


CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

From: John Leach, Municipal Administrator 

Date: July 16, 2024

Subject: Renewal Option (4 of 5) to Provide Convention and Visitor Bureau Services

Background

A contract was established with The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, Inc. (“Chamber”) on December 27, 2018 to provide Convention and Visitors Bureau Services to the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS). The contract is attached to this memo.

Analysis

Section 5 of the contract states, “If the Contractor complies with all terms and conditions of this contract at all times until December 31, 2021, Owner shall have the right to renew this contract for the period Jan. 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022...”. I exercised the third-year renewal option on July 20, 2023. The renewal letter is attached to this memo.

In order to exercise future renewal options (up to 2 remaining one-year periods **subject to owner’s approval for each renewal option**), the CBS shall give the Chamber written notice of such renewal on or before August 1st of any subsequent year. If the CBS fails to exercise a renewal option, the contract will expire on December 31, 2024.

Termination of the contract may be initiated by mutual consent of the parties provided that notice of termination is given at least 6 months prior to the effective date of termination.

Currently, the Chamber contract has appropriated funding for the CBS fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, however, the CBS has not yet notified the Chamber of their intent to exercise an additional one-year renewal option.

On July 16, 2024, the Chamber provided the attached scope of services report for CBS staff to determine if performance was satisfactory per the terms of the contract. I have found the Chamber to be in compliance with all terms of the contract and performing satisfactorily as required by Exhibit A of the contract.

Fiscal Note

The CBS approved the budget appropriation for Chamber funding for FY25 of \$575,000 which is \$275,000 above the base amount of \$300,000.

Exercising the renewal option would not financially obligate the CBS beyond what has already been budgeted for FY25, however, since the renewal term would end on December 31, 2025, exercising the renewal option would make a future obligation of FY26 funds to cover the base period of July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

Recommendation

Recommend the Assembly review the scope of services report provided by the Chamber and direct the Administrator to exercise the renewal option if so desired. I also recommend that if this renewal option is exercised, that future renewal options be considered and determined during the Chamber's annual spring work session.

Encl: Convention and Visitor Bureau Services Contract
Third-year Renewal Option Memo
2024 Scope of Services Report

**CONTRACT BETWEEN OWNER AND CONTRACTOR
TO PROVIDE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU SERVICES
TO THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA, ALASKA**

City and Borough of Sitka (“Owner” or “CBS”) desires the GREATER SITKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC., (“Contractor”) to Provide Convention and Visitors Bureau Services. This Contract to Provide Convention and Visitors Bureau Services (together with all exhibits and attachments hereto to and all amendments and modification to such contract or exhibits, collectively the “Contract”) to the City and Borough of Sitka is made and entered into by and between Owner and Contractor in consideration of the mutual promises contained in this Contract. This Contract describes Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau duties and obligations, which include effective marketing and promotion of Sitka’s visitor attractions and tourism related services. The primary goal is to increase the level of visitor traffic to enhance the economy and maintain tourism related businesses in Sitka.

This Contract also consists of the following which are incorporated into and made a part of the Contract.

- Statement of Interest
- Exhibit A - Scope of Services (2 pages)
- Exhibit B - Compensation and Payment (1 page)

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Contract, the terms used in this Contract shall have the following meaning:

- A. “Owner” shall mean the CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA, Alaska.
- B. “Contractor” shall mean the GREATER SITKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC, an Alaska non-profit corporation, and any **partner, associate**, or any other person acting for and/or in behalf of the GREATER SITKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC.
- C. “Owner’s authorized representative” shall mean the person set forth in Section 20 (B)(2) of this Contract.
- D. “Days” shall mean calendar days.

SECTION 2. CONTRACT TIME

- A. This Contract becomes effective when signed and dated by both Parties.
- B. Contractor shall commence performance of the work identified in Section 4 immediately following receipt of the Notice to Proceed.

- C. Except as expressly allowed under this Contract, Owner need not grant Contractor any extension in the time provided to complete the work under this Contract. If Contractor's progress falls behind the project schedule, Contractor shall commit additional resources to the prosecution of the work, or take such other additional steps as are reasonably necessary to assure the completion of the work on schedule, all at no additional cost to Owner.

SECTION 3. CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- A. The Contractor expressly represents and warrants it is now and shall continue to be at all times during the performance of this Contract, the holder of all required or necessary professional, business or other licenses or permits and is qualified and capable of performing all of the work covered or called for by this Contract and is presently ready, able and willing to undertake and perform all of such work and services, and to supply all necessary materials and equipment at the times, and in a professional and workmanlike manner and pursuant to the terms, conditions and provisions, and for the compensation and payments as herein provided.
- B. All actions taken by Contractor under this Contract shall comply with all applicable statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations. Contractor shall timely pay all federal, state and local sales, excise or other taxes or assessments incurred by the Contractor.

SECTION 4. SCOPE OF SERVICE

- A. The services to be performed by Contractor shall include all services required to complete the tasks set forth and described on Exhibit A, and shall be in accordance with all applicable statutes, Sitka General Code provisions, ordinances, rules, and regulations.
- B. The Statement of Interest provided by the Contractor, and incorporated into this Contract, shall be treated as a broad general intent of Contractor as to how the Scope of Services under this Contract shall be performed, and, Contractor shall not be held to strict performance of elements of the Statement of Interest which are not specifically contained within Exhibit A. Both parties mutually agree, however, that a gross deviation by the Contractor from the intent set forth in the Statement of Interest, especially in regards to governance and management accountability, shall potentially form a reason for Termination for Cause as outlined in Section 6.

SECTION 5. CONTRACT TIME PERIOD

- A. The term of this Contract shall commence on **January 1, 2019** and end at the end of the business day **December 31, 2021**.

If the Contractor complies with all terms and conditions of this Contract at all times until December 31, 2021, Owner shall have the right (hereafter "Renewal Option") to renew this contract for the period Jan. 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022; and if Contractor complies

with all the terms and conditions of the Contract at all times thereafter, Contractor and Owner may agree to a Renewal Option for subsequent one-year periods up to 5 one-year periods subject to Owner's approval for each new Renewal Option. In order to exercise these Renewal Options, Owner shall give Contractor written notice on or before August 1, 2021, or on or before August 1st of any subsequent year, of its intent to renew this Contract whereupon Contractor will have 10 days to accept or reject Renewal Option. If the Owner fails to exercise a Renewal Option, this Contract shall terminate on December 31st of that year.

SECTION 6. TERMINATION

This Contract may be terminated:

- A. By mutual consent of the Parties.
- B. For the convenience of Owner or Contractor, provided that Owner or Contractor notifies the other of its intent to terminate under this paragraph at least 6 months prior to the effective date of the termination.
- C. For cause, by either Party where the other Party fails in any material way to perform its obligation under this Contract; provided, however, that as a condition of the exercise of its right of termination under this subsection the terminating Party shall notify the other Party of its intent to terminate this Contract and state with reasonable specificity the grounds, and the defaulting Party shall have failed, within 60 days of receiving the notice, to cure the default.
- D. Termination pursuant to this section shall not affect the Parties' continuing obligations under this Contract.

SECTION 7. DUTIES UPON TERMINATION

- A. If either Owner or Contractor terminates this Contract for convenience, either shall pay the other, the reasonable value of all expenses incurred and services rendered prior to actual termination date. Payment under this section shall never exceed the total compensation possible under Section 10. All finished and unfinished reports and materials prepared by Contractor shall become the property of Owner.
- B. If this Contract is terminated for cause, Owner shall pay Contractor reasonable value of the services satisfactorily rendered prior to termination less any damages suffered by Owner because of Contractor's failure to perform its contractual obligations. Any finished or unfinished documents or materials shall become the property of Owner at its option. Under no circumstances shall payment under this section exceed the percentage value of work completed as defined by Exhibit Band under Section 9. Under no circumstances shall payment under this section exceed the total compensation possible under Section 9.

- C. If Contractor has received payments prior to termination in excess of the amount to which it is entitled under Subsection A or B of this section, Contractor shall remit such excess to Owner within 60 days after receipt of notice to that effect.
- D. Contractor shall not be entitled to compensation under this section until Contractor has delivered to Owner all documents, records, work products, materials, and equipment owned by City and Borough of Sitka, related to this Contract and requested by Owner.
- E. If Contractor's services are terminated, for whatever reason, Contractor may not claim any compensation under this Contract other than allowed under this section.
- F. The Owner need not recognize any claim by Contractor for reimbursable expenses or costs incurred after the 60 day notice of termination period under section 7C.

SECTION 8. INDEMNIFICATION

- A. Each Party (the "Indemnitor Party") shall indemnify, defend, save, and hold the other Party (the "Indemnitee Party") harmless from any claims, lawsuits, or liability, including attorney's fees and costs, arising from any wrongful or negligent act, error or omission of the Indemnitor Party occurring during the course of or as a result of the Indemnitor Party's performance pursuant to this Contract.
- B. The Indemnitor Party shall is required to indemnify, defend, save, and hold the Indemnitee Party harmless from any claims, lawsuits, liability, or attorney's fees and costs, arising in wrongful or negligent acts, errors or omissions solely of the Indemnitee Party occurring during the course of or as a result of the performance of this Contract.
- C. Where claims, lawsuits, or liability, including attorney's fees and costs, arise from wrongful or negligent acts of both Parties, Contractor shall indemnify, defend, save and hold Owner harmless from only that portion of claims, lawsuits or liability, including attorney's fees and costs, which result from Contractor's wrongful or negligent acts occurring during the course of or as a result of Contractor's performance pursuant to this Contract.

SECTION 9. PAYMENT

- A. For Contractor's Contract Services and Expenses, as described in Section 4 of this Contract, compensation will be paid as set forth and described on Exhibit B, subject to Contractor's satisfactory performance, unless mutually agreed upon by both Parties prior to commencing additional work.
- B. Each year, the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka will have a worksession with the Contractor. During this worksession the contractor will include the marketing plan, budget, visitor statistics and plans for the future.
- C. Either party to this contract may request that the compensation to Contractor be

renegotiated. Any renegotiated contract amount must be approved by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka. If a request for renegotiation is not initiated by either party, the existing contract compensation amount and payment schedule shall remain in place.

- D. Contractor shall submit invoice(s) to Owner's authorized representative, as set forth and described on Exhibit B.
- E. Owner shall make payment on invoices as set forth and described on Exhibit B with approval by Owner's authorized representative.
- F. Contractor shall be entitled to no compensation under this Contract beyond the amount of Owner's express obligation under subsection A above.
- G. The amount to be paid for additional services, at the option of Owner, shall be negotiated by the Parties prior to the execution of amendments to this Contract for this work.

SECTION 10. AUDIT: ACCESS TO RECORDS

- A. Contractor shall maintain records of performances, communications, documents, correspondence and costs pertinent to this Contract. The Owner's authorized representatives shall have the right to examine such records and accounting procedures and practices.
- B. The Owner's authorized representative shall have the right to examine all books, records, documents and other data of Contractor related to the pricing and performance of the Contract, and any change or modification for the purpose of evaluating the accuracy, completeness, and currency of the data submitted. The right of examination shall extend to all documents necessary to permit adequate evaluation of the data, computations, and projections used.
- C. The materials described in this section shall be made available at the business office of Contractor at all reasonable times for inspection, audit or reproduction, for a minimum of 3 years from the date of final payment under this Contract and for such longer period, if any, as may be required by applicable statute or other provisions of this Contract.
- D. Records which relate to claims or litigation or the settlement of claims arising out of the performance of this Contract shall be made available to Owner by Contractor until such claims or litigation have been concluded.

SECTION 11. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

- A. The parties hereto expressly agree that the Contractor shall be and is an independent contractor and is not an employee or agent of the Owner and is, therefore, entitled to no insurance coverage, whether worker's compensation or otherwise and no other benefits accorded to Owner's employees. No withholding, FICA or other taxes (whether income,

sales or otherwise) or other amounts will be withheld from the payments due to the Contractor, it being understood that the Contractor is solely responsible therefore, provided Owner shall be entitled to withhold such retainage or other amounts from any progress or other payments as have been provided for elsewhere in this Contract.

- B. Contractor shall perform its obligations under this Contract as an independent Contractor of Owner. Owner may administer the Contract and monitor Contractor's compliance with its obligations. Owner shall not supervise or direct Contractor as provided in this section.
- C. The parties hereto agree that the Contractor is not and shall not be construed to be a partner, joint venture, employee or agent of the Owner, and shall not and is not authorized to enter into or make any contracts, agreements to into any understanding with any other person, corporation, partnership, joint venture or other entity, in the name of or for the benefit of the Owner.

SECTION 12. CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR PERSONNEL

The Contractor has or will secure, all personnel required to perform this Contract in a timely and proper manner. The parties hereto agree and understand that such personnel shall in no event be deemed to be and are not employees, agents, or representatives of the Owner, and the Owner shall have no responsibility or liability whatsoever to any of said persons or for the acts or omissions of any such persons.

SECTION 13. ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise allowed by this Contract or in writing by Owner, any assignment by Contractor of its interest in any part of this Contract shall be void.

SECTION 14. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Contractor covenants, warrants and represents that the Contractor has no interest and shall not acquire any interest, direct or indirect which would conflict in any manner with the subject matter or the performance of this Contract. The Contractor further covenants, warrants and represents that in the performance of this Contract, no person having any such interest shall be employed.

SECTION 15. NONDISCRIMINATION

- A. Contractor may not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood. The Contractor shall post in a conspicuous place, available to employees and applicants for employment, a notice setting out the provisions of this paragraph.
- B. Contractor shall state, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees to work on jobs relating to this Contract, that all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood.
- C. Contractor shall include the provisions of Subsection A in every subcontract or purchase order under this Contract, so as to be binding upon every such subcontractor or vendor of Contractor under this Contract.
- D. Contractor shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and City laws concerning the prohibition of discrimination.

SECTION 16. COPYRIGHTS AND RIGHTS IN DATA

- A. All documents produced under this Contract are the property of Owner, including notes, drawings, reports and other technical information referred to as work products, except items which have pre-existing copyrights. Payments to Contractor for services include full compensation for all work products produced by Contractor and its subcontractors.
- B. All such subject data furnished by Contractor pursuant to this Contract are instruments of its services in respect to this particular project. It is understood that Contractor does not represent such subject data to be suitable for reuse on any other project or for any other purpose. If Owner reuses the subject data without Contractor's specific written verification of adaption, such reuse will be at the risk of Owner, without liability to Contractor. Any such verification of adaption requested in writing by Owner at Owner's sole option will entitle Contractor to further compensation at rates agreed upon by the Parties.

SECTION 17. NOTICES

- A. Regular Communications. For communications between the Parties on personnel issues or on matters of a confidential nature the Parties' respective points of contact shall exclusively be the Municipal Administrator of CBS and the President of Contractor, or their respective designees. For all other regular or routine communications with respect to this Contract the Parties designate the following persons as their respective primary points of contact:

OWNER Point of Contact:

Name: Community Affairs Director
Telephone: 1.907.747.1824
Email: maegan.bosak@cityofsitka.org

CONTRACTOR Point of Contact:

Name: Executive Director
Telephone: 1.907.747.8604
Email: director@sitkachamber.com

- B. Formal Notices. Any notice required under this Contract shall be in writing and either personally delivered or mailed by prepaid, first class, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the following addresses:

OWNER:

City and Borough of Sitka
Attn: Community Affairs Director
100 Lincoln Street
Sitka, AK 99835

CONTRACTOR:

Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce Inc.
Attn: Board President
104 Lake Street
Sitka, AK 99835

SECTION 18. CLAIMS AND DISPUTES

If Contractor becomes aware, or reasonably should have become aware, of any act or occurrence which may form the basis of a Claim outside of this contract by a third party or outside entity, Contractor shall immediately notify in writing Owner's authorized representative. If the matter cannot be resolved within seven (7) days, Contractor shall, within the next fourteen (14) days, submit a written notice of the Claim. Contractor shall, in presenting the Claim, include the facts and circumstances surrounding the claim, the specific relief requested including any additional compensation claimed and the basis upon which it was calculated, and the provisions of this Contract under which the Claim is made.

SECTION 19. SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGN

The Parties bind themselves, partners, successors, assigns and legal representatives to the other Party to this Contract and to partners, affiliates, successors, assigns and legal representatives of such other Party with respect to all covenants of this Contract.

SECTION 20. AMENDMENT

- A. This Contract shall only be amended, modified or changed by a written amendment, executed by authorized representatives of the Parties, and such amendment shall be attached to this Contract as an appendix.

- B. For the purposes of any amendment, modifications or change to the terms and conditions of this Contract, the only authorized representatives of the Parties are:
 - 1. President of the Board - For Contractor
 - 2. Municipal Administrator - For Owner

- C. Any attempt to amend, modify or change this Contract by either an unauthorized representative or unauthorized means, shall be void.

SECTION 21. INSURANCE

A. Contractor shall at all times during the term of this Contract, maintain in good standing the insurance described in Subsection B. Before rendering any services under this Contract, Contractor shall furnish Owner with proof of insurance in accordance with Subsection B in a form acceptable to the Risk Manager for Owner; such proof of insurance shall be incorporated into this Contract.

B. Type of coverage:

- 1. Comprehensive General Liability
 - Occurrence Limit \$1,000,000
 - Products and Completed Operations Aggregate \$2,000,000
 - General Aggregate \$2,000,000

- 2. Workman’s Compensation Alaska Statutory
 - Employers Liability

- 3. Comprehensive Automobile Liability \$1,000,000
 - Including all owned, hired and non-owned vehicles

C. Insurance Notes

- 1. Owner shall be named as an additional named insured on the required general liability and automobile insurance policies. The Owner shall also be granted a full waiver of any rights of subrogation by endorsement under all required policies with the exception of Professional Errors and Omissions. These requirements extend to all subcontractors.

- 2. Contractor is required to notify Owner if any policy is to be canceled, materially changed, or renewed, at least thirty days prior, by written notice sent by certified mail.

SECTION 22. CHANGES OR MODIFICATIONS

Any change in any regulations or requirements applicable to the work called for herein, made, caused or imposed by, or as a result of the action of any state, federal or other governmental agency that has or will provide all or any portion of any funds for payment for the work or project which is the subject of this agreement, shall automatically become a part of, and amendment to this agreement and the Contractor shall comply there with.

SECTION 23. NON-WAIVER

The failure of either Party at any time to enforce a provision of this Contract shall in no way constitute a waiver of the provision, nor in any way affect the validity of this Contract or any part, or the right of such Party to enforce each and every provision.

SECTION 24. SEVERABILITY

Any provision of this Contract decreed invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction shall not invalidate the remaining provisions of the Contract.

SECTION 25. JURISDICTION - CHOICE OF LAW

Any civil action rising from this Contract shall be brought in the Alaska Superior Court at Sitka. The laws of the State of Alaska shall govern the rights and obligations of the Parties under this Contract.

SECTION 26. INTEGRATION

This instrument and all appendices and amendments embody the entire Contract of the Parties. There are no promises, terms, conditions or obligations other than those contained in this Contract. This Contract shall supersede all previous communications, representations, or Contracts, either oral or written, between the Parties.

IN WITNESS, the parties execute this agreement through their duly authorized representatives, and represent that their duly authorized representatives are authorized to sign this agreement between Owner and Contractor to provide Convention and Visitor Bureau Services to the City and Borough of Sitka, on behalf of the party they represent.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA



Municipal Administrator

Date: 12/26/18

GREATER SITKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC.



President of the Board

Date: 12-24-18

IRS TAX I.D. NO. 017-319

ATTEST:

Melissa Henshaw
Municipal Clerk, *Acting*

Date: 12-27-2018

LEGAL REVIEW:

Brian Edman
Municipal Attorney

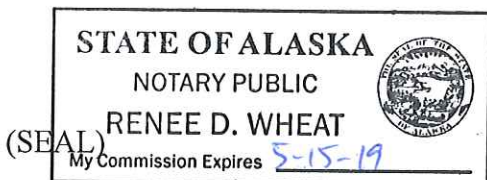
Date: 12/27/2018

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

STATE OF ALASKA)
)ss.
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT)

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 26th day of December 2018 by P. Keith Brady, **Municipal Administrator** of the City and Borough of Sitka, an Alaska municipal corporation, for the corporation on behalf of the corporation.

WITNESS my hand and official seal the day and year in this certificate above written.

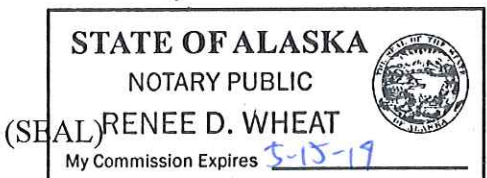


Rene D. Wheat
Notary Public for State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 5-15-19

STATE OF ALASKA)
)ss.
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT)

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 24th day of December 2018 by Chris McGraw, the (title of office) President of the Board of (name of organization) Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce for and on behalf of the organization.

WITNESS my hand and official seal the day and year in this certificate above written.



Rene D. Wheat
Notary Public for State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 5-15-19

Exhibit A

Scope of Service – Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce (SCVB) will be responsible for providing all Convention and Visitor Bureau services for the municipality. SCVB's work under this contract will market and sell Sitka as a premier business and leisure destination, enriching Sitka's hospitality industry and the community's overall quality of life. This work includes:

1) Marketing and Promotion:

- a) Develop and implement a 3-year strategic marketing plan to be presented annually to the Assembly during a work session. During this work session the contractor will include the marketing plan, budget, stats and plans for the next year. The goals should be to effectively increase the number of revenue generating functions, increase the number of independent travelers visiting, increase the number of convention center reservations and support the growth of tourism in Sitka. Emphasis should be placed on targeted marketing to maximize the return on investment, to sell destination strengths and reach specific high-growth visitor audiences. The marketing plan shall be consistent with the policy that the primary role of the Convention and Visitors Services Contract is to promote travel to Sitka through marketing and development, focusing on convention sales, tourism marketing and services, with an emphasis on shoulder and winter seasons. The plan will be continually evaluated for success and updated and revised as necessary, and work to have visitor industry stakeholder input into the marketing plan.
- b) Collaborate with State and local tourism related groups, committee's, and commissions.
- c) Design and publish annual visitors guide, place ads in a variety of media based on best ROI research available.
- d) Maintain promotional social media pages.
- e) Develop and maintain a promotional website.
- f) Host media members and group tour operators, cruise line visits and public relations.

2) Visitor Services:

- a) Provide telephone and email contacts for information requests and inquiries by the public.
- b) Provide timely and accessible visitor bureau services which address the informational needs of visitors via first person assistance, telephone, and internet access. First person assistance to be limited to normal business hours at the central business district Visitor Information Center and on weekends during high traffic hours determined by the contractor.
- c) Provide an accessible and visible Visitor Information Center in Sitka's central business district and supply Harrigan Centennial Hall Visitor's Desk with visitor information materials as requested by City and Borough of Sitka staff.
- d) Staff seasonal visitor information desks at port facilities during cruise days utilizing the facility. Staffing will be 30 minutes after port arrival to two

hours prior to last tender. No seasonal visitor desk staffing required for hospitality suites.

- e) Create and distribute printed information pieces for use by visitors while in Sitka. Provide information and/or brochures about lodging, restaurants, excursion's, tours, fishing charters, wildlife tours, trips and other attractions in the Sitka area
- f) Provide knowledgeable information about local goods and services, as well as cultural and historical information about Sitka thru both internet based portals, as well as physical information rack(s) located at strategic locations within Sitka.
- g) Annually, the Contractor will put out notice to Sitka businesses to take part in a directory of tourism related businesses and services. During the 30 day period, responding businesses will provide contact information and descriptions of their services. This information will be compiled and made available on the promotional website and for viewing at the visitor desks or kiosks. Notice will go out January 1st and responses will be due January 31st. The list will be updated by the Contractor and made available by February 28th.

3) Convention Sales and Services:

- a) Market Sitka as a year-round meeting, conference, and convention destination. Highlight Sitka's marketable features and services in a variety of media, based on best return on investment research available.
- b) Collaborate and strategize with venue managers and the business community to attract conventions.
- c) Assist groups with conference planning (securing locales and assist with contracts, bids, printed collateral, etc.)
- d) Provide information on all support services offered in the community, create and distribute convention delegate welcome folders and welcome signs in downtown businesses.
- e) Follow up with groups, and venue and service providers to ensure customer satisfaction.

4) Reporting

- a) Meet with City and Borough staff quarterly, to provide a staff prepared summary describing activities from the quarter and financial reports including the statement of operations semi annually, and the profit and loss quarterly, prepared by an external bookkeeper. Reports should be submitted within 60 days of the quarter's completion. Meeting will also review operations as needed.
- b) Provide an annual State of the Sitka Convention and Visitor Industry report to the Assembly.

5) Other Services:

- a) Regularly update a marketing and promotional website and the annual visitor guide, as well as brochure displays.
- b) Develop and regularly communicate through a variety of media including newsletter formats, email blasts, push notifications, text, etc. to visitor industry businesses and providers in Sitka.

- c) Research cruise industry information and maintain an up-to-date summer cruise ship calendar on the promotional website.
- d) Manage additional contracts for the CBS as negotiated.

6) Metrics:

The performance of the contractor shall be based on its effectiveness to reach potential visitors, secure convention bookings, and increase tourism in Sitka. In measuring performance of marketing efforts, there is no single statistic that can be utilized to determine the effectiveness, however looking at the trends of a wide range of metrics on an annual basis can provide information regarding marketing efforts and the effectiveness of those efforts. The following metrics shall be tracked on an annual basis with FY17 being the baseline year.

- a) Convention Metrics – These metrics will track the contractor’s effectiveness at generating interest for conventions in Sitka and its ability to sell organizations on Sitka as a convention destination.
 - 1. Convention RFP Requests
 - 2. Convention Bookings
 - 3. Total Number of Convention Attendees
 - 4. Number of Room Nights
 - 5. Estimated direct attendee spending (Economic Impact)

- b) Visitor Inquiries – The goal of visitor marketing is to generate interest in Sitka. Effective marketing campaigns should generate additional inquiries. In addition, by tracking the number of inquiries as a ratio to marketing costs, it will provide an indicator of performance vs. cost.
 - 1. Number of E-mail Inquiries
 - 2. Number of visitors to the Visitor Information Center
 - 3. Number of Unique Website Visits
 - 4. Ratio of total number of inquiries to direct and indirect visitor services marketing costs

- c) Economic Indicators – Increased tourism will benefit the economy of Sitka. The key economic indicators will show the financial impact of increased tourism. However, global factors not relating to marketing performance can also affect the visitor industry.
 - 1. Transient Lodging Tax Revenue
 - 2. Potential on Investment (POI)
 - 3. Net Promoter Score
 - 4. Total Visitors to Sitka
 - 5. Sales Tax Revenue

Exhibit B

**Compensation and Payment – Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau
Services Contract**

In consideration of Contractor's responsibilities under this agreement, Owner agrees to pay Contractor according to the payment schedule provided below:

The annual contract amount shall be a minimum of \$300,000. Annual budget to be determined by the Sitka Assembly following an annual work session, with first payment in next fiscal year. If the contribution is increased by Assembly action, the annual contract amount will be adjusted accordingly. The Contractor is encouraged to request additional funding for specific projects above and beyond those included in this contract, pursuant to approval by the Assembly.

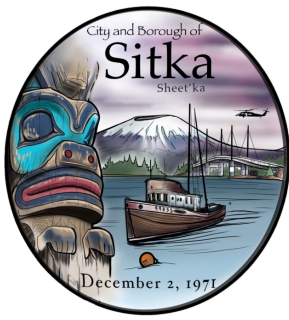
For all contract years, twenty five percent of the contract amount will be paid at the start of each quarter.

Payment schedule:

- January 1 – 25% of the annual contract amount
- April 1 – 25% of the annual contract amount
- July 1 – 25% of the annual contract amount
- October 1 – 25% of the annual contract amount

The Owner agrees to allow Contractor use of all physical and intellectual property related to providing convention and visitor services and marketing for the term of the contract period.

Payment includes cost share on Contractor's building lease, utilities and improvements. Annual budget funds may be used to pay up to 75% percent of the associated expenses.



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

ADMINISTRATION

100 Lincoln Street | Sitka, Alaska 99835

www.cityofsitka.com

administrator@cityofsitka.org

907-747-1812

July 20, 2023

[VIA EMAIL ONLY]

Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
Attn: Board President
104 Lake Street
Sitka, AK 99835
director@sitkachamber.com

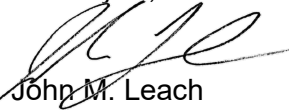
Re: Renewal Option for Contract to Provide Convention and Visitors Bureau Services

Dear Board President,

Pursuant to Section 5.A of the Contract (copy attached), the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS), as Owner under the Contract, hereby requests and agrees to a third one (1) year renewal option beginning January 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. The second renewal option was enacted January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 (copy attached). As required by the Contract, within 10 days please indicate your mutual agreement to this third renewal option by signing below and returning the original of the signed letter to the CBS at the address stated in the header.

As this is the third renewal option, the Contract provides for two (2) additional one (1) year renewal options upon mutual consent and compliance with all terms and conditions of the Contract. If an additional renewal option is desired, CBS will request a fourth renewal prior to August 1, 2024.

Thank you,



John M. Leach
Municipal Administrator

Attachment

I agree to a one (1) year renewal of the Contract.

Date

Paul Kraft

Cc: Melissa Haley, Finance Director (via email only)
Tori Fleming, Compliance Officer (via email only)



Convention & Visitor Services Contract

Current Contract period:

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

This report covers the period of July 1st, 2023 - July 15, 2024.

Scope of Service

Visit Sitka, Sitka's destination marketing organization (DMO), performs visitor services under the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce. These activities are detailed in the following report.

The report follows the outline found in the [Convention and Visitor Services Contract - Appendix A](#).

Below are links to the reports for 2019-2022:

[Scope of Service Report 2019-2021](#)

[Scope of Service Report 2022](#)

[Scope of Service Report 2023](#)

Appendix A [Media Hosting](#)

Appendix B [3-Year Strategic Marketing Plan](#)

Appendix C [Meeting & Convention Planner's Guide](#)

Marketing and Promotion

We are currently in year four of our five-year contract. In accordance with the contract and the current marketing plan, the following items have been our focus:

a) Three Year Marketing Plan

The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, operating as Visit Sitka (VS) will continue to follow the 2022-2024 3-year strategic marketing plan through the remainder of the

2024 calendar year. The plan was updated in April of 2024, per CBS Assembly requests, to more accurately reflect operations (see Appendix B).

As the current marketing plan ends, Visit Sitka will be developing a new marketing plan to cover 2025–2027. Following is an outline of the process:

1. Facilitated Strategic Workshops

With support of a contracted facilitator, Visit Sitka will host two in-person strategic workshops to gather insights and align goals for a comprehensive 3-year marketing plan. These workshops will include a dedicated internal staff session and a community round table. The primary focus will be to attract independent travelers and convention attendees, bolster off-season visits, and enhance peak-season visitor education. By engaging key stakeholders, these workshops will create a strategic approach to address community concerns while meeting the diverse needs of Sitka’s tourism sector.

- **Workshop 1: Community Round Table Workshop**

Following the staff workshop, Visit Sitka will host a facilitated in-person roundtable, bringing together key stakeholders including local businesses, community leaders, CBS representatives, community members, and tourism partners. This community will focus on gathering insights and ideas from stakeholders to ensure the strategic plan reflects the broader needs and aspirations of the community. The agenda will include:

- overview of Visit Sitka’s current marketing efforts
- interactive discussion focused on the community’s vision for tourism
- collaborative planning session to identify current and future opportunities for year-round and convention tourism
- summary of gathered feedback
- identify action items

- **Workshop 2: Internal Visit Sitka Staff Workshop**

The first of these workshops will be a dedicated work session for internal Visit Sitka staff, focused on collaborative planning and aligning the project team with Visit Sitka’s strategic vision. The workshop will include activities such as a state analysis, strategic initiatives development, visioning/goal setting, and detailed action planning, concluding with a review to ensure clarity and alignment in preparation for the community roundtable workshop.

2. Market Research

Visit Sitka will work with a sub-contractor to conduct comprehensive market research to understand current trends in visitor education, audience demographics, competitor landscapes, and emerging opportunities. The primary demographic research will target convention, C-suite, and independent travel audiences. Based on this data, a SWOT analysis will be completed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to create a solid foundation for strategic planning.

3. Developing the 3-Year Plan

Utilizing all the collected data, Visit Sitka will develop our 2025-2027 3-year strategic marketing plan. The plan will include goals, messaging strategies, audience personas, actionable marketing strategies, and a path for moving forward to implement the new plan.

b) Tourism Collaboration

Over the last 10 years, Visit Sitka has forged strong relationships and maintained active memberships with community and tourism-related organizations, including:

- Alaska Travel Industry Association
- Southeast Conference
- Heritage & Cultural Tourism Conference
- Southeast Alaska Tourism Council
- Sustainable Southeast Partnership
- The Alaska Outdoor Alliance
- The Foraker Group
- Destination Development Association
- Northwest Cruise Symposium
- US Superyacht Association

Additionally, Visit Sitka is now an integral part of a broader network of destination marketing associations (DMOs) from across the state and Pacific Northwest, including a “Monthly DMMO & Industry Partner Meeting” hosted by Alaska Travel Industry Association. This meeting connects us with 50+ tourism industry partners statewide. These collaborative efforts and constant communication with industry partners give Visit Sitka access to a much broader scope of industry information, trends, and partnership opportunities.

Visit Sitka staff members also attend conventions, conferences, meetings, and workshop to expand their industry education and collaborate in-person with industry leaders. Our staff also maintain roles on several boards, steering committees, and planning committees. For example, both the Executive Director and the Member & Convention Relations Specialist are on the Heritage & Cultural Tourism Conference (HCTC) Steering Committee, and provide support in the planning, execution, and growth of the conference.

c) Annual Visitor’s Guide

Each winter, Visit Sitka produces an Official Visitor’s Guide. This guide serves as a valuable pre-trip planning resource and is specifically tailored for future and prospective independent travelers.

This magazine style publication creates strong engagement with readers by connecting them to Sitka’s unique stories, breathtaking imagery, local resources, and attractions. Ours was the first magazine-style visitor guide in the state, and we are proud that it inspired other DMOs to create similarly formatted publications. In 2023, our Sitka Visitor’s Guide won both Gold Award and Best in Category at the AIGA Alaska professional design awards.

For the 2024-25 Visitor’s Guide, VS highlighted the theme: "Sitka Year-Round." This theme is woven throughout the guide with editorial content, imagery, and shoulder-season photos on the front and back covers. Our aim is to show potential independent travelers that Sitka offers reasons to visit in all four seasons.

We produce 20,000 printed copies and an online interactive digital version each year. Printed Visitor’s Guides can be requested by mail through a simple form on visitsitka.org or contacting our office. Mailed guide requests are fulfilled by a mail house company in Portland, Oregon, and hundreds of guide requests are ordered monthly.

Guide Distribution Breakdown

| Distribution | Estimated % of Supply | Locations Available |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Direct-to-consumer | 50% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shipped to incoming/ prospective worldwide |
| Across the nation | 20% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statewide visitor centers & DMOs AMHS Ferry Terminals Brought to statewide & national industry events |
| Available Locally | 30% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit Sitka Visitor Information Center Sitka Airport Alaska Seaplanes Westmark Hotel Sitka Hotel Aspen Suites Sitka Baranof Lodge AC Lakeside B&B’s, lodges, resorts, & short-term rentals |

The interactive digital version of the Visitor’s Guide is developed and made available online. The full digital Visitor’s Guide library from 2019-present is available [here](#). To save on printing costs and paper waste, QR codes are available at businesses, top attractions, and visitor hot-spots to access the digital Visitor’s Guide library and all other maps and resources.

d) Advertising

Visit Sitka closely follows current trends in advertising and develops cutting-edge strategies to reach consumers. As a result of our increasingly digital world, we have moved away from many traditional print outlets in favor of organic online content. This includes boosted social media posts that blend seamlessly into users' feeds, enhancing authenticity and engagement. Additionally, Visit Sitka collaborates with journalists to secure coverage in articles, generating earned media that builds credibility and trust among consumers. VS is also expanding our digital footprint through owned media, such as informative blog posts and engaging social media content, establishing itself as a reliable source of destination information.

This approach not only reduces advertising costs but also enhances credibility, builds long-term relationships with audiences, and leverages digital platforms to reach and engage potential travelers effectively. By creating high-quality blog posts and engaging social media content, Visit Sitka establishes itself as an authoritative source of information about the destination.

See the Social Media, Media Hosting, and Website and Online Resources segments of this report from pages 5-9 for additional details on these advertising strategies.

e) Social Media

Statistically, 5.44 billion people worldwide use the internet, and over 60% of the global population is on social media (*Datareportal Global Overview report, April 2024*). VS maintains social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Pinterest. Since launching the Pinterest and TikTok accounts in late 2021, VS has been developing best-practice strategies and next steps for these platforms.

To stay ahead of ever-changing social media trends, VS collaborates with Element Agency to develop a posting calendar for these platforms, highlighting key community events and holidays. Beyond these essential posts, VS creates multiple weekly posts that follow the latest trends, showcasing the uniqueness of our community and inspiring year-round travel. These social media efforts help build brand awareness and promote a Sitka lifestyle, adapting to each platform's evolving algorithms.

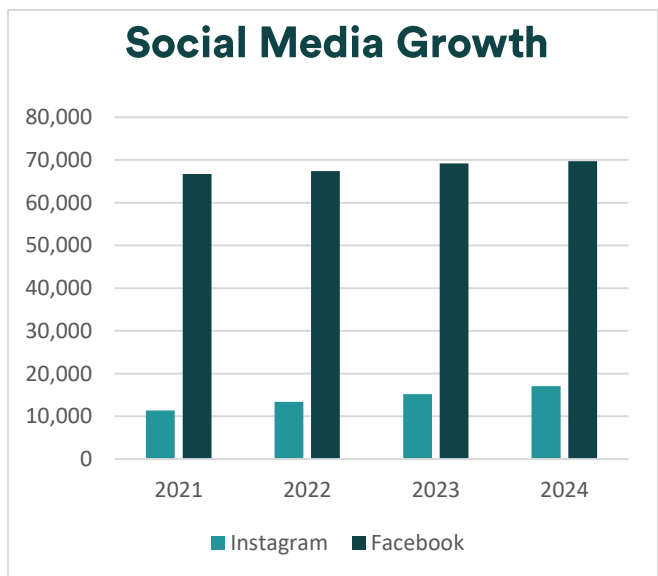
As of this report, the Visit Sitka Facebook page has over 69,723 followers, and the Instagram account has 17,100 followers—more than 3,000 followers since our last report.

Facebook

| Year | End-Of-Year Follower Count |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2024 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> | 69,723 |
| 2023 | 69,213 |
| 2022 | 67,424 |
| 2021 | 66,687 |

Instagram

| Year | End-Of-Year Follower Count |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2024 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> | 17,100 |
| 2023 | 15,218 |
| 2022 | 13,419 |
| 2021 | 11,360 |



Note: Metrics prior to 2021 are unavailable due to the discontinuation of Facebook Analytics and the merge to Meta on July 1st, 2021

f) Website and Online Resources

Website

Visitsitka.org is a constantly evolving platform to share Sitka information, stories, and business information. The website acts as an informative guide for potential travelers, with focus on local business through highlighting available things to do and places to stay. General visitor information and a Sitka blog is also available for visitors.

The site has been developed with sharing in mind. Not only does it share information about activities, attractions, and businesses, it offers visitors a chance to share with unlimited visitor guide requests (order for your friends and family too), downloadable maps and guides, a video library, and an annual photo contest with cash prizes.

VS staff are constantly evolving the site to contain new, fresh information. A website-wide update is planned for 2024, including a new header video, updated imagery, and refreshed wording. In collaboration with Element Agency, the website is maintained and updated by an IT professional who works directly with the staff to continuously enhance the site, ensuring it is current, functional, and compliant with all necessary requirements.

See a full scope of website visits data throughout the years in the metrics section of this report on page 16 below.

Driftscape

Visit Sitka launched its partnership with Driftscape, a cutting-edge mobile app platform, in the summer of 2023. This initiative fulfilled a long-standing request by the CBS Assembly for a digital map that doesn't require internet access. We are delighted to offer this feature to both visitors and locals. The app is available on iOS and Android, and a web version can be accessed at visitsitka.org, allowing users to explore Sitka virtually and pre-save points of interest for their in-person visit.

In December 2023, Driftscape introduced dynamic menus tailored to each partner organization. This menu allows users to navigate between various points of interest, such as hiking trails, historical sites, and businesses. This enhancement was the top feedback we received after the initial launch, and after collaborating with Driftscape developers, we are excited to offer this new feature to improve the user experience. When users open the app for the first time, a menu appears, and it can be easily accessed later by clicking the Visit Sitka logo in the top right corner.

Driftscape is an ever-evolving platform. Visit Sitka staff maintain consistent communication with Driftscape developers to propose new ideas and stay updated with the latest features. In 2024, Visit Sitka plans to further enhance Driftscape by adding self-guided tours that support local businesses, event listings, scavenger hunts, and refreshed content.

Visit Sitka is actively promoting Driftscape as a valuable tool. QR codes for downloading the app are available at several top attractions, downtown businesses, the Visit Sitka Visitor Information Center, Harrigan Centennial Hall, and the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal. Consistent, branded signage is available for any business interested in promoting the app. Most app downloads occur at the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal, thanks to recommendations from Visit Sitka staff and strategically placed sandwich boards with QR codes throughout the terminal.

We have received excellent feedback on Driftscape from both visitors and the business community. Users appreciate having Sitka information at their fingertips, reducing paper waste, not requiring cell service, and eliminating the need to carry a physical map. Over the past three months, Visit Sitka has seen an average of over 125 app uses per week. We anticipate Driftscape usage to continue growing in 2024 and beyond with additional features and continued promotion.

Blog

The blog on visitsitka.org is a vibrant and informative section dedicated to sharing stories, updates, and insights about Sitka. It connects readers with the essence of Sitka, offering glimpses into its unique charm and diverse activities year-round. New posts are published bi-weekly, diving deep into relevant topics, answering visitor FAQs, and sharing insider tips. This blog serves as a valuable resource for potential travelers and locals looking to stay informed about the latest happenings in the community.

In the past year, in collaboration with Element Agency, working with a contracted professional blog writer, and internal research by the Communications Specialist, VS developed over 150 ideas for future blog posts. Annually, the Visit Sitka team creates a posting calendar using these ideas, ensuring relevant and timely information is shared. The development of a Communications Roadmap with Element Agency provides a strategic approach for the Communications Specialist to maximize and leverage Visit Sitka content for enhanced visitor education. This roadmap includes detailed plans for blog posts, search engine optimization (SEO), and steps for sharing completed blogs. The Communications Roadmap document can be viewed [here](#).

Blog posts on visitsitka.org are crucial for SEO because they drive traffic, utilize targeted keywords, and keep the website content fresh, which are all factors favored by search engines. Regularly updated posts enhance user experience, reduce bounce rates, and increase visitor engagement, signaling value to search engines. High-quality content attracts backlinks from other sites, boosting the website's authority and ranking. Additionally, blog posts are shared on social media, increasing visibility and traffic. By targeting long-tail keywords, blog posts draw highly specific and less competitive search traffic, further improving SEO performance.

g) Media Hosting

Hosting of media and VIPs is an integral part of promotion for all DMOs. The time, effort and money spent on a well vetted media partner is a return on investment that garners rewards and recognition that could not be afforded through typical small DMO budgetary restraints.

VS works with the state of Alaska's PR company Thompson & Co. for media hosting. When media are visiting Sitka through sponsored travel by Thompson & Co., VS works with media to ensure they have the best experience possible by supporting activities, meals, and occasionally lodging. VS works with advertising partners to secure discounted or comped rates for these items in exchange for exposure.

So far in 2024, VS has hosted 6 media professionals in-person. This number will likely increase as the summer season progresses. Media itineraries are carefully planned by VS staff based on their niche market to provide unique experiences, deeply engaging storylines, and provide personalized experiences with community members. The overarching goal is to ensure each media member leaves Sitka with multiple article and storyline possibilities that authentically represent our community. The resulting publications, articles, and social media posts not only help inform future travelers about Sitka but also add clout, as these articles are seen as trusted and non-biased sources by prospective visitors.

Below are some examples of content written about Sitka from media that Visit Sitka has hosted:

- [Where And When To See The Northern Lights In Alaska – USA Today](#)
Written by Sarah Sekula, hosted in 2023
- [10 Cruise Ports You Can Visit Over and Over – Cruise Critic](#)
Written by Mikkel Woodruff, hosted in 2023
- [A Perfect Fall Getaway in Sitka, Alaska – Via Travel](#)
Photos provided by Visit Sitka in 2023
- [“From Scratch” S4 E2 - Tastemade Streaming Service](#)
Partially hosted in 2023, lodging, transport, and information support provided
- [Post by @willjardell on Instagram - \(184k followers\)](#)
Instagram influencers hosted in 2024

Aside from in-person hosting, VS also assists media with Sitka articles, content, and trip-planning from afar. As of the date of this report, VS has already assisted more than a dozen additional journalists and outlets with fact checking and research support.

Each October, VS participates in Alaska Media Roadshow, an exclusive event hosted by Thompson & Co. and Travel Alaska. This event gives VS an opportunity meet and create pitches to 25 pre-vetted and highly influential media representatives. Media members include reps from well established outlets such as NBC, CBS, widely acclaimed travel magazines and blogs, social media influencers, and much more. So far in 2024, in partnership with Thompson & Co., VS has already hosted three media professionals that were previously met at the October 2023 Media Roadshow event.

In September of 2024, the Travel Blog Exchange (TBEX) Summit will be held in Alaska for the first time. This premier conference and networking event for travel bloggers and industry professionals focuses on education and fostering opportunities within the travel industry. Visit Sitka (VS) is excited to participate in this event and will host a booth at the accompanying trade show in Anchorage.

h) Yacht & Cruise Relations

Maintaining relationships with cruise line partners is key to keeping cruise market share and Sitka's economic health. Visit Sitka will continue to maintain positive relationships with existing cruise lines by attending inaugural ship visits, ensuring cruise staff have accurate information on Sitka and the things to do, and maintaining the live cruise ship calendar.

Visit Sitka has an amendment to the Convention & Visitor Services contract to perform additional cruise passenger communication services and has been providing these services since Summer of 2022. These services include:

- **Management of the Sitka Tourism Facebook page**
 - *Facebook posts notifying residents of all Lincoln Street closures on a daily and 10-day summary basis, as well as updates for all cruise ship calendar changes*
- **Management of the Community Feedback Line**
 - *Phone and email line monitored regularly, all feedback logged and submitted to CBS Assembly*
- **Design and Management of Closure Barricade Covers**
- **“Next Lincoln Street Closure” Sandwich Board**
 - *Sandwich board displayed in downtown corridor displaying next Lincoln Street closure day of the week*

Cruise Line Agencies International (CLIA) hosted its first Pacific Northwest Cruise Symposium in Seattle in February. Visit Sitka attended, along with 300 others, to have a regionally focused discussion on cruise tourism. This event allowed Alaska to be one of the primary destinations and a more intimate connection with the cruise industry leadership. With the success of this event, Visit Sitka will *not* attend Seatrade Cruise Global as we have in previous years.

Services for cruise ship passengers are limited to serving information verbally in-person, through email/phone calls, and through printed information materials, as Visit Sitka's primary focus remains on independent travelers.

Visit Sitka will continue to increase engagement with the independent yacht market, including membership with the US Superyacht Association. Visit Sitka will offer visitor guides to be distributed through the Yacht Services of Alaska and the Sitka Harbormasters office, and actively supply service information to encourage yacht staff to shop for their needs in Sitka.

i) Additional Programs

Visit Sitka Summer Expo

On April 26, 2024, Visit Sitka sponsored the annual Visit Sitka Summer Expo. This trade show-style event invites the local community, specifically those who work in public-facing jobs, to meet tour operators and attractions managers. The event provides an opportunity for Sitkans to learn about the local tourism industry, attractions and activities, and important information to know ahead of the busy summer season. The 2024 Expo hosted 26 vendor booths and approximately 100 local attendees. Several vendors donated items for 4 prize drawings that were awarded to those who attended.

Visit Sitka Biking Guide

Visit Sitka is excited to announce a new piece of collateral in 2024, the Visit Sitka Biking Guide. Bike safety, especially e-bike safety, has been a growing concern in the Sitka community. In the last year, we've seen an increase in bike rental and bike tour businesses, which made providing more information and resources for biking in Sitka a top priority for Visit Sitka. The Visit Sitka Biking Guide was developed through a collaborative process with community partners that included the City & Borough of Sitka, USFS, Sitka Trail Works, The Salty Spoke, bike rental companies, and tour operators. The Biking Guide is being printed and will be distributed in the Visitor Center and by bike rental companies and tour operators. View the final version [here](#).

Visitor Services

Visit Sitka is accessible year-round to visitors and the public through walk-ins, phone calls, and emails.

The Visitor Center is open from 9:00 am–4:00 pm Monday through Friday, with additional weekend hours during peak summer season as-needed. The visitor information center at 104 Lake Street is easy to find and accessible for all visitors. Additionally, VS staff provides maps and information at the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal every day that a ship with over 1,000 berth capacity is in port. VS is currently developing additional printed signage to be hung on the

information shed, allowing VS to offer information 24/7. This signage is expected to be installed late July/early August of this year.

VS responds daily to requests for information from visitors and residents via telephone, email, and postal mail. VS replies to over 250 emails/year from visitors seeking additional information. The office receives a very large number of calls from visitors, ranging anywhere from 5-7 calls per day in the off-season and 10-15+ calls per day in peak visitor season. In 2023, approximately 3,000 visitors signed Visit Sitka's guestbook at the Visitor Information Center. Guestbook sign-in is not required, and it is conservatively estimated that approximately 1 in 5 visitors sign-in. For 2024 and beyond, Visit Sitka is investigating other ways to track visitor foot traffic to provide a more accurate count. Due to extremely busy days at the visitor center, using a clicker or tally system has proven to be an unviable method while still providing a pleasant experience to all guests.

VS annually produces many printed collateral pieces, which are supplied at the Visit Sitka Visitor Center, Harrigan Centennial Hall, and many local businesses and attractions across town. Each piece is designed to meet specific needs of visitors based on their area of interest. All collateral pieces are available on visitsitka.org in digital formats and accessible to download.

- [Official Visitor's Guide](#)
- [Attractions Map](#)
- [Pocket Guide](#) (downtown shopping/dining/tour info)
- [Hiking Guide](#) (with trail map)
- [Closer Than You Think map](#) (Southeast Alaska highlighting Sitka)
- [Meeting & Convention Planner's Guide](#)
- [NEW: Sitka Biking Guide](#)
- Restaurant Guide (available in visitor centers and various hotels in town, not yet available online)

VS also supplies the Visitor Information Center, Harrigan Centennial Hall, and the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal information shed with an informational binder that contains detailed information about Sitka.

Visit Sitka has partnered with the web app developer Driftscape to bring Sitka to visitor's fingertips. The app is free for users to download on iOS and Android, and has an internet-free option for those without connection in Sitka, and to cut down on bandwidth usage. A mobile app for Sitka has been a long-requested item by the CBS Assembly, and we are excited to bring this option to the table to cut down on printed map costs and paper waste.

Driftscape allows visitors to view information on available attractions nearby, nearby restrooms, ATMs and other facilities, hiking trails, and more. Driftscape also allows visitors to take self-guided tours directly from their devices, complete with video and audio tour options, and will alert visitors with push notifications when they are passing by a point of interest.

Visit Sitka supplies printed promotional materials to interested businesses, including printed signage ranging from sandwich board size, all the way to business card-sized QR codes to download the app. We expect interest in Driftscape to rise in 2024 and 2025 through additional promotion and development of features.

Meeting & Convention Sales and Services

Relationship building and interacting face-to-face with decision makers is essential to building Meeting & Convention business in Sitka. Visit Sitka has identified incentive travel and C-suite retreats as the best fit for Sitka's strengths and location along with in-state trade, government, and school travel. Projects to complement this strategy include advertising to business-to-business meeting planners and maintaining a physical and digital meeting planner to offer easy access to information and tools for planners.

Promotional items are especially important for emphasis on enhancing visitor experience and taking advantage of word-of-mouth marketing, which research shows is still the number one driver of travel. Event groups are supplied with items to support their meetings including pens, notepads, lanyards, maps, programs, and staff support to create successful events.

Visit Sitka staff members provide varying amounts of event support, depending on the type of event. Assistance may include providing recommendations and resource information, logistical meetings with event planners, and action plan development and execution. Visit Sitka staff often attend meetings leading up to events to ensure their experience is smooth and successful.

Show Your Badge Program

An important part of Visit Sitka's strategy is making sure local businesses are being supported. We often act as a liaison for Sitka's business community and connect event planners with partners during the planning process. Our Show Your Badge program is offered to large events. The program lets local businesses offer special deals and discounts to event attendees. It encourages them to shop local while in town, and gives exposure to local businesses. We also keep local businesses informed when events are in town through word-of-mouth, email, and flyers.

Meetings and Conventions Planners' Guide

In 2024, Visit Sitka completed updates to the Meetings & Conventions Planners' Guide. Historically, this guide has been a digital piece of collateral that supported meeting planners in bringing their event to Sitka. In an effort to grow meetings and conventions sales, Visit Sitka is printing physical copies of the updated guide, in addition to it being available on our website in a digital format. Physical copies of the Meetings & Conventions Planners' Guide will be sent to mid-to-major companies, conferences, conventions, festivals, and event planners in Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, and across the country. The updated Meetings & Conventions Planners' Guide includes over 40 pages of extensive event information, beautiful photography, and highlights for local businesses.

The purpose of the guide is to provide everything an event planner needs to know about hosting an event in Sitka - all in one document. New sections highlighted in the update include:

- Small Group Retreats
- Green Meetings
- Weddings

View the updated version [here](#).

Meetings & Events Supported by VS:

- **Southeast Conference Annual Meeting**
Sept. 19-21, 2023, 275 attendees
- **Region V Basketball Championships**
March 6-10, 2024, 1,000 attendees
- **Heritage & Cultural Tourism Conference**
March 19-21, 2024, 120 attendees
- **Lowell Wakefield Fisheries Symposium**
April 16-18, 2024, 100 attendees
- **Alaska SAF Annual Meeting**
April 25-27, 2024, 50+ attendees
- **Alaska Telecom Association Annual Conference**
May 20-22, 2024, 150 attendees
- **Shee Atika Annual Meeting**
June 15, 2024, 50+ attendees
- **Sealaska Annual Meeting**
June 29, 2024, 100 attendees
- **Sharing Our Knowledge Conference**
September 11-15, 2024, 150 attendees
- **Sitka Whalefest**
November 1-3, 2024, 150 attendees

Recent Meetings & Conventions Successes

Southeast Conference (SEC) held their annual meeting in Sitka on September 19th-21st, 2023. The meeting brought over 250 business leaders, delegates, and elected officials to Sitka. The Visit Sitka team worked with SEC throughout the year leading up to the event. Visit Sitka provided support with lodging, catering, transportation and more. During the event Visit Sitka staff supported SEC with their event needs including set-up, recruiting volunteers, and on-site activities. As part of hosting SEC, Visit Sitka coordinated a community-sponsored reception (special project). This event gave Sitka the opportunity to sponsor an important networking event as well as showcase the community to the attendees. The reception was held at Halibut Point Crab & Chowder, located at the Cruise Ship Terminal. It included local artists, dancers, and businesses, and was very well received.

The Region V Basketball Championships were held in Sitka on March 6th-10th, 2024. The tournament brought in over 1,000 visitors from across the state. The economic impact the tournament had on our lodging, restaurant, and small business industries was tremendous. In November of 2023, the tournament coordinator reached out and asked Visit Sitka for support, as the tournament was in jeopardy of being moved out of Sitka if more lodging was not secured. The Visit Sitka team offered support by working with partners in the community to find solutions. Adequate lodging was secured, and Visit Sitka's efforts played a large role in

keeping the tournament in Sitka. In addition to lodging support, Visit Sitka donated water bottles to tournament participants, visitor guides and maps, and distributed flyers for the tournament throughout town.

The **Heritage & Cultural Tourism Conference** was held in Sitka from March 19-21, 2024, at Harrigan Centennial Hall. The conference brought in a little over 120 delegates, government officials, business partners, and industry leaders. Members of Visit Sitka's staff were active participants on the conference's planning committee, which meets year-round in preparation of the annual conference. Visit Sitka played an instrumental role in the execution and success of the conference. The successful outcome strengthened our partnership with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and positioned Sitka as a premier destination for sustainable and culturally responsible tourism activities.

Reporting

a) In-Person Meetings with City Administrator

The VS team meets quarterly with the City Administrator to present reports.

b) Annual City Report

Scope of Service reports are provided annually at the contract renewal.

- [Scope of Service Report 2019 - 2021](#)
- [Scope of Service Report 2022](#)
- [Scope of Service Report 2023](#)

c) State of the Industry Report

In October/November, following the season and fall industry conventions, the VS team will present a special state of the visitor industry report to the Assembly.

Other Services

a) Regular Communications

Visit Sitka sends monthly newsletters to over 450 local business contacts, providing updates on VS programs, cruise schedules, and key tourism opportunities, such as upcoming conferences. Additionally, VS sends e-blast notifications for important events and tourism updates, including city news releases. Our partners value these communications, which have an average click-through rate of 47% and an open rate of 5.2%, both well above industry averages (39% and 1.38% respectively, according to Constant Contact Email Performance Analytics).

b) Cruise Calendar

VS produces and maintains a live google [cruise calendar](#) every year. Included on this calendar is the ship name, total lower berth capacity, and dock assignment. As soon as VS is aware of a change to the schedule or cancelation, the calendar is updated. This calendar is used widely as a resource for community and business members alike. VS deploys e-blast email notifications to key stakeholders, media, VS partners, and the Sitka Tourism Facebook page to announce cruise schedule changes. In 2023, VS deployed over 25 cruise update press releases.

c) Directory of Tourism Related Businesses

In January, VS published a comprehensive list of tourism-related businesses. Local businesses were notified through the Daily Sitka Sentinel to submit their contact information. The finalized list was made available on [visitsitka.org](#) in late January and included in the information binders at various visitor information desks and kiosks.

d) Other Projects

Welcome Packets for US Coast Guard Families

Every year, Visit Sitka supplies the US Coast Guard Spouses of Sitka organization with materials and collateral to be included in their welcome bags. In 2024, Visit Sitka sponsored the physical welcome bags, in addition to the standard materials and collateral, after the organization reached out in search of support. Approximately 50 US Coast Guard families who were new to Sitka received welcome bags. Visit Sitka also supplies materials and collateral for SEARHC employees who are new to Sitka.

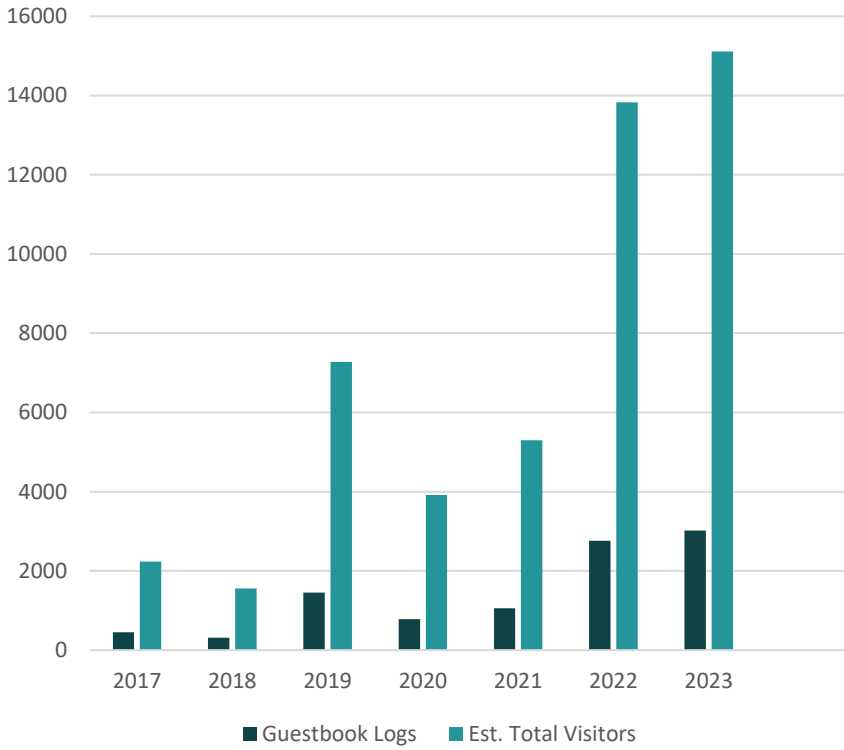
Visitor Data and Metrics

In measuring performance of marketing efforts, there is no single statistic that can be utilized to determine the effectiveness, however looking at the trends of a wide range of metrics on an annual basis can provide information regarding marketing efforts and the effectiveness of those efforts. *The following metrics shall be tracked annually with FY17 being the baseline year.*

a) Visitor Inquiries

The goal of visitor marketing is to educate visitors, manage expectations, and provide the best possible visitor experience. Visitors to the Visit Sitka Visitor Center receive detailed information and personal assistance from staff during their 5 to 20-minute average visits, depending on their informational needs. Visitor traffic is monitored through a guestbook. We conservatively estimate that that one in five visitors are signing in voluntarily.

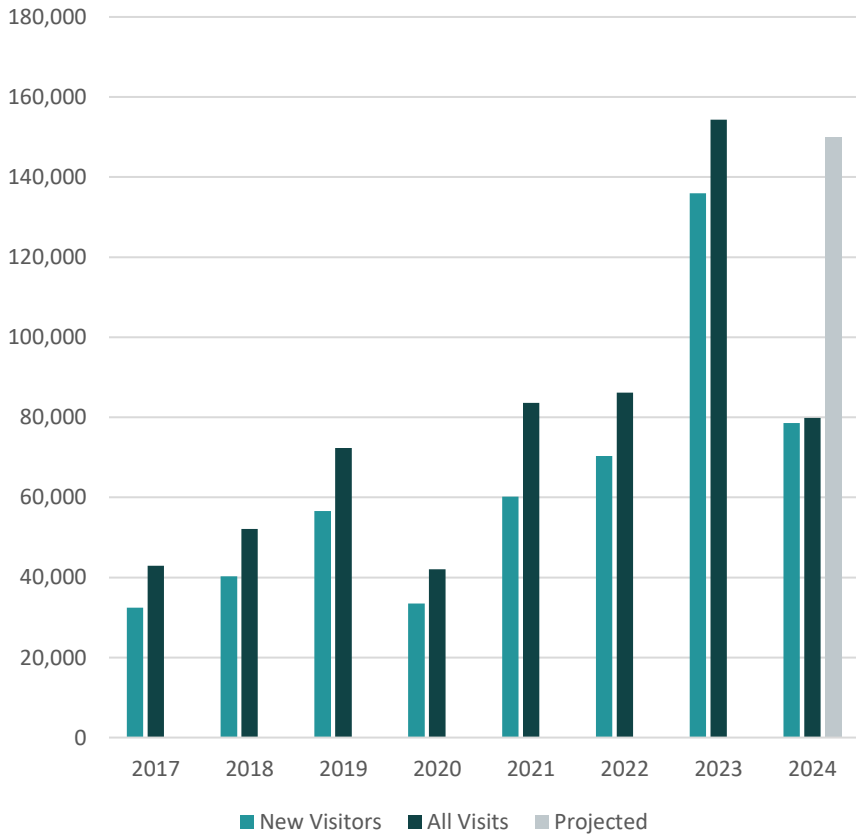
Visitors to Visitor Center



Visitors to Visitor Center

| Year | Guestbook Logs | Est. Visitors to Visitor Center |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2024 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> | 1,967 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> | 9,835 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> |
| 2023 | 3,023 | 15,115 |
| 2022 | 2,765 | 13,825 |
| 2021 | 1,060 | 5,300 |
| 2020 | 783 | 3,915 |
| 2019 | 1,455 | 7,275 |
| 2018 | 312 | 1,560 |
| 2017 | 448 | 2,240 |

Unique Website Visits

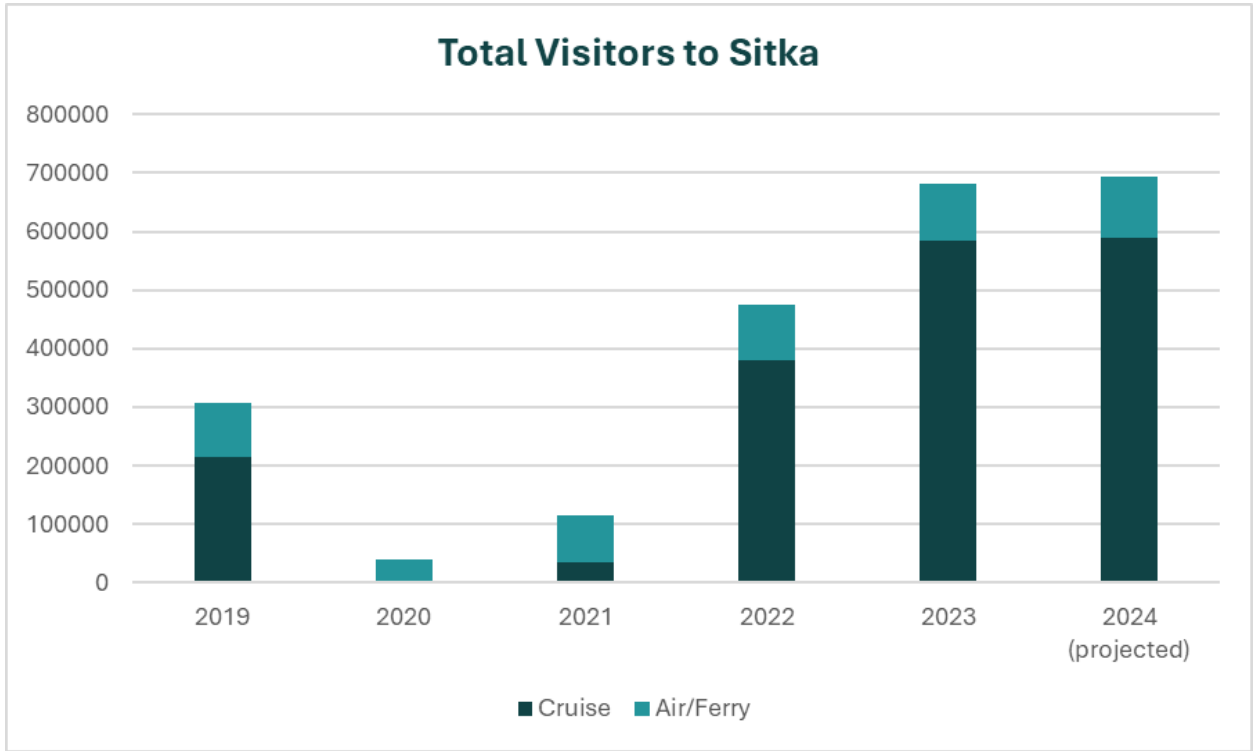


Unique Website Visits

| Year | All Visits | New Visitors |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2024 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> | 79,846 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> | 78,594 <i>(as of 7/15/24)</i> |
| 2023 | 154,369 | 135,989 |
| 2022 | 86,184 | 70,326 |
| 2021 | 83,566 | 60,205 |
| 2020 | 42,023 | 33,526 |
| 2019 | 72,358 | 56,599 |
| 2018 | 52,109 | 40,261 |
| 2017 <i>(sitka.org)</i> | 42,908 | 32,478 |

b) Total Visitors to Sitka

The chart below displays total visitors to Sitka with distinctions for how they arrive:



Passengers to SIT Airport

| Year | Airport Passengers | Independent Travelers |
|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2024 | *101,541 <i>(projected)</i> | *70,672 <i>(projected)</i> |
| 2023 | 95,794 | 66,673 |
| 2022 | 93,550 | 65,111 |
| 2021 | 79,604 | 55,404 |
| 2020 | 38,235 | 26,612 |
| 2019 | 89,518 | 62,305 |
| 2018 | 87,782 | 61,096 |
| 2017 | 85,375 | 59,421 |

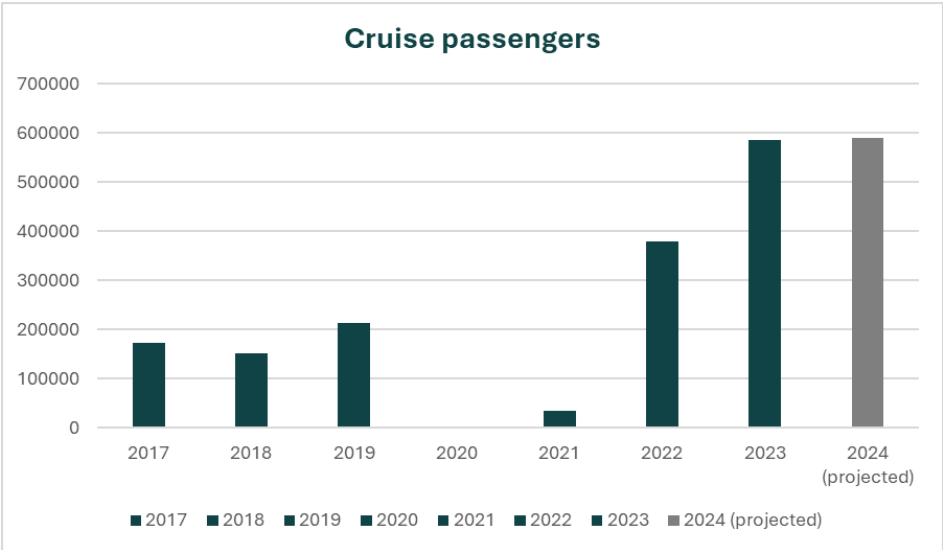
**69.6% of Domestic Air passengers are visitors



With the exception of 2020 and 2021, air travel to Sitka has seen tremendous growth over the last decade, in which a large percentage of that is made up of independent travelers.

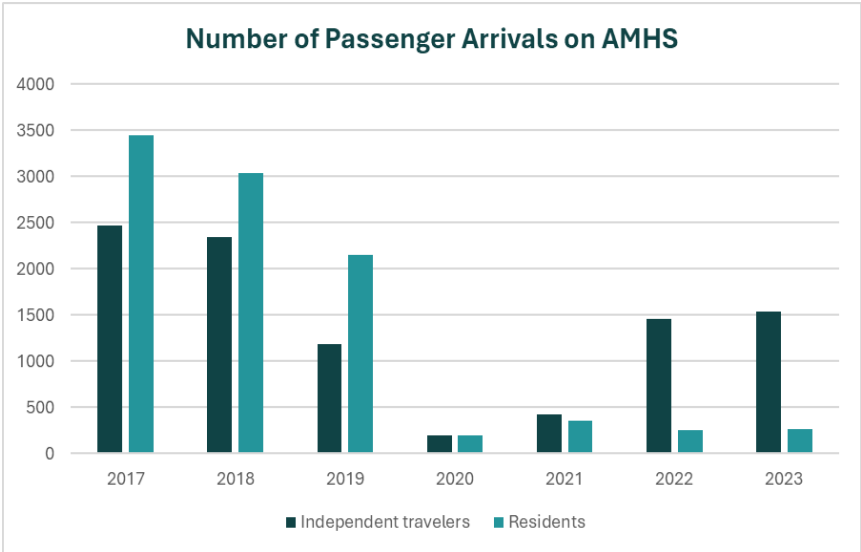
Data for 2024 is currently only available through Q1, so total numbers for the year are projected. The projections are based on a 6% increase seen from comparing Q1 2023 to Q1 2024.

**Source: https://www.transtats.bts.gov/Data_Elements.aspx?Data=1



Passengers on Cruise Ships

| Year | Cruise Passengers |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 2024 (projected) | 590,000 |
| 2023 | 585,000 |
| 2022 | 379,278 |
| 2021 | 35,421 |
| 2020 | 0 |
| 2019 | 213,610 |
| 2018 | 151,259 |
| 2017 | 172,678 |



Passenger Arrivals on AMHS Ferry

| Year | Residents | Independent Travelers | Total |
|------|-----------|-----------------------|-------|
| 2023 | 259 | 1,537 | 1,796 |
| 2022 | 253 | 1,454 | 1,707 |
| 2021 | 358 | 426 | 784 |
| 2020 | 190 | 195 | 385 |
| 2019 | 2,148 | 1,189 | 3,337 |
| 2018 | 3,035 | 2,341 | 5,376 |
| 2017 | 3,444 | 2,466 | 5,910 |

c) Economic Indicators & Impacts

Transient Lodging Tax Revenue

The past year has seen a full return of in-person meetings and conventions post-pandemic, and transient lodging tax revenue in FY23 reached an all-time high. There was a nearly 20% increase in tax revenue from FY22, and a staggering 40% increase from the previous pre-pandemic high in FY19.

| Fiscal Year | Transient Lodging Tax Revenue* |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 2023 | 792,950 |
| 2022 | 665,880 |
| 2021 | 458,600 |
| 2020 | 398,187 |
| 2019 | 557,048 |
| 2018 | 540,875 |
| 2017 | 503,439 |
| 2016 | 472,900 |
| 2015 | 411,916 |

(*Data provided by CBS)

Potential on Investment (POI)

Part of what we do at Visit Sitka is raise destination awareness and generate current and potential future demand. With very little investment, our social media program reaps huge rewards. The more followers we gain, the larger the potential on investment.

The Formula:

POI = Consumer Value in a Destination (Cv) x Channel Impact (Ci) x Maximum Qualifier (Mq)

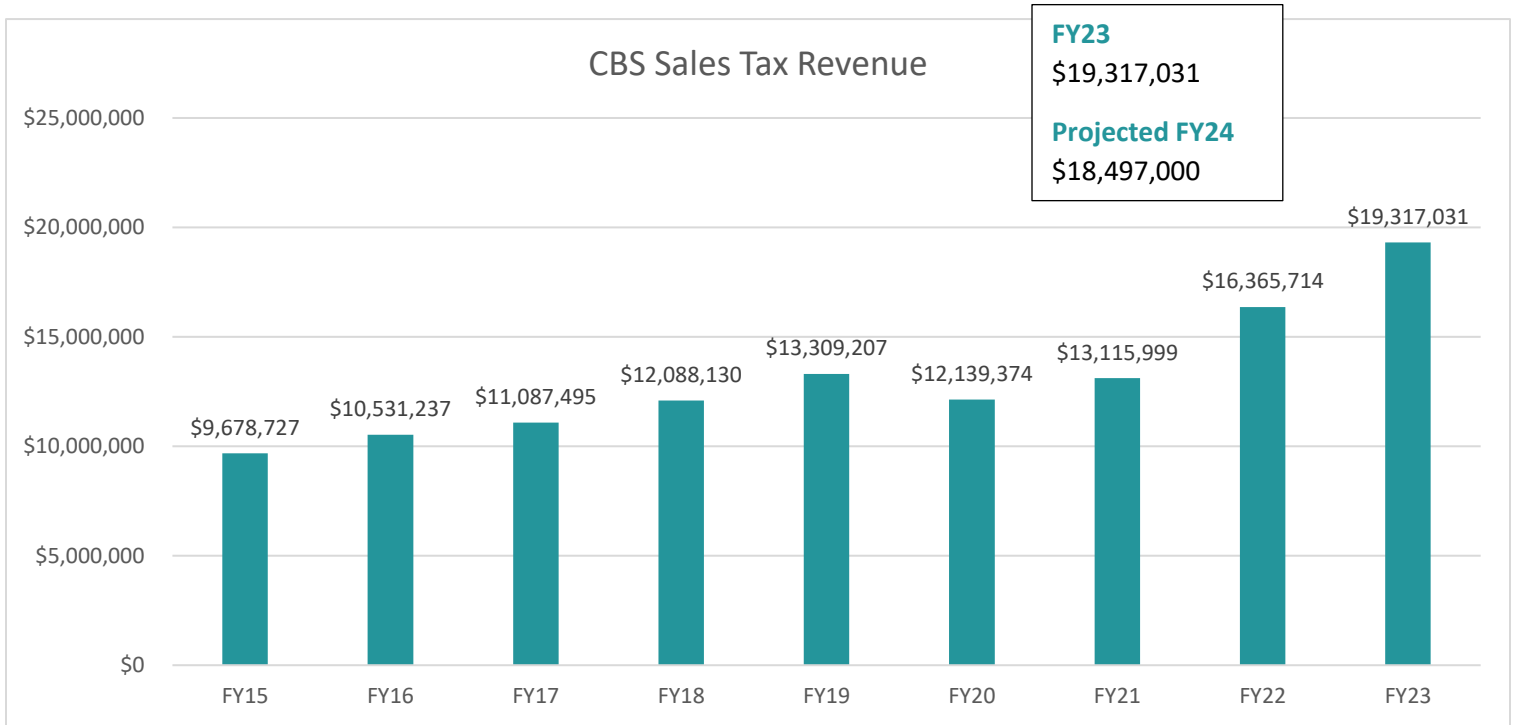
Calculation of POI

Instagram: \$917 (Cv) x 4.51% (Ci) x 17,095 followers (Mq) = **\$706,993**

Facebook: \$917 (Cv) x 2.21% (Ci) x 69,676 followers (Mq) = **\$1,412,033**

Sales Tax Revenue

Sales Tax revenues are at an all time high for Sitka. Approximately 50% of revenues are tourism related, with recent gains largely associated with the cruise visitor increases. One of the strategies for maximizing revenues is to increase length of stays for independent travelers. Additionally, ensuring visitors have access to information on attractions, dining, shopping and excursions increases spending.



Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score is calculated by: **Subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters.** (The percentage of passives is not used in the formula.) For example, if 10% of respondents are detractors, 20% are passives and 70% are promoters, your NPS score would be 70-10 = 60.

78% satisfaction is the benchmark set by Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (ASVP) 7 (Summer 2016) – *Alaska Dept. of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCE)*. This is the last year that AVSP was funded by Alaska.

Sitka has seen a positive rating in customer satisfaction over the past several years. Sitka was chosen as a Top 5 Alaskan Cruise Destination by Cruise Critic for the four years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2016 through 2019). Sitka’s satisfaction rating, based on the results of the 2017 AVSP, was 78% Very Satisfied, 20% Satisfied.

Visitors were asked how likely they were to recommend Alaska as a vacation destination. Virtually all visitors said they were or highly likely to recommend Alaska to others, **including 79 percent** who said they were highly likely, and 18 percent who said they were likely. Just 1 percent said they were unlikely to recommend Alaska. - *AVSP 7 – Section 6: Visitor Profile - Satisfaction, Repeat Travel, and Trip Planning (2016)*.

d) Meetings and Conventions Metrics

With the addition of a team member with focus on convention support and outreach, Visit Sitka has begun working processes for gathering data and metrics to include convention bookings, total number of convention attendees, number of room nights, and estimated direct attendee spending. A top priority for future meetings and conventions is developing a survey to gather data directly from convention attendees on an on-going basis. This will help Visit Sitka more easily determine lodging information, local spend, and overall economic impact. It can be difficult to measure full impact because when convention attendees come to Sitka, they create economic activity that ripples throughout the community.

There were 2,100 attendees for the conventions and meetings we directly supported in FY24.

Information sharing on convention bookings at the Harrigan Centennial Hall has not been shared with Visit Sitka. Visit Sitka would like to establish a process for getting this information to report more comprehensive numbers of overall convention bookings.

In an effort to provide the metric specifically on room bookings, Visit Sitka is in conversation with Smith Travel Report who work with national brand hotels to provide hotel occupancy rates. DMOs, such as Explore Fairbanks, can purchase reports to better understand trends in hotel bookings. Currently, none of the Sitka based hotels are reporting to this agency so the goal is to partner with them to work towards reporting.

- Total # of meetings and conventions Visit Sitka supported since January 2023: **9**
- Total # of meetings and conventions attendees since January 2023: **2,100**
- Percentage of total meetings and conventions attendees that came during October-April: **79%**
 - *The majority of meetings and conventions attendees stay in hotels. Meetings and conventions that occur during non-peak season months provide significant economic benefit for hotels in Sitka.*

This report provides an overview of the various deliverables included in the scope of services. If you have any questions or would like more details on a specific topic or strategy, marketing please reach out. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Roy
Executive Director
Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce | Visit Sitka