

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/5/2022 9:32:06 PM

First name: Elizabeth

Last name: Figus

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing today to recommend the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE be taken at this time. As written, I STRONGLY OPPOSE Alternatives 2 and 3 and I OPPOSE Alternative 4. The expense, lack of innovation, and likelihood of decreased quality of life for my household with all the Action Alternatives is too great (I live on property along View Drive, adjacent to the proposed construction and increased traffic areas).

I am not against updating infrastructure and improving the visitor experience at the Mendenhall Glacier, but the Action Alternatives in this proposal are wholly lackluster and potentially damaging to quality of life for local human residents and to habitat for salmon, birds, bears, and other wildlife that depend on the MGRA for refuge.

This EIS notes the existence of the Juneau Climate Action and Implementation Plan and associated actions, but it does not create any set of standards for green, climate-friendly actions by the MGRA (with the exception of planning to build the new Welcome Center building to get LEED certification). The plan as written places the burden of responsibility for green innovation and action on CBJ instead of on the MGRA for its own GHG emission in the future. See page 3-185: "The proposed project would be compatible with foreseeable sustainability innovations to meet the plan's GHG emissions goals, such as electric tour buses or expanded electric-powered public transit options. These changes would reduce GHG emissions within the MGRA over the life of the project." It is not enough for such an expensive set of projects to be 'compatible' with future improvements from Juneau's plan. MGRA must lead the way by example.

To update infrastructure and provide recreation activities for future visitors, there should be a focus on all Action Alternatives providing renewable, green options for all aspects of the proposed changes. For example, if the parking areas must be expanded, then there should be an accompanying requirement that all private tour buses using the parking area (for pick up, drop off, or parking) must be powered by electricity, hydrogen, or a comparable green power source by 2025 or 2030. Additionally, all new car parking spots should be designated for electric or hybrid vehicles only.

If there is any intent to build docks and provide infrastructure for boats on Mendenhall Lake, there should be a corresponding rule that all non-emergency craft on the Lake must be powered by electric motors or some other approved renewable technology. Gas, diesel, or other petroleum-based power must not be allowed on Mendenhall Lake except in the event of an emergency.

Any updates or improvements to the Visitor Center and/or construction of new buildings, pods, or other facilities must be done with green, renewable products and heat sources. The materials should be sourced locally or from renewable options. The heat sources for all MGRA facilities must be shifted to renewable/green options (like heat pumps).

Additionally, as a Juneau resident who often uses a bicycle as a form of transport but rarely uses a mountain bike on trails for recreation, I take issue with the approach to bicycles/bikes in the EIS only as a source of potential conflict with walkers or hikers. There is currently a paucity of bicycle racks in the existing parking areas, and your proposal to increase infrastructure makes no mention of improving areas to park traditional bicycles or plug in electric bicycles. This oversight is unfortunately in line with the lack of innovation throughout the document.

Overall, I am not opposed to the idea of creating environmentally responsible docks and allowing small (<20 passenger) electric boats to ferry visitors around the MGRA. I could also imagine a scenario where the 'pods' could be a really cool option for green visiting and camping opportunities. But the plans as written are not sufficient to get my support for any Action Alternative.

One final note: Climate Change is already impacting Juneau. Do the authors agree with Fluharty as stated (21minutes, 08 seconds) in the webinar (<https://vimeo.com/689860131>) that the glacier might stop receding and start increasing in size again?! UAF researchers would disagree (<https://news.uaf.edu/62165-2/>), especially with insufficient action to combat climate change, like the actions proposed in this EIS.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to comment.