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Comments: Comments concerning changes to the Mendenhall Glacier area.

Concerning Drafts Plans for the Mendenhall Glacier Area

As someone who lives in Juneau and works at the Mendenhall Glacier all summer, leading tours for cruise ship passengers, I see major problems with some of the plans for future developments. Part of the plan shows a bus lot up front. This is last century thinking. When you are on the bear platforms or Trail of Time or East Glacier Trail, you can hear every bus that pulls into the current drop off/ pick up spot. To improve the visitor experience, the buses, with their smells and sounds, need to be moved out of the area. When the guests get their first big view of the area, they shouldn't be standing in a parking lot.

The idea of moving so many buses to the front is the complete opposite of what needs to happen out there. The answer to the problem of moving guests from a distant bus lot to the main area is not easy but the proposed plan is not that answer. If the Forest Service can't see other options, they should reach out to people that have a vision to see things out-side the box. The main area should be made incredible not industrial.

A dock on the lake shore to take people across the lake to a distant facility looks nice in the drawings but it also looks as though it was designed for a day when there aren't many people at the glacier. I'm trying to imagine that dock on a Tuesday with a thousand people trying to get on a boat to get across the lake. Suddenly the dock in the drawings starts to look really small, and there is no staging and organizing area. It's going to take much more infrastructure than what shows in the drawings to handle the number of visitors the glacier sees on a typical summer day. It will not be the calm and peaceful scene the drawings depict. You will also need a steady stream of boats to satisfy demands of even the current number of tourists. If these boats aren't quiet (electric?) the plan should not even go forward. Maintaining the peace out there is far more important than driving people across the lake.

I like the walkway under the road but if there is a bear down there on a busy day, it's going to be crowded with people.

If this project is done halfway, which is what the current plan envisions, it is going to be a mess from day one. Some of the things proposed are just wrong for the area and its future. These ideas need more thought, more creativity and more future thinking. The plans and drawings should be more realistic and show how any changes look and work on a busy day.

There needs to be many changes to what has been presented before anything is decided.

Cameron Byrnes

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