

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/21/2023 6:07:31 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings from a former long-term Mendenhall Valley resident and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed development near the Glacier Visitor Center.

I'll never forget a wonderful winter night walk across the frozen lake under a bright full moon many years ago. That silent walk in foot-deep snow and crisp clean air without artificial lights to the Nugget Falls with a loved one is a peak experience permanently etched among many memories of regular treks in the broader glacier area: birdwatching, hiking, sledding, skiing, enjoying the coming of spring, seeing the beavers' latest work, sighting bears, discovering hidden mining remnants, watching sockeye fry dart about in the creeks, and just observing the changes in the icefield. The Mendenhall Glacier area is a backyard treasure of these simple nature experiences.

Of course I would favor Alternative 1 - No Action, and would in fact prefer stopping all the existing bus transport of hoards of summer tourists. But some change is nearly inevitable. Most of all I absolutely oppose glacier access development for motorized watercraft and more paved trails. I do not want the industrialized feel of food service with its inevitable litter and plastic debris, the smell, garbage, bear attractants, etc.). Preserve our beloved old Visitor's Center with its Friday night Fireside Chats. A new welcome center, if built, must be low profile and eco-conscious and use "green" infrastructure. Transport infrastructure must be practical yet unobtrusive, with improved parking and electric vehicle shuttle service originating from the lot already in place. Don't develop a new lot and for heavens sake don't bring in light rail from town or anywhere else! Minimize the noise, gas exhaust, and light pollution. Once transported to the central area, if electric carts are allowed to transport folks to Picture Point (for example), make sure those of us seeking quiet walking paths are included in changes.

In short, I agree with others who have requested a focus on preserving nature, seriously limiting construction, and avoiding turning the area into a "fake Disney attraction". Retain the smallest carbon footprint possible while minimizing distractions to the peaceful experience of our near-wilderness. We love it year-round, not just in tourist season.

Thank you.