



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

**Thru:** John Leach, Municipal Administrator *John Brantley*, Acting

**From:** Amy Ainslie, Planning & Community Development Director *AA*

**Date:** July 1, 2025

**Subject:** Supplemental Appropriation for Continuation of Visit Sitka Services

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### Background

Following the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP), CBS has not yet been able to secure a long-term operator for its Visit Sitka services. While our current operator, the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), has indicated that they do not intend to continue operating Visit Sitka long-term, CBS staff and the Chamber have engaged in preliminary discussions regarding a temporary continuation of Visit Sitka services while we continue our search.

### Analysis

As proposed, this supplemental appropriation will provide funding to have the Chamber continue certain Visit Sitka base contract services for the remainder of the 2025 calendar year. These services include:

- Maintaining the Chamber's office location as the Visitor Center and associated support for information requests/inquiries from the public
- Continued seasonal visitor information staffing at the Visitor Center and the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal through the remainder of the 2025 visitor season
- Printing and stocking of visitor information, maps, and guides
- Continued maintenance of the 2025 cruise ship calendar
- Visit Sitka website maintenance including local business listings
- Visit Sitka social media management
- Tourism Commission participation and attendance (ex-officio member)
- Design of the 2026 Visitor Guide
- Media member hosting
- Service subscription renewals including Visit Sitka's digital asset storage system,

the digital wayfinding application, digital guide services, website domain and certificates, etc., and membership renewals for Southeast Conference and Alaska Travel Industry Travel Association.

- Support for Southeast Conference and attendance at the Alaska Travel Industry Association annual conference

Additionally, funding is included for the Chamber to provide transition support for a new Visit Sitka operator over the course of January 2026.

The continuation of these services will ensure consistent delivery of visitor information and destination marketing, and greatly reduce strain on CBS staff that would result from a lapse of these services. Further, extension of these services by the Chamber will be instrumental for a smooth transition to a new, long-term Visit Sitka operator.

### **Fiscal Note**

The funding request is for a total of \$285,000 to come from the Visitor Enhancement Fund (VEF). Budgeted VEF revenue in FY26 is \$810,500. Currently budgeted expenses total \$114,500; if this supplemental appropriation is approved, VEF will have a remaining fund balance of \$411,000.

### **Recommendation**

Approve the supplemental appropriation to fund the continuation of Visit Sitka services.