

PUBLIC COMMENTS
PRIOR TO APRIL
MEETINGS, INCL
MEETING NOTES
FROM MARCH.

Sitka Implementation Master Plan

Summary of 3/10/10 Public Meeting held at Harrington Hall:

Introduction and Master Plan Presentation:

Scott Brylinsky explained the goals for the evening meeting, provided context and background for the Master Plan project, identified previous planning that supported the current work, probable timeline, and process to integrate public comment.

Paul Voelckers explained the dual nature of the Master Plan project, with its broad objective to provide a consistent planning framework for the central Sitka core, with detailed "implementation" projects which grew from the Master Plan. Some implementation projects are starting now, concurrent with the Master Plan resolution. Others are identified in a comprehensive list, from which projects will be developed as sufficient information and consensus is developed.

Mario Campos offered further background on the philosophical goals of the planning work, with an emphasis on authenticity, and extending on the powerful attributes that Sitka offers, including the beauty of the setting, the interesting working waterfront, and the strength of the historic fabric including Tlingit, Russian, and American history.

Ints Luters then explained the different planning districts comprising the plan, providing specificity for the Katlian, Lincoln, Shorefront, Japonski, and Park Districts. Mario provided more detail and focus on the key Sea Walk element of the plan, illustrating the improved sea-edge walking link from O'Connell Bridge to the National Park Service.

Ints identified potential improvements to Lincoln Street, and specific changes around the Russian Orthodox Cathedral to improve safety and pedestrian flow. Paul finished the plan over-view by explaining potential locations for a future Visitor's Center, and enlarged drawing options illustrating potential changes to the Crescent Harbor/Centennial Building area, including improved lighter facilities, bus staging, parking, and visitor accommodations.

At that point, the meeting was opened up to public comment, with a question and answer period. Responses from the planning team or Borough staff, where new information was provided, are indicated in parentheses.

Public Questions and Comments:

- What is the purpose of the visitor center? (General discussion – no specific programming accomplished yet. Focus will include visitor orientation, assistance understanding visitor options, and visitor services, like restrooms.)
- Crescent Harbor users and Crescent Harbor parking lot users should have been one of the stakeholder groups interviewed during the January scoping meeting. Another comment later remarked that commercial fishers should have also been included as a stakeholder group at that time. (Purpose of this public meeting was to solicit comment from all interested parties, and

that no group of reviewers had more weight than another. Good ideas, from whatever source, would be included in finished planning work.)

- Any constraints so far as a timeline for spending the funds? Is there an urgent need to move forward? How much money do we have? (City Administrator Jim Dinley explained that roughly \$3 million was available at present, with no stipulated date for its expenditure. Language in statute existed identifying that funds had to be closely linked to impacts due to cruise industry. Goal of project was to identify projects that met criteria, while providing as much universal benefit to Sitka residents as possible.)
- Crescent Harbor area is a mess, so Crescent Harbor shouldn't be the primary lightering facility. There's room for shelter and vendors at O'Connell. Visitors should be directed downtown, not to a seawalk. Move the expanded lightering docks to O'Connell. (Generalized discussion on weather and staging limitations at O'Connell, and better potential of centralized visitor services at Crescent, if congestion issues can be adequately addressed.)
- Ships are leaving. The passenger tax should be spent to keep boats here. We are "stuck" with lightering. Should come up with ways to reduce the congestion at Crescent. Look at opportunities for improved shelter for people getting off tenders. Consider reimbursing ships for their tendering costs.
- Would two visitor centers be better? Important to disperse the visitors.
- Two docks are problematic and confusing. O'Connell works poorly: no protection, congested and too small. Having a central visitor orientation location would help ease visitors fears.
- Boat ramp at Crescent is important to accommodate an individual's rowing craft. Not necessary for whole Seawalk to be on the ocean (referencing the area behind Centennial). Seawalk idea is good though. Harbor parking at Crescent Harbor Park needs improvement.
- Seawalk will be an attractive and inviting addition. Agreed that a central orientation location is important. Thoughtful phasing of shared street concept would be good, especially by the church. Colored paving could lead visitors to the Seawalk.
- How far do people walk? (Explanation that way-faring signage would include this information on walking times to areas, and also be linked to a new walking map.)
- Orientation is important. Seawalk and main walking routes should be developed with a strong, graphic map (Boston subway map).
- Any sense of difference between the crew member and cruise ship visitor needs? (Discussion included the reality of crew use of library for computer access. Mr. Dinley explained that's why the City has added distributed WiFi to satisfy this need.)
- Yeah! Doing a plan is good! Glad to see the new Master Plan is incorporating good elements from the Gateway plan. I really like the walkway, but hate to see parking replacing the green space around the Baranof statue. Don't give up that area to parking.
- Are you aware that the library needs expansion? (Explanation that library expansion was identified, and the scale of addition will be an added challenge to the general area around the Centennial Building/Crescent Harbor zone)
- Commercial fishers need to be contacted.
- Aesthetically pleasing walkways and green space are good. Time element is also important.

- Complex project- almost too much to soak in and respond to. (Link to City/Borough site was explained, and comments were encouraged after the meeting, by phone or e-mail.)

Specific Crescent Seawalk Comments:

- Suggestion for a low barrier between the greenspace and road to keep children from running into the street.
- Use landscaping or other design feature to keep the Pacific High students on the sidewalk.
- Preserve portions of the large green areas for active recreation. If possible, increase the scope of the project to improve soil drainage with amendments to soil and re-grading. This will also reduce maintenance costs.
- Use native plants for plantings. (Explained that was the goal.)
- Is it possible to build out on the rip rap? (Explained that this was expensive and might require additional permitting. May be possible in future modifications.)
- Permeable pavers should be considered. The steel/concrete walkway images presented in the slides look sterile. Sitka design should reflect nautical theme or be rustic. Yellow cedar is a perfect material to use.
- The eight foot width is appropriate – it also allows for dogs on leashes and keeps folks from having to step off the sidewalk into the grass which can be swampy and wet.
- Save the mountain ash along the path. Use natural, native wood.
- Little Pup Creek becomes dry at points and is not necessarily “clean”.
- The dry creek/water feature is a good idea. The Japanese knotweed may end up growing in the landscaped water feature and should be eliminated before a water feature is constructed.
- Screening for the garbage containers is good but should include “bear-proof” devices.
- Fix the lawn drainage.
- Being able to walk out on the breakwater should be considered as a future phase.

At this point, the general public meeting was adjourned. The public was invited to join four different focus tables, covering the Sea Walk, signage and detailed District features, Crescent Harbor/Centennial Building visitor center options, and general master plan administrative steps.

Conversation in focus groups continued for 45 minutes, with the meeting concluding about 9:30.

Scott Brylinsky

From: Scott Brylinsky [scott@cityofsitka.com]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2010 5:03 PM
To: 'brant brantman'
Subject: RE: the walk
Attachments: sitka non-motorized transportation plan 2002.pdf

Hi Brant,
 Thanks for writing and for wanting to get the factual background.
 I would welcome you or anyone to come and in and discuss concerns/questions in person over drawings.
 Responses to your specific questions and comments are in different font below.
 Scott

Scott Brylinsky
 Public Works Operations Manager
 100 Lincoln Street
 Sitka, AK 99835
 907-747-1829
 907-747-3158 fax

From: brant brantman [mailto:bbrantman@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2010 8:43 AM
To: Scott Brylinsky
Subject: the walk

Hey Scott-

Just wanted to get our facts straight about the tourist walk. We had planned on attending the cancelled public meeting, but did not hear your talk. We have seen the map on the City web site.

As you know, we're in a great position to observe the public use of both the library lawn and the remnant of historic Crescent Beach.

Is it true that the plan is to run a wide walk through that lawn area and around the back (service entry) side of the library? *The Sitka Non-Motorized Transportation of 2002, adopted by the Assembly, includes a seawalk in front of the library partially along the footprint you describe. I've attached that plan for your reference (see sheet 8). That earlier plan actually depicts the path as going right through your front porch, linking Maksoutoff to the library front yard by that route, rather than along the west side of the library.*

The current draft CPET Master Plan includes a walk in a similar footprint, but going past Maksoutoff and along the west side of the library. It is a draft, not officially reviewed or adopted by the Assembly. Before this, or any project over \$50,000, can be constructed requires Assembly approval. Is there any filling of the beach in order to do that? The details of how such a walk would be constructed are not determined (whether on fill, on existing topography, etc), and are not part of the scope of the Master Plan effort.

Our hope is that the path will run to Lincoln on the front side of the library. Running it around the back seems like a costly way to access a view of the new fuel tank, the library dumpsters and the parking lot, at the expense of one of the most highly used green lawns, and the only public beach in downtown. A

path from Centennial past the library entrance would access the lawn and view seating, not diminish it. And the beach is heavily used by Sitka families (including us!) on nice days, and it would be a shame to alter that if you'd have to widen the squeeze past the fuel tank. *I will include this comment in the record of public comments on the plan.*

Anyway, before feeding the growing anxiety around the neighborhood, I wanted to confirm the current state of the Plan (*draft*), when it needs to be finalized (*no deadline when it needs to be finalized*) and the details and your thoughts about these concerns. If needed, we'd like to meet with you before meeting with the neighbors.

Hope you're well. It's almost April, but who's counting?

Thanks-
Brant

Scott Brylinsky

From: Paul Norwood [norwoodpaul@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2010 2:03 PM
To: scott@cityofsitka.com
Subject: Late comment on head tax revenue.

Hello. Somehow I managed to miss both meetings. I had intended to say that it would be a nice use of those funds to commission a totem pole that would be immediately visible to those visitors walking up the Crescent Harbor Ramp. After all, traditionally poles faced the water. Hopefully it isn't too late for my comment to contribute.

Thanks,

Paul Norwood
Sitka

Scott Brylinsky

From: Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins [jonathan.s.kt@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 13, 2010 12:53 PM
To: Scott Brylinsky; Lynne McGowan
Subject: Re: Comments re. Sea Walk

Hello,
 Just a delinquent addition to my comments.

Another suggestion for a future project occurred to me when biking through the St. Michael's roundabout yesterday. I noticed that when it is snowing small "pie wedges" of untrampled virgin snow accumulate on both the movie theatre side and Old Harbor Books side of the roundabout. Why? Because cars and trucks never needs to drive on those pie wedges of asphalt. I'm now sure if this makes much sense so I'll include an image to illustrate the point:



The "pie wedges" to which I refer are the above pictured pedestrian islands on the approach to the roundabout proper. Obviously, with St. Michael's those pie wedge pedestrian islands were never constructed. My suggestion: build them!

As I see it, the advantages are thus:

- Safety. Pedestrians only have to cross one lane of traffic at a time with a pedestrian island, not two.
- Aesthetics. Gives the area form and feel. Right now, especially on the movie theatre side, you have a miniature asphalt abyss. It's always good to break up uninterrupted expanses of concrete and asphalt if one can help it.
- Traffic flow. Conceivably, for the same reasons pedestrian islands would improve safety, flow of vehicular traffic would also improve, especially in summer months. I might add the tourists also love to take pictures of Lincoln St....from the middle of Lincoln St., vehicular traffic be darned. These pedestrian islands would give tourists a safe and unobtrusive place to take their photos.

Next time there's fresh snow coming down, I really suggest heading over to St. Michael's to look at the wedges of snow accumulate to get a feel for the possible size of the pedestrian islands.

Scott Brylinsky

From: Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins [jonathan.s.kt@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2010 12:42 AM
To: Scott Brylinsky; Lynne McGowan
Subject: Comments re. Sea Walk

Hello,

Just want to put my comments into a formal format.

-I support just about everything I saw, read, and heard at the meeting on Wednesday evening.

-I would like to especially voice my support for project numbers 5 and 6, as I feel these really will extract value out of the tremendous scenic asset that is Sitka's waterfront. As I mentioned to Lynn on Wednesday, I don't think there would be many places more impressive and powerfully beautiful during a winter storm than a pedestrian walkway on the ocean-facing side of O'Connell Bridge.

-I second Marcel LaParriere's suggestion that local materials, and specifically yellow cedar, be incorporated to the project as much as possible.

I also have a few suggestions for future projects relating to cruise ship money:

-Paths on both segments of the Crescent Harbor breakwater. Talk about a location with potential, this has got it all: sea lions, boat traffic, great vistas, easy access.

-Possibly acquisition of the parking space in front of the Sitka Realty office and turn it into a small greenspace. I remember reading how Robert Moses, during the height of his reign in New York City, would scour the city for even fractions of acres of underutilized real estate and turn them into vibrant public-use spaces. Sitka's not Gotham, obviously, nor are we quite as short on space, or public space, but it's always bugged me how this little spot of land is used as, of all things, parking. It's got a great view and goodness knows tourists would use it as a place to rest and look out into Sitka Sound if it was a miniature park of sorts, especially if the Sea Walk was constructed all the way to the O'Connell lighter facility.

Thanks for your time,

-Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

March 22, 2010

Kim Elliot - Comments regarding Sitka Passenger Fee Fund Implementation Plan

Of most concern to me is to see the O'Connell Bridge lightering facility be upgraded and used as the primary location for the lighter boats rather than Crescent Harbor. Originally it was supposed to be the primary location when it was proposed and presented to the people of Sitka. Entering and departing Crescent Harbor when it is being used by the lighter boats is **dangerous**. The blind corner at the entrance is a big problem and lighter boats, larger fishing boats, kayaks and the charter fleet creates an accident waiting to happen and I know there have been a few incidents. That is including my own experience of being swamped in a small skiff by a lighter boat wake. That is why the original plan to make the O'Connell Bridge dock primary was looked forward to by many Crescent Harbor tenants. Later it was decided by the Harbormaster (and those others in power at the time) to split the boats between the 2 locations to make the downtown business people happy. I would suggest considering a floating breakwater and improvements to those floats and reception area at the O'Connell Bridge. This would include building a visitor's center there or perhaps where the old Petro Marine Gas Station was and put in a nice walkway to lead people to the downtown area and Totem Square.

I have read the comments made available at the public meeting March 10, 2010 and I hope my comments will have as much weight as any of those. As far as I can tell each of those "groups" had one spokesperson that was supposedly speaking for the entire group. I am a member of Port and Harbors and I had no real input. I think the Port and Harbors comments came from our chair person who spoke with his own opinion as far as I can see. I have talked to a few folks that have boats down and Crescent Harbor and they were not aware that this plan would impact them by making the Crescent Harbor the primary location again.

Many of the problems I see with the phase 1 portion of the plan – the seawalk - directly impact Crescent Harbor users. At Port and Harbor meetings Crescent Harbor parking issues have been ongoing. The repaving recently completed did nothing to alleviate the problems. Now the idea is to replace a considerable amount of the green strip with cement which will also impact the size of the two already crowded parking areas supposedly for harbor users. The garbage cans block the view of anyone with a small vehicle and as a Crescent Harbor tenant I have had multiple close calls with my Ford Festiva and have had hit and run damage while parked in one of the small lots. During the summer the large trucks coming to collect the charter boat fish from the cruise ship charters completely block those parking lots frequently. I am wondering if anyone has considered removing the shelters at the green strip and perhaps replacing them with covered benches. I hardly ever see anyone besides Sitka's homeless using them. This would be one way to give extra space for the parking areas. If the green space can be reduced dramatically for widening sidewalks then taking some of it for enlarging those parking lots should be put into the plan even if it can't be paid for with those funds.

During cruise ship days you will find many cruise ship passengers walking the dock from the shelter down to one of the other ramps looking at the charter boat catches or taking charters. Often they cross the parking lots to look at St. Peter's by the Sea church. I am concerned that the steepness of the ramps will result in accidents the city will be liable for.

Starting from the base of the O'Connell Bridge the seawalk will pass in front of Sitka Realty, cross Maksoutoff Street (where I live), go between the Woman's Club and Library. Personally I would prefer the seawalk start at the green strip at Crescent Harbor instead of wrapping around the base of the Bridge. I will have to look at all those people every day a cruise ship comes in as this walk will definitely adversely affect my view and privacy. However if it must be done, please consider the impact if the parking spaces along the street between the base of the bridge up to Maksoutoff Street should go away to widen the sidewalk as I estimate there would be a loss of about 10 parking spots. Where the walk goes between the library and the Woman's Club there is about 4 parking places for the Woman's Club and about 4 for the library employees. Where will they all park if the walkway is put there? As difficult as parking already is in downtown Sitka losing that parking is going to be a problem. I would suggest a better route should continue down Harbor Drive past the library then go down to the corner of Lincoln and Harbor Drive and join the seawalk at the corner of Crescent Harbor green strip in front of the rose gallery. An access to the Centennial building could go through the center of the flower garden area where Baranov sits and he could be moved up to Castle Hill where he lived during his lifetime. Many tourists visit the Hill. This would also alleviate some congestion to the sea side of the Centennial Building and leave access to the launch ramp. Everywhere one goes in Sitka there is a view of the ocean and the rest of the planned walk will be in areas that would take much better advantage of it. I am also concerned about how I will get out of Maksoutoff Street (where I live) on cruise ship days.

Back to the library area – I think it would be great to move the canoe to Totem Square and use that area for a covered place with benches of some sort where folks could use their computers or remove the shelter and enlarge library parking.

I don't want to see our town look like every other tourist town in the country that has closed their main street to vehicle traffic. I think refurbishing Lincoln street sidewalks and ADA accessibility is necessary.

This is the comments I have for now. I reserve the right to add to them as this plan develops.

Thank you,

Kim Elliot
7 Maksoutoff St.
Sitka, AK 99835

Scott Brylinsky

From: Sandy Lorrigan [director@sitka.org]
Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2010 8:56 AM
To: scott@cityofsitka.com
Subject: Comment on Implementation Plan

Dear Scott

I am writing to offer the Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau comments on the Sitka Passenger Fee Fund Implementation Plan. The comments that I would like to relay from the board are about the consideration of a Visitor Center or Centers:

- The Plan wasn't specific enough on a new building (what type of building, how many levels, cost of rent, space size, will there be any vendor areas, etc.). There are too many questions to have answered before giving support behind a new building.
- What is the actual cost to renovate Harrigan Hall (and what would happen in the renovation – would it increase size of offices, offer space to the Visitors Bureau, offer more space for the Sitka Historical Museum, other occupants, costs, etc.)
- A large amount of storage should be considered in any type of visitor center.
- It is difficult for the Visitors Bureau to staff two outlying visitor centers with personnel (especially with cuts in funding) or volunteers.
- A room should be designated for cruise line officials to use for their end-of-the-day reporting with partner tour companies.
- Parking should be considered thoroughly as well as meet with affected shareholders on any parking or re-design of traffic flow in the disembarking areas.
- If new 'green areas' are used in the design, to let the public know that areas are either being moved or green space and seating are still available.
- The least restrictive amount of blocking the ocean views should be considered.
- Has a complete demolition and rebuild of Harrigan Hall been considered?
- Can the City Library be expanded and or considered as a location? And/or remodeled?
- Has Sheldon Jackson library building been considered as an option (if available), if not for relocating Sitka's current library, but perhaps for city offices, a museum expansion or other reasonable usage?
- Plenty of seating inside a new public building (which are heavily used by elderly or persons cannot ambulate well and/ physically-challenged).
- Please consider any additional new technology, audio and WiFi/computer needs in any building location.
- Protected areas from the outside elements for visitors and local vendors if there is no inside vendor area in a design.

We realize the opportunity to use this funding for projects will benefit the tourism industry and be a great step for improving Sitka's tourism services for all.

On behalf of the Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau Board

Sandy Lorrigan
 (907) 747-5940
www.sitka.org

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City and Borough of Sitka

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

100 Lincoln Street, Sitka, Alaska 99835
(907) 747-1804 • Fax (907) 747-3158

PROJECT _____

LOCATION _____

DATE _____ BY BRYLINSKY

SCALE _____ SHEET 1 OF 1

Date	Name	Comments
2-26-10	JOHN DUNLAP	2-26-10 MASTER PLAN - Phone + OFFICE COMMENTS
		- Possibly use parallel lanes for busses along loading areas to allow deeper staging of all forward movement.
		- For entrance at Limerick - open up traffic ingress/egress lane to allow for higher traffic flow.
3-9-10	KEN FATE - RAVEN RADIO	- R.R. wants to note their radio dish is under bridge + they want to keep using it. - It is a receiver dish, no transmission. It will not hurt people.
Additionally	R.R. wants to develop	the shoreside area of their property in the medium term - 5-7 years, as some sort of a public space.
3-10-10	KIM ELLIOT -	- O'CONNELL WALKWAY - WILL PUT MORE TRAFFIC TO MARSDEN + BE A TRAFFIC CONFLICT - LIBRARY SEAWALK - NOT IN FAVOR OF CURRENT LAYOUT - AGAINST ANY INCREASE IN BOAT TRAFFIC TO CRESCENT - NOT IN FAVOR OF LARGE FORMAT SIGNAGE, OR TOO MANY SIGNAGE - AGAINST ANY CHANGE TO CENTENNIAL BLOCK
		- A DOCK SHOULD BE BUILT AT SCIP, + CITY SHOULD OWN + OPERATE. - WANTS SMALL BOAT LAUNCH TO REMAIN, AS ISLAND DWELLERS.