

## Sara Peterson

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**From:** Rachel Roy <director@sitkachamber.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 7, 2024 4:39 PM  
**To:** Sara Peterson  
**Subject:** Additional Information Requested from Visit Sitka  
**Attachments:** Supplemental Budget Coverage Breakdown.pdf

Hi Sara,

Please share this information with the Assembly. The attached and linked are the additional information that has been requested since the April meeting. I am available anytime at 907-738-1186 or via email at [director@sitkachamber.com](mailto:director@sitkachamber.com).

We wanted to share this Meeting & Convention Planners' guide with you. It is in its last revision before being sent to the printer.

[Draft 2024-25 Meeting & Convention Planners' Guide - CBS.pdf](#)

Also, the draft of the Biking Guide is available at the link below. The stakeholders met and made final recommendations. Once we receive that back from the designers, we will be able to place the first order and get it out to educate bike riders.

[Biking Guide Draft for Assembly.pdf](#)

Thank you,

Rachel

Rachel Roy, MBA, ACE  
Executive Director  
Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce | Visit Sitka  
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# FY25 Base and Supplemental Budget Detail

The Visit Sitka Comprehensive Budget detail serves as a means to demonstrate the areas of spending for the Visit Sitka programs as well as explain the methodology in creating the Comprehensive Budget. When the current contract was established in 2018 a base (minimum) amount of \$300,000 was set for the contract with the ability to request additional funding above that about Base and Supplemental Budget. Since 2018, the number of visitors to Sitka has nearly tripled which means more staff and printed collateral. These costs for providing visitor information services are a significant part of the program costs.

The FY23 revenue for the Visitor Enhancement Fund was \$792,950. Visit Sitka's funding request is \$575,00 with options for special projects for FY25. This boost in revenues opened the opportunity for some special projects to support community needs and visitor navigation in the community. A potential decrease in Transient Lodging Tax revenue for FY25 is expected due to the removal of 70 rooms at Totem Square Hotel from the market, now being used for workforce and medical housing (and therefore not collecting Transient Lodging Tax). However, an increased demand in hotel prices has caused nightly rates to increase during peak season. Additionally, Visit Sitka has received feedback from hotel partners over the last season that they have seen sold-out dates earlier than ever, leaning into the shoulder seasons of April and May. Considering these factors, Visit Sitka anticipates that the large increase shown in the past two fiscal years will level off and Sitka will see numbers similar to historical fund levels moving forward.

## Budget spreadsheet methodology

**Revenue:** Revenue is shown as Contracted Revenue Total Contract Budget to maintain Visit Sitka Programs at \$575,000. The increase over the FY24 level is to account for additional staffing costs, printing costs and a facilitated 3-year marketing strategy (detailed below on page 4). The Total Contract is then broken down into two budgets, Base Contract Budget and Supplemental Budget. The final column is Visit Sitka DMO Unrestricted Revenue, revenue used to support the programs outside of the contract funds. These funds are raised from partners through advertising and partnership dues.

**Operating Expenses:** Expenses are listed next with personnel shown in all three budgets. The base contract does not cover the full staffing costs and in 2023, unrestricted funds were used to subsidize this line item. Below you will see the detail for each of the expense items with explanation of what is covered in the base contract and what the supplemental budget covers.

**Total Profit (Loss):** Visit Sitka spends down the full contract each year so there is no profit from year to year. The unrestricted funds budget has a contingency that can be used in areas needed for the program, i.e. personnel costs in summer of 2023.

**Special Projects:** The optional special projects are in the following section. These items are in response to Assembly member and City staff requests and the recent Tourism Task Force. They will move into the budget line items if they are chosen to be funded.

# FY25 Visit Sitka Comprehensive Budget- Draft 5/17/24

July 1 , 2024-June 30, 2025	Total Contract Budget to maintain VS programs	Base Contract	Supplemental Budget	VS DMO Unrestricted Revenue
<b>Revenue</b>				
Contract Revenue- Requested (FY24 \$525,000, FY23 \$525,000)	\$575,000	\$300,000	\$275,000	
Unrestricted Revenue				\$157,250
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$575,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$275,000</b>	<b>\$157,250</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>				
<b>Personnel Salaries</b>	\$241,304	\$188,134	\$53,170	\$45,390
Payroll taxes, worker's comp insurance <i>3.5 FTE year-round, 10 Seasonal positions</i>	\$24,130	\$18,813	\$5,317	\$4,539
<b>Market/Industry Promotion</b>	\$19,100	\$5,000	\$14,100	
<i>ATIA, SE Conference attendance</i>				
<b>Occupancy</b>	\$41,350	\$41,350	-	
<i>Rent, utilities, phone, internet, insurance</i>				
<b>Advertising</b>	\$42,315	\$2,000	\$40,315	\$2,400
<i>Social media contract, TravelAlaska, Milepost, Alaska map</i>				
<b>Website, online services</b>	\$29,220	\$12,500	\$16,720	
<i>Website maintenance, App, internet-based subscription services</i>				
<b>Promotion</b>	\$12,750	-	\$12,750	\$15,000
<i>Branded collateral, hosting for meetings, conference sponsorships</i>				
<b>Contracted Services</b>	\$89,015	\$4,500	\$84,515	\$22,901
<i>Contracts for visitor guide design, photo &amp; video, graphic design, accounting, dues/subscriptions</i>				
<b>Supplies, Printing &amp; Postage</b>	\$61,187	\$27,703	\$33,484	\$30,670
<i>Office supplies, visitor center, collateral printing, shipping &amp; postage</i>				
<b>Professional Development</b>	\$3,129	-	\$3,129	\$3,850
<i>Staff attendance at industry &amp; business trainings in-person &amp; via web</i>				
<b>Media &amp; Public Relations</b>	\$11,500	-	\$11,500	\$2,500
<i>On-site hosting of visiting journalists &amp; media</i>				
	<b>\$575,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$275,000</b>	\$127,250
Income	\$575,000			\$157,250
Expense	\$575,000			\$127,250
Profit (Loss)- Contingency*	\$0			\$30,000
<b>Total Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>\$0</b>			
<b>SPECIAL PROJECTS</b>				
<b>Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP)</b>	\$40,000	-	\$40,000	*Contingency to cover unexpected program
<i>Staffing, database development, tracking community input, online submission forms, brand development and design, initial season beta testing Summer 24, season end update, implementation</i>				
<b>Workforce Development &amp; Recruitment Campaign</b>	\$25,000	-	\$25,000	
<i>Collateral development, digital marketing for year-round jobs in Sitka</i>				
<b>Wayfinding Phase II Planning &amp; Scope</b>	\$10,000	-	\$10,000	
<i>Research, public meetings, graphic design, signage location plans including vehicular wayfinding</i>				
<b>Destination Development Project Planning &amp; Scope</b>	\$10,000	-	\$10,000	
<i>Planning for expanded visitor education, improvements to enhance experience for independent travelers</i>				
<b>Total Special Projects</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>	
Total with special projects	\$660,000			
<i>Total Transient Lodging Tax revenue FY24: \$ 792,950</i>				

## Personnel

The Visit Sitka team is critical to the success of the programs. Personnel expenses include payroll costs for 3.5 FTE year-round staff and 10 seasonal employees, payroll taxes, and worker's comp insurance. Visit Sitka does not charge an overhead fee, nor does it currently provide health insurance benefits which keeps the staffing costs at a much lower cost allowing more dollars to be spent on the program.

Base Funding: \$206,947

- Payroll for management, communications, convention support and visitor information.

Supplemental Funding: \$58,487

- Additional visitor information staff

## Market/Industry Promotion

Base Funding: \$5,000

- In-person attendance at one major industry event

Supplemental Funding: \$14,100

- In-person attendance at major industry events (ATIA Annual Convention, Southeast Conference, Seatrade/CLIA Symposium)
- In-person promotion at state/regional events to promote Meetings & Conventions market

## Occupancy

Base Funding: \$41,350

- Includes the costs associated with the Visitor Information Center and Visit Sitka's business office. No supplemental budget for this.

## Advertising

Base Funding: \$2,000

- Paid ads in local printed collateral

Supplemental Funding: \$40,315

- Social media contract
- All printed, display, and digital advertisements (local, regional, state, and global)

## Website & Online Subscription Services

Base Funding: \$12,250

- Maintaining visitsitka.org website

Supplemental Funding: \$16,720

- ChamberMaster: Member database management tool (accounts receivable, accounts payable, used to populate directories in printed collateral)
- Driftscape: Visit Sitka mobile visitor information app
- Canto: Photo/video storage database system
- Adobe Acrobat Suite
- Trello: Project management tool and payroll tracking
- Canva: Graphic design program
- MailChimp: Monthly newsletter and e-blast tool
- Joomag: Interactive digital publication program for Visitor Guide
- Zoom: Paid memberships to host meetings

## Promotion

Base Funding: \$0

- Promotional activities would be done through sponsorships use of unrestricted funds and in-kind donations from partners

Supplemental Funding: \$12,750

- All branded collateral (stickers, note pads, pens, chargers, lanyards, etc.)
- All sponsorships for community, regional, state, and global events
- VIP, familiarization trips, and hosting for influential figures (convention organizers, CEOs, etc.)
- New business grand openings
- Memberships and subscriptions for local, regional, state, and global organizations (ATIA, AIANTA, SEC, DMA West, AND, Destination Development, Southeast Alaska Tourism Council, etc.)

## Contracted Services

Base Funding: \$4,500

- Accounting services

Supplemental Funding: \$84,515

- Sub-Contracting for Visitor guide (planning, copywriting, photography, design, print/digital coordination), photo and video sourcing, graphic design for maps, and 3-year marketing plan
- Additional graphic design services

## Supplies, Printing, & Postage

Base Funding: \$27,703

- Reduced amount of printed collateral (visitor guide, attractions maps, pocket guide, hiking guide, biking guide)

Supplemental Funding: \$33,484

- Full order of printed collateral to maintain current distribution numbers
- Shipping of visitor guides sent to prospective visitors
- Shipping of Printed visitor guides sent to other visitor centers
- Ability to supply printed collateral to businesses outside of visitor center (Lodging, retail)
- Printed Meetings & Conventions Planners' Guide (Draft Included at the end of this document)
- Printed signage and office displays
- Stamps.com subscription (print postage in-office)

## Professional Development

Base Funding: \$0

- Staff would use unrestricted funds for professional development

Supplemental Funding: \$3,129

- In-person & virtual attendance in industry and/or business trainings

## Media & Public Relations

Base Funding: \$0

- Media hosting activities would be done through sponsorships, use of unrestricted funds, and in-kind donations from partners

Supplemental Funding: \$11,500

- Travel Writer hosting (on-site support, lodging, meals, sponsored activities)
- Alaska Media Roadshow attendance (one-on-one meetings with media covering Alaska for independent traveler market)
- TBEX Media Conference attendance \*Hosted in Anchorage Fall 24

# 3-Year Marketing Strategy

Included in the Supplemental budget is development of a comprehensive 3-year strategic marketing plan. Visit Sitka will hire a sub-contractor to support the project and facilitate discussions, provide research, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning services to ensure the plan aligns with our goals and the community's vision.

This work will culminate in a 3-year strategic marketing plan outlining goals, strategies, and implementation details, designed to drive off-season travel, attract Sitka's conventions and C-suite audiences, and focus on opportunities for visitor education.

## Facilitated Strategic Workshops

Visit Sitka, with support of a contracted facilitator, will host two in-person strategic workshops aimed at gathering insights and aligning goals for a comprehensive 3-year marketing plan. These workshops will include a dedicated internal staff session and a community round table, focusing on attracting independent travelers and convention attendees to bolster off-season visits and enhance in-season visitor education. By engaging key stakeholders, these workshops will address community concerns and ensure a strategic approach that meets the diverse needs of Sitka's tourism sector.

- **Workshop 1: Internal Visit Sitka Staff Workshop**

The first of these workshops will be a dedicated day workshop for internal Visit Sitka staff. This workshop will focus on collaborative planning, goal setting, and aligning the project team with Visit Sitka's strategic vision. The full-day workshop (approximately 5 hours) will include activities such as a state analysis, vision and goal setting, strategic initiatives development, and detailed action planning, concluding with a review to ensure clarity and alignment in preparation for the community roundtable workshop.

- **Workshop 2: 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, and tourism partners. This half-day community workshop (approximately 3-4 hours) will focus on gathering insights and ideas from stakeholders to ensure the strategic plan reflects the broader community's needs and aspirations. The agenda will include an overview of Visit Sitka's current marketing efforts, an interactive discussion on the community's vision for tourism, and a collaborative planning session to identify opportunities and challenges. The workshop will conclude with a summary of feedback and identification of actionable items.

## 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, forming a solid foundation for strategic planning.

## Developing the 3-Year Plan

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

# Special Projects

The following Special Projects can be supported with funding if selected by the Assembly as part of the Convention & Visitors Services Contract. The budget lists these additional costs under special projects.

## Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP)

FY25: \$40,000\*

Key areas include:

- Development of database for tracking community input and online submission forms
- Brand development and design
- Initial season beta testing Summer 24 and end of season assessment
- Implementation Summer 25

The Tourism Task Force was tasked with supporting the development of the initial TBMP and with their submission to the Assembly on May 16<sup>th</sup>, this document can serve as a starting point for the program. Visit Sitka participated in this effort by engaging tourism businesses in review and recommendations for inclusions and collaborating with the task force members during the editing process.

As a part of the Convention & Visitor Services Contract- Special projects, Visit Sitka can serve as the lead organization to ensure the program is implemented. This may include development of database for tracking community input, online submission forms, phone system for telephonic feedback, brand development and design. There will be opportunities for community input prior to the establishment of the first set of best practices and outreach to tourism industry businesses to get buy in and commitment to the program. Monitoring of the input and communication to businesses will ensure that concerns are relayed throughout the season and an end of season meeting will be held to discuss need for additional best practices to be implemented the following visitor season.

\*Note: The amount requested for FY25 is for the implementation of the program with an expanded scope. In FY24, Visit Sitka proposed a special project to create the initial best practices document for \$20,000. This project request was not funded and was done through the task force process instead.

## Workforce Development and Recruitment Campaign

FY25: \$25,000

Key areas include:

- Development of collateral
- Digital marketing campaign targeting year-round jobs

The workforce is essential to support the Visitor Industry in Sitka and a special campaign to develop and implement strategy to attract workforce to Sitka. Visitor Industry jobs are in all sectors and include everything from management to frontline to bookkeepers. These year-round positions will be the focus of the campaign to develop new collateral utilizing Visit Sitka assets and brand. Digital marketing with paid ads will put Sitka based jobs in front of potential employees through visuals showing the lifestyle found in the Sitka community.

## Wayfinding Phase II

FY25: \$10,000

### Planning & Scoping

Key areas include:

- Research
- Meetings with stakeholders and community members
- Development of a plan for vehicular wayfinding and increase pedestrian wayfinding system

In 2015-17, Sitka's Branding and Wayfinding programs were implemented which included the framework for the initial Visit Sitka brand, 36 wayfinding signs and one kiosk. During the planning process, the scope of the project was limited to the downtown core communicating with pedestrians walking distances to key points of interest and information. The destination assessment and community feedback has brought forward need for additional signs and scope to the pedestrian wayfinding as well as the need for vehicular wayfinding. Vehicular wayfinding not only will serve summer visitors but also help business travelers and new residents. This initial special project will be planning and scoping for Sitka's wayfinding needs. Activities will include research, public meetings, and meetings with property owners and stakeholders.

## Destination Development

FY25: \$10,000

### Planning & Scoping

Key areas include:

- Development of plan to improve independent traveler experience/spending
- Meet with stakeholders to determine viability and willingness to participate

In 2022, Roger Brooks from completed a destination assessment for Sitka presenting us with suggestions to help improve experiences in the community for independent travelers. As a special project, Visit Sitka will work through the suggestions and create a plan for implantation keeping in mind the timeline and associated costs for each of the tracks of projects. Tracks include downtown utilization and beautification, visitor information distribution - grab and go locations, airport visitor information, and assessing locations for public art. The assessment worked to answer the question: "What can we do locally to become a stronger more successful destination for investment, as a place to live, and that will attract increased visitor spending?" This phase of the project will take it to the next step by assessing the feasibility of the recommendations and creating a plan for next steps. The full destination assessment can be viewed [here](#).



# Analysis of Use of CVP Funds

Per your request, we have estimated the direct to cruise support and have prepared a separate budget detailing where those expenses are. According to the City Finance Director, in order for CPV funds to be used, special reporting and tracking will need to be made and submitted to CBS. Visit Sitka will collect this information starting in July for FY25 and will plan to submit these quarterly. The direct to cruise support include personnel expenses for visitor information provided at the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal, printed collateral provided at the terminal, a portion of the Driftscape app, and if funded, half of the cost for the Special Project: TBMP. Note: The figures provided below are estimates and actuals will come following the activities with justifications and are subject to review and approval from CBS Finance.

## Estimated Direct Cruise Support

Personnel and Taxes: \$120,087

Driftscape App: \$2,500

Attractions Maps: \$18,250

Special Project- TBMP: \$20,000

The below budget has an additional column for Direct Cruise Support. The amount of supplemental funding is reduced when the CVP funds are included in the budget estimations and allows Visitor Enhancement Funds to be directed towards the programs. The Tourism Best Management Practices program funding is shown coming from CVP and 50% from Visitor Enhancement Funds.

## FY25 Visit Sitka Comp. Budget- Direct CRUISE Support Estimations

July 1 , 2024-June 30, 2025	Total Contract Budget to maintain VS programs	Base Contract	Direct Cruise Support	Supplemental Budget	VS DMO Unrestricted Revenue
<b>Revenue</b>					
Contract Revenue- Requested (FY24 \$525,000, FY23 \$525,000)	\$575,000	\$300,000	\$140,837	\$134,163	
Unrestricted Revenue					\$157,250
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>\$575,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$140,837</b>	<b>\$134,163</b>	<b>\$157,250</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>					
<b>Personnel</b>	\$241,304	\$132,134	\$109,170		\$45,390
Payroll taxes, worker's comp insurance	\$24,130	\$13,213	\$10,917		\$4,539
Market/Industry Promotion	\$19,100	\$19,100			
Occupancy	\$41,350	\$41,350			
Advertising	\$42,315	\$2,000		\$40,315	\$2,400
Website, online services	\$29,220	\$12,500	\$2,500	\$14,220	
Promotion	\$12,750	-		\$12,750	\$15,000
Contracted Services	\$89,015	\$44,500		\$44,515	\$22,901
Supplies, Printing & Postage	\$61,187	\$35,203	\$18,250	\$7,734	\$30,670
Professional Development	\$3,129	-		\$3,129	\$3,850
Media & Public Relations	\$11,500	-		\$11,500	\$2,500
	<b>\$575,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$140,837</b>	<b>\$134,163</b>	<b>\$127,250</b>
Income	\$575,000				\$157,250
Expense	\$575,000				\$127,250
Profit (Loss)- Contingency*	\$0				\$30,000
<b>Total Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>\$0</b>				
<b>SPECIAL PROJECTS</b>					
Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP)	\$40,000		\$20,000	\$20,000	*Contingency to cover unexpected program
Workforce Development & Recruitment Campaign	\$25,000	-		\$25,000	
Wayfinding Phase II Planning & Scope	\$10,000	-		\$10,000	
Destination Development Project Planning	\$10,000	-		\$10,000	
<b>Total Special Projects</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>		<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>	
Total with special projects	\$660,000				

Updated 4/10/2024



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## Annual Workplan & Budget Request

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FY25

April 10, 2024

PRESENTED BY THE GREATER SITKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
104 Lake Street, Sitka, Ak 99835

## Introduction

The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce is currently in contract with the City of Sitka to provide Convention & Visitor Services. The initial contract began Oct. 2015; current contract began Jan. 1, 2019, and we are in our three of five one-year renewals. The Sitka Chamber as Visit Sitka will undertake the process to create a 3-year Strategic Marketing Plan 2025-2027 to include industry and community input. The Annual Marketing Workplan FY25 is prepared for the Assembly and presented in a work-session on March 26, 2024.

*Exhibit B CVS Contract: "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."*

**The Sitka Chamber has prepared the Visit Sitka program based on the contracted deliverables with consideration of the requests of the CBS Assembly. The items detailed in the following document provide a framework for how Visit Sitka will carry out the scope of services including visitor information, convention sales and services, and marketing to reach the independent travel market.**

Following the March 26<sup>th</sup> annual work session, this document has been updated to include the following:

- **Proposed budget allocations for convention and promotional activities from the Visitor Enhancement Fund (VEF) and direct cruise related expenses from Cruise Vessel Passenger Funds (CPV)**
- **Comprehensive budget**
- **Updated 3-Year Marketing Plan**

## Highlights

In 2023 tourism accounted for 15% of SE AK's jobs, and in non-pandemic years tourists spent \$800 million in Alaska.

Sitka hosted the largest number of cruise ship passengers we have seen to date, which brought new challenges and opportunities within the industry and community.

Transient Lodging Tax collected its largest ever amount with \$798,000 brought into the fund!

### FY25-Q1-Q4

Budget request \$575,000

Base \$300,000 Supplemental \$275,000

Special Projects \$

FY24 request \$676,180 | funding level \$525,000

FY23 request \$575,000 | funding level \$525,000

FY22 request \$458,600 | funding level \$458,600

FY21 request \$500,200 | funding level \$500,200

# Organization Chart

Visit Sitka’s team is partially funded with the funding requested in this annual submission. There are four full-time year-round positions and a team of 10 employees who join the program during the summer months. Below is the staffing structure. The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors provide policy and fiscal oversight throughout the year. More information about the Board and staff can be found [here](#). At this time, the Director of Visit Sitka position is vacant and the Executive Director is serving in that capacity while recruitment efforts are underway.



## Visitor Information Services – Staffing breakdown

Providing visitor services is an integral part of the Visit Sitka program. Ensuring that visitors have the information that they need prior to visiting the community allows them to plan ahead, schedule excursions and these tools help visitors set expectations for what their experience may be in Sitka. These expenses are generally the same as visitor numbers grow as they are primarily using digital assets and communication campaigns that are able to be available electronically 24/7 with the exception of emails and phone calls made to Visit Sitka’s office. When

visitors arrive to Sitka, they use more physical means of getting information in the form of signs, maps, and by visiting the Visitor Information Center in person. Post-pandemic, in 2022, Sitka saw large growth in cruise visitors and Visit Sitka’s visitor information services provided as part of the contract increased accordingly

**Visitor Information Staff**

Visit Sitka provides information services with a team of staff both year-round and seasonally. The Communications Specialist provides email and telephone support year-round to both independent and cruise passengers contacting the office for support in planning their visit. The Visitor Services Coordinator is a 6-month full-time position that supports the direct services and coordinates the Visitor Information Center and Kiosk staffing. The Visitor Information Staff serve at both the Visitor Information Center and the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal during the cruise season. Full job descriptions for each position can be found at the end of this document. The below graph shows the percentage of time that each position provides information to independent and cruise visitors for purposes of budgeting and reflected in the Comprehensive budget.

Staff Position	Convention & Visitor Services (VEF)	Visitor Services (Large Cruise Related CPV)	Total
Director of Visit Sitka	75%	25%	100%
Communications Specialist	75%	25%	100%
Visitor Services Coordinator	25%	75%	100%
Visitor Information Staff	10%	90%	100%

**Special Projects**

The following Special Projects can be supported with funding if chosen to by the Assembly as part of the Convention & Visitors Services Contract. The budget lists these additional costs under special projects.

**Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP)**

**FY24: \$40,000 CPV Fund**

Key areas include:

- Development of database for tracking community input and online submission forms
- Brand development and design
- Initial season beta testing Summer 24

Tourism Best Management Practices is an industry driven program developed over 25 years ago in Juneau to minimize the impacts to the community made by large scale tourism activities. The program’s framework has been shared and communities are encouraged to implement programs to allow the industry to hear and respond to the concerns of the local community. The Tourism Task Force was tasked with supporting the development of the initial TBMP and with their submission to the Assembly on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, this document can serve as a starting point for the program. Visit Sitka participated in this effort by engaging tourism businesses in review and recommendations for inclusions and collaborating with the task force members during the editing process.

As a part of the Convention & Visitor Services Contract- Special projects, Visit Sitka can serve as the lead organization to ensure the program is implemented. This may include development of database for tracking community input, online submission forms, phone system for telephonic feedback, brand development and design. There will be opportunities for community input prior to the establishment of the first set of best practices and outreach to tourism industry businesses to get buy in and commitment to the program. Monitoring of the input and communication to businesses will ensure that concerns are relayed throughout the season and an end of season meeting will be held to discuss need for additional best practices to be implemented the following visitor season.

### **Workforce Development and Recruitment Campaign**

**FY25: \$25,000-\$40,000**

Workforce is essential to support the Visitor Industry in Sitka and a special campaign develop and implement strategy to attract workforce to Sitka. Visitor Industry jobs are in all sectors and include everything from management to frontline to bookkeepers. These year-round positions will be the focus of the campaign will develop new collateral utilizing Visit Sitka assets and brand. Digital marketing with paid ads will put Sitka based jobs in front of potential employees though visuals showing the lifestyle found in the Sitka community.

### **Wayfinding Phase II**

**FY24: \$10,000**

#### Planning & Scoping

In 2015-17, Sitka's Branding and Wayfinding programs were implemented which included the framework for the initial Visit Sitka brand, 36 wayfinding signs and one kiosk. During the planning process, the scope of the project was limited to the downtown core communicating with pedestrians walking distances to key points of interest and information. The destination assessment and community feedback has brought forward need for additional signs and scope to the pedestrian wayfinding as well as the need for vehicular wayfinding. Vehicular wayfinding not only will serve summer visitors but also help business travelers and new residents. This initial special project will be planning and scoping for Sitka's wayfinding needs. Activities will include research, public meetings, and meetings with property owners and stakeholders.

### **Street Signage Planning & Development**

**FY25: \$10,000**

#### Planning & Scoping

In 2022, Roger Brooks from completed a destination assessment for Sitka presenting us with suggestions to help improve experiences in the community for independent travelers. As a special project, Visit Sitka will work through the suggestions and create a plan for implantation keeping in mind the timeline and associated costs for each of the tracks of projects. Tracks include downtown beautification, visitor information distribution - grab and go locations, airport visitor information, and assessing locations for public art. The assessment worked to answer the question: "What can we do locally to become a stronger more successful destination for investment, as a place to live, and that will attract increased visitor spending?" This phase of the project will take it to the next step by assessing the feasibility of the recommendations and creating a plan for next steps. The full destination assessment can be viewed [here](#).

# Marketing & Promotion

## Tourism Promotion

Following the contract, Visit Sitka's primary focus remains serving independent travelers and the meetings & conventions market. This is accomplished through a number of ways, primarily the following:

- **Official Visitor's Guide:** Visit Sitka conceptualizes, designs, and prints an Official Visitor's Guide every year, with the new versions becoming available every February. The 2024-25 Visitor's Guide is focused on Sitka year-round. More information about the Visitor's Guide is available in sections to follow.
- **Meetings & Conventions Guide:** Visit Sitka has a digital Meetings & Conventions Guide available online. This collateral piece, designed to be updated every two years, sells Sitka as a premier destination to hold a meeting, event, conference, or staff retreat. The Meetings & Conventions Guide is undergoing an update for 2024, and the goal is to produce a small print run to mail out to convention planners across the state. More information on the Meetings & Conventions Guide is available in sections to follow.
- **Destination Marketing Website:** Visit Sitka developed and currently maintains our website, [visitsitka.org](https://visitsitka.org). 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. Additionally, each of our collateral pieces including our library of digital interactive Official Visitor's Guides are available. There is also a form for visitors to request a printed and mailed visitor's guide. More information on the website, including metrics, is available in sections to follow.
- **Social Media:** Visit Sitka believes social media is a critical source to engage visitors and collect feedback in real-time. Visit Sitka is active on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Pinterest. More information on social media is available in sections to follow.
- **Media Relations:** Visit Sitka works closely with the State of Alaska's PR firm, Thompson & Co. to host media throughout the year. Visit Sitka's doors also remain open to assisting independent media as appropriate. More information on media relations, including metrics and media hosting counts for 2023 is available in sections to follow.
- **Blog:** Visit Sitka staff has been actively working towards publishing two blog posts on [visitsitka.org](https://visitsitka.org) per month. Blog posts are a great way to answer frequently asked questions, give insider tips, and promote independent travel and convention interest. Blog posts are shared on Social Media and loaded to the website resulting in increased search engine optimization (SEO). More information about the Visit Sitka blog is available in sections to follow.
- **Consumer Shows:** Following feedback from City & Borough of Sitka Assembly members, Visit Sitka will be reducing the number of consumer shows attended going forward. In 2025, Visit Sitka will not attend Travel & Adventure Consumer Shows, or Holland America's Travel Show. Visit Sitka will instead seek out different opportunities to partner regionally and reach independent travelers.



## Cruise/Yacht

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.

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.

## Local & State Tourism Partners

Visit Sitka's participation in the Alaska Travel Industry Association annual conference gives the team access to hundreds of travel industry professionals, advocates, and vendors for Alaska's Tourism Industry. Networking with other Alaska tourism professionals creates a strong network of advocates for Sitka for referrals. Attending both meetings at Southeast Conference is an important tool for keeping abreast of economic issues in southeast Alaska and develops important partnerships for economic growth in Sitka and across the region. Participation with the Southeast Alaska Tourism Council allows us to connect as a region and strategically plan for marketing with focus on independent travelers.

## Visitor's Guide

Visit Sitka's 2024-25 Official Visitors' Guide has a very intentional theme focused on Sitka year-round. The magazine-style format allows us to tell Sitka's stories and this year, readers will learn about "Sitka year-round". This underlying theme is reflected throughout in editorial content, imagery, and highlighted by the herring spawn displayed in the cover is intended to inform potential independent travelers that there are reasons to visit Sitka in all four seasons.

Visit Sitka is proud that our magazine design layout has inspired other DMO's across the state, and each year we receive compliments on our layout, stories, and content. In 2022, Element Agency, our partner in creating the guide, was awarded best in category and a gold award for our publication at the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Big One design awards.

This year, we have ordered 20,000 guides to be distributed to independent travelers across the country. Approximate metrics of guide distribution can be seen here:

- ~6,000 mailed directly to prospective visitors (*through request form on [visitsitka.org](https://visitsitka.org) and phone call/email requests for mailed copies*)

- ~ 4,000 mailed to other visitor centers across the state, mailed to travel agents, and distributed at trade shows
- ~10,000 distributed locally to independent travelers through hotels, Visit Sitka and Harrigan Centennial Hall visitor centers, ferry terminal, and taken to trade show events by Visit Sitka and tourism business partners

The interactive digital, online version includes video inserts, scrolling photo galleries and direct website links. The current issue and prior five year's issues are available for readers on the Digital Visitors' Guide Library and can be viewed [here](#).

## External Advertising

### Digital

Digital marketing spans content creation, social media marketing (video & image creation, paid promotion, and ads) including online advertising with search & display ads plus email marketing. Precise targeting of sponsored content on the web gives Visit Sitka the ability to quickly respond to changes in market conditions and other data. This will also give us access to the mobile phonemarket where a multitude of leisure travelers continue to use their mobile phones to plan their adventures. 96% of leisure travelers regularly use a mobile phone and the use of mobile phones in trip planning before leaving home has become consumers preferred method of research.

### Print

Print advertising continues to be a pricier investment across the market. With fluctuating advertising prices and changing times, Visit Sitka continues to prefer digital marketing over print. Print marketing presents ROI tracking challenges and is often difficult to track audiences. Visit Sitka will continue to search out the best publications for our potential visitors and ensure that those ad buys also include a strong digital component. We will continue to advertise in the Alaska Map and the Alaska Milepost, as these are iconic publications that visitors consider to be reliable sources of information.

### Social Media

Visit Sitka is currently active on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Pinterest, and our social media presence continues to reach large audiences worldwide. Consistency on social media and interacting with comments and messages establishes Visit Sitka as the expert for both visitors and partners, and allows us to improve customer service with real-time feedback. Visit Sitka works with the PR firm Element Agency to contract out consistent, branded social media content. Visit Sitka works closely with Element Agency to create an annual calendar of must-post topics, primarily surrounding prominent year-round events and holidays, as well as sharing our Digital Official Visitor's Guide- a great resource for pre-trip planning and visitor education.

Current social media "wins":

- Instagram followers – 16,000
- Facebook followers – 69,000
- On 8/25/2023, a post featuring Sitka's airport runway went viral with over 10,000 lines and a reach of over 6 million Facebook users.

## Branded Content

Branded content is content that does not involve traditional advertising. It can include articles, videos, podcasts, and even live elements that bring relevant value to the consumer. It is not advertising in the way most people think of advertising (commercials, banner ads, social media ads, etc...). Branded content can work better than traditional advertising because it feels organic and authentic rather than ads that are in our face. When a consumer watch branded content, their brand recall is up to 59% higher than it is with display ads. Visit Sitka will continue to maintain relationships with media and influencers to remain open to opportunities for branded content.

Visit Sitka plans to complete a project started in 2024 for an educational video to be played on cruise ships and at the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal, intended to set visitor expectations and foster a deeper understanding of how to honor and respect the community and culture.

## Website

Destination Marketing Organization websites are trusted and valuable resources for travel planning. Visit Sitka continues to maintain our website to include the most up-to-date information, and act as a trustworthy and educational resource for incoming visitors. [visitsitka.org](https://visitsitka.org) has continued to gain traction through analytics, showing that visitors are recognizing Visit Sitka as the reliable resource for planning out their days in our community.

In 2023:

- 123,032 sessions (website visits)
- 389,569 page views
- 54% engagement rate

Moving forward, Visit Sitka will continue updating [visitsitka.org](https://visitsitka.org) with the latest information on traveling to Sitka. We continue to develop fresh content from professional photoshoots and through our annual photo contest. Goals for 2024-25 include building out each directory section with a welcoming narrative, expanding the yacht and wedding sections to gear towards independent travelers, and continuing to expand the Sitka blog with frequently asked questions and hot topics.

For the website to maintain functionality it is necessary to invest in maintenance, including software updates and bug fixes, security scans, minor modifications, and maintaining overall site health. Included in this cost are annual costs such as domain hosting, database support, and online support services.

## Driftscape – Interactive Mobile App

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.

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 through additional promotion, resulting in additional need for printed promotional materials, outside of the cost of participating on the platform and maintaining the app's content.

## Media Hosting

Connecting and working with media outlets and public relations allows us to maintain control in the message spread about Sitka. It is important to continue to build and maintain relationships over time with journalists, influencers, and other media to ensure Sitka is displayed in an accurate and consistent manner throughout media platforms. Visit Sitka will attend Alaska Media Roadshow, held by the Alaska PR firm Thompson & Co. This event is a fantastic opportunity to meet with up to 25 of the most influential travel media in the United States who are working on Alaska projects. This event is a great opportunity to meet face-to-face with these media and tell them about important Sitka updates and begin forming relationships.

Visit Sitka also hosts visiting travel writers in Sitka throughout the year through partnerships with Thompson & Co. Last year Visit Sitka hosted 10 unique journalists, which included hotel nights, guided tours, meals in local restaurants, and logistical support. Many more media members were supported via telephone and email. Visit Sitka will continue to open its doors to media and journalists to continue the consistency of messaging surrounding Sitka as a destination.

In 2023, Visit Sitka began working with the service Critical Mention, which allows us to see any article, tv show, or radio service that mentions Sitka. Visit Sitka has created a monthly internal Media & Mentions Report of monthly tourism-related mentions, estimated publicity value, and mentions by sentiment.

A comprehensive document of all Media & Mentions Reports with an explanatory introduction page can be viewed by [clicking here](#). Some quick metrics:

### Since August 2023, Sitka has:

- Been mentioned in 5,308 tourism-related articles, TV productions, and radio shows
- Received an estimated publicity value of \$146,279,420

## Visitor Services

### Public Inquiries & Visitor Information Center Operations

Visit Sitka keeps our doors open to the public through walk-ins, phone calls, and emails. Visit Sitka keeps the Visitor Center open from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday through Friday, as well as additional weekend hours throughout the heavy visitor season and full days for the Norwegian Bliss every other Sunday.

Visit Sitka hires a seasonal, full-time Visitor Services Coordinator and approximately 10-12 part-time, seasonal Visitor Information Staff to keep a healthy rotation of personnel ready to provide quality information to visitors. Visit Sitka keeps at least one Visitor Information Staff (in addition to the Visitor Services Coordinator) at the Visitor Center during all open business hours to ensure each visitor receives a quality experience, and leaves feeling that their needs were met. The Visitor Services Coordinator schedules and manages all Visitor Information Staff, is the first point-of-contact for all visitor calls and emails, maintains the live cruise ship calendar, and maintains a level of organization and order in the Visitor Center throughout the season.

Additional stats and metrics on visitor walk-ins, emails, and calls can be found in sections to follow.

- **Visitor Information at Cruise Terminal**

As part of the contract deliverable, Visit Sitka staff provides at the visitor information shed at the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal every day that a ship with over 1,000 berth capacity is in port. Depending on needs, this can be anywhere from 1 – 3 staff members to ensure all passengers receive a quality experience. Staff tasks include distributing attractions maps, directing to shore excursions, connecting visitors with the Driftscape App, and answering general questions.

Visit Sitka staff make contact with at least half of all cruise ship passengers exiting ships at the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal, with the other half heading directly to shore excursions. Visit Sitka goes through anywhere from 500 – 1500 attractions maps per day at the cruise terminal. Also displayed at the terminal are two sandwich boards and a pop-up sign advertising Driftscape, Visit Sitka’s mobile app platform. Important to note: Visit Sitka utilized unrestricted funds to both increase the staff at the terminal and the increased printing costs related to this increase in cruise visitors. In 2024, we expect to see more visitors utilizing Driftscape, slightly reducing the need for printed maps at the terminal.

### **Collateral Supply**

Visit Sitka supplies collateral on an as-needed basis for Harrigan Centennial Hall, including attractions maps, pocket guides, hiking guides, visitor guides, and Driftscape promotional materials. In addition to this, Visit Sitka also supplies a reasonable amount of collateral as-needed for various high-traffic businesses in town, such as e-bike companies, hotels, restaurants, Fortress of the Bear, Alaska Raptor Center, and more.

In addition to primary collateral pieces, Visit Sitka also developed and maintains a restaurant guide. The guide is displayed in a flip-stand at high-traffic hotels, Harrigan Centennial Hall, and at the Visitor Information Center. Visit Sitka also keeps a rack card system with flyers for local businesses at the Visitor Information Center.

It is important for Visit Sitka to continue to supply collateral items around Sitka to provide a sense of consistency in visitor services throughout the community.

### **Directory of Tourism Related Business**

Each year, Visit Sitka advertises an opportunity for tourism-related businesses to be listed on a directory that is then published on [visitsitka.org](http://visitsitka.org). The advertising for businesses is run for 30 days through Visit Sitka newsletters and an advertisement in the Daily Sitka Sentinel. In addition to being available on the website, a printed copy of the directory is available at the Visitor Information Center, the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal information shed, and delivered to Harrigan Centennial Hall for usage at their visitor desk.

## **Convention Sales & Services**

### **Meetings & Conventions Supported in 2023 & 2024:**

#### **Heritage & Cultural Tourism Conference**

*April 11-13, 2023, 120 attendees*

#### **Yaaw Koo.eex**

*April 15, 2023, 200 attendees*

#### **Sustainable Southeast Partnership Annual Spring Retreat**

*April 26-28, 2023, 75 attendees*

#### **North Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting**

*April 5-11, 2023, 50+ attendees*

### **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*

## **Meetings & Conventions Strategy:**

Relationship building and face-to-face interactions with decision makers is essential to building our 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 (B2B) 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 our 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.

The amount of staff support varies with each event, but this may include in-person or virtual meetings with event planners to discuss the logistics, provide recommendations, and execute action plans. Our team will attend recurring meetings leading up to the event to ensure their experience is smooth and easy.

An important part of our 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 they're 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.

## **Recent Meetings & Conventions Successes:**

Southeast Conference (SEC) held their annual meeting in Sitka on September 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>, 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. We held the reception at Halibut Point Crab & Chowder, located at the Cruise Ship Terminal. The reception included local artists, dancers, and businesses.

The Region V Basketball Championships were held in Sitka on March 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 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. 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 our lodging partners 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.

## Reporting

### Quarterly Reports

Visit Sitka meets quarterly with the CBS Municipal Administrator to provide updates on activities throughout the year and get feedback on activities Visit Sitka is undertaking that quarter. Meetings, emails, and phone conversations also provide an opportunity for collaboration with City staff on a regular basis.

### Annual Scope of Service Report

As part of the contract renewal process, CBS Municipal Administrator has requested the Scope of Services report be provided by Visit Sitka. This report has been completed directly reporting on each of the deliverables in the contract.

## Other Services

### Maintaining Current Information & Collateral

Infrastructure projects help visitors and locals find the resources they need to fully experience Sitka. To continue to give excellent service Visit Sitka will maintain visitor information locations, update signage, maintain [visitsitka.org](http://visitsitka.org), and to encourage visitation to local eateries with menu stands in high traffic areas.

With the significant increase in visitors, additional branded collateral including larger quantities of attractions maps, hiking guides, and downtown pocket guides will be needed. Visit Sitka also supplies maps and collateral for Harrigan Centennial Hall's visitor desk, as well as local businesses as requested. Due to extremely popular demand, the Attractions Map was reordered 7 times throughout the season, at around 20,000 maps per order. Hiking Guides were reordered three times, and Downtown Pocket Guides were reordered twice. With another raise in anticipated visitor count for 2024, we anticipate printing needs and costs to rise again.

See chart below for what was budgeted for the 2023 season, the actual cost, the quantity ordered in 2023, and the projected need for 2024.

Collateral	2023 Budgeted	2023 Actual	Quantity ordered in 2023	Projected quantity needed for 2024
Attractions Map	5400	7,466	130,000	150,000
Pocket Guide	3960	6,912	18,000	20,000
Hiking Guide	4060	5,006	10,000	10,000

**NEW Collateral Piece:** Visit Sitka is partnering with Sitka Trail Works, Sitka Bike Club members, and local bike rental companies to develop a critically-needed new collateral piece, the Sitka Biking Map. The map is intended to help bikers and e-bikers learn the rules of the road and what trails/locations are best suited for biking. The goal of the piece is to cut down on undesirable behaviors on visiting bikers and e-bikers, educate users and protect local trails and users. The map will be a similar style to the attractions map, and will be ordered through the same printing platform, costing approximately 6¢/map. In previous years, local biking and e-biking companies relied on Visit Sitka’s Hiking Guide for their daily business operations. Moving forward, Visit Sitka intends to supply these companies with the Biking Map instead, and we anticipate needing to order a few thousand of these new maps to start.

### Newsletters & Business Support

Visit Sitka sends out monthly newsletters to over 450 local business contacts that include updates and opportunities with Visit Sitka’s programs, cruise schedule updates, and key tourism opportunities, such as upcoming conferences. Visit Sitka also sends e-blast email notifications in addition to the newsletters as-needed for important events and tourism updates. City news releases are included in these communications to help share important CBS updates and project development information directly to the business community.

Visit Sitka’s partners are highly engaged with us and rely on the value of the content provided in email newsletters and e-blasts. Performance indicators for Visit Sitka newsletters over the previous calendar year:

- Average click-through rate: 47% (industry average: 39%)
- Average open rate: 5.2% (industry average: 1.38%)

*Source: Constant Contact Email Performance Analytics*

Visit Sitka is dedicated to not only the visitor experience but enhancing the overall tourism experience in Sitka. To reach this goal Visit Sitka continues to develop training and experiential events for locals and tourism businesses. This includes the Sitka Summer Expo, where locals are encouraged to learn about Sitka’s tourism industry: Alaska Host trainings, and visitor industry meetings. Visit Sitka has encouraged community members and visitor industry professionals to engage with programs provided by the Sitka Chamber such as the Sitka’s Emerging Leaders workforce development group and pertinent topics at their Speaker Series which include industry trends and community issues such as housing and childcare.



## Cruise Calendar

Visit Sitka develops and maintains a live cruise ship calendar throughout each season. The calendar is managed through Google Calendar, allowing us to update it live for all viewers instantly when cruise ship changes arise. The calendar contains the ship, its arrival and departure time, its docking location, and its berth capacity. The calendar is widely used across the Sitka community due to its convenience of having real-time, updated information.

Visit Sitka monitors emails over the weekends throughout the cruise season to check for changes that may happen over off-days. For major changes such as docking locations or arrival/departure changes, Visit Sitka deploys e-blast email notifications on a timely basis to local businesses, city staff, and Harrigan Centennial Hall staff.

## Additional Contracts

In the summers of 2022 and 2023, Visit Sitka bid on and received an additional contract to perform short-term operational and communication support for the cruise ship seasons. It is anticipated that Visit Sitka will provide communication support services during the 2024 season.

# Metrics

## Conventions

With the addition of a team member with focus on convention support and outreach, VS 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. Surveys will be conducted to gather data directly from convention attendees on an on-going basis. It can be difficult to measure full impact because when convention attendees come to Sitka, they create economic activity that ripples throughout the community. We will provide an update in the next quarter with preliminary data points and trends found as part of the survey results.

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. We are working 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. The feedback we have received from lodging partners for the upcoming summer season is that there is room for growth in early May with occupancies nearly sold out from Mid-May through August. This information helps us as we seek visitors and conference attendees to fill in the weeks with space available.

- 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.

## Visitor Inquiries

### Emails & Calls

Visit Sitka receives approximately 250 emails/year from visitors seeking additional information.

Visit Sitka receives a very large number of calls from visitors. In the off-season, Visit Sitka receives anywhere from 5-7 calls per day. During peak visitor season, Visit Sitka can receive anywhere from 10-15+ calls per day.

### Visitors to the Visitor Information Center

In 2023, approximately 3,000 visitors signed Visit Sitka's guestbook. Guestbook sign-in is not required, and it is 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.

### Visits to Website

In 2023:

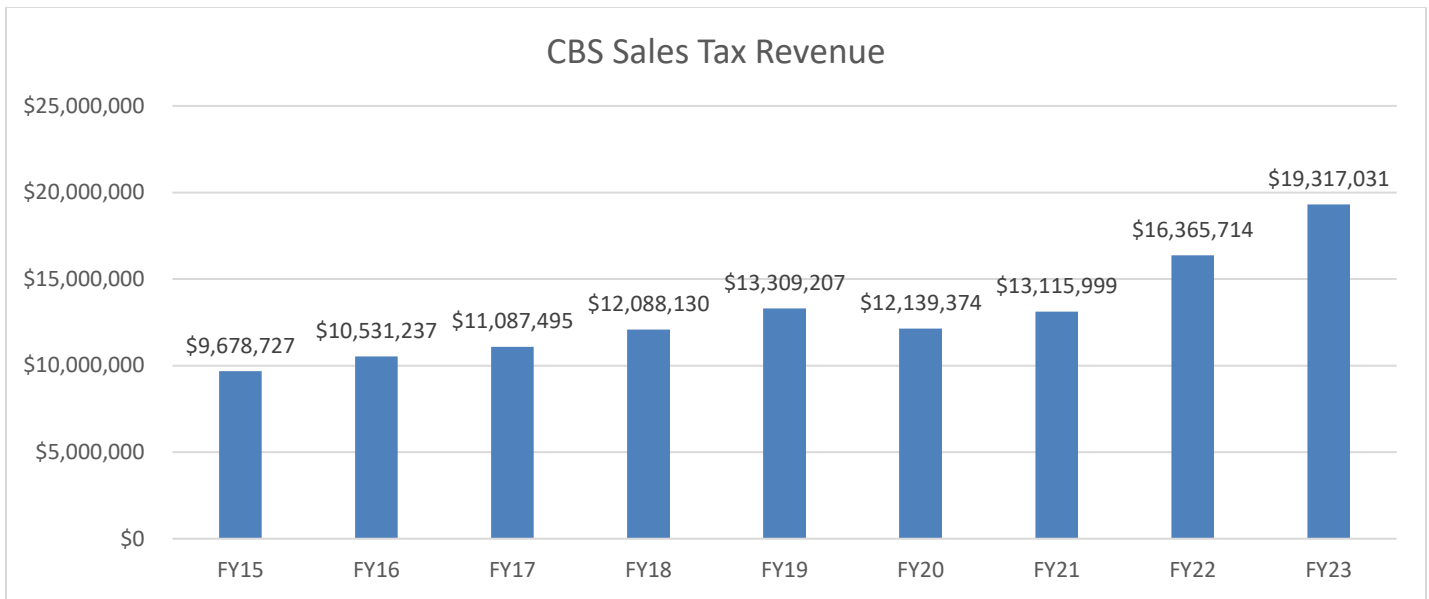
- 123,032 sessions (website visits)
- 389,569 page views
- 54% engagement rate

## Economic Indicators

### Sales Tax Revenue

The City and Borough of Sitka's sales tax revenues have seen consistent increases aligned with the growth in the visitor industry. These tax increases allow for additional funds to support city services, pay for projects and infrastructure improvements.

In FY19, sales tax receipts were \$13.3 million which fell to \$12.1 million in FY20. The approximate \$1 million reduction of revenue that was seen in FY20 was nearly fully recovered in FY21 with revenues of \$13.1 million. In FY23, \$19.3 million was collected with Retail trade and services being the two highest industries.



Source: CBS 23 ACFR

### Transient Lodging Tax Revenue

The Transient Lodging tax has also seen growth over the past several years with large increases in FY23 seen as a result of the increase of independent travelers and the 5-day ATIA Convention of over 500 attendees hosted in Sitka Oct. 2022. The Transient Lodging Tax Revenues are expected to have a full recovery in FY23 with the return of meetings and conventions and a strong independent traveler season.

Fiscal Year	Transient Lodging Tax Revenue
2023	792,950
2022	669,958
2021	458,600
2020	398,187
2019	557,048
2018	540,875
2017	503,439
2016	472,900
2015	411,916

### Potential on Investment (POI)

Potential on Investment of a DMO’s social media activities is one way to measure the effectiveness but should also keep in mind the economic factors that are outside the control of the DMO that can affect potential demand. Examples of these include the weather, economy, natural disasters, industry’s ability to convert and pandemics (i.e., COVID-19). This metric is a new fluid concept and is still being explored by DMOs throughout the world. Below is a description of the equation and each of the factors that can be used in calculations.

The Formula:

$$POI = C_v \times C_i \times M_q$$

Calculation of POI

Instagram:  $\$917 (Cv) \times 4.51\% (Ci) \times 16,000 \text{ followers} (Mq) = \$661,707$   
Facebook:  $\$917 (Cv) \times 2.21\% (Ci) \times 68,109 \text{ followers} (Mq) = \$1,341,388$

### Net Promoter Score

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.

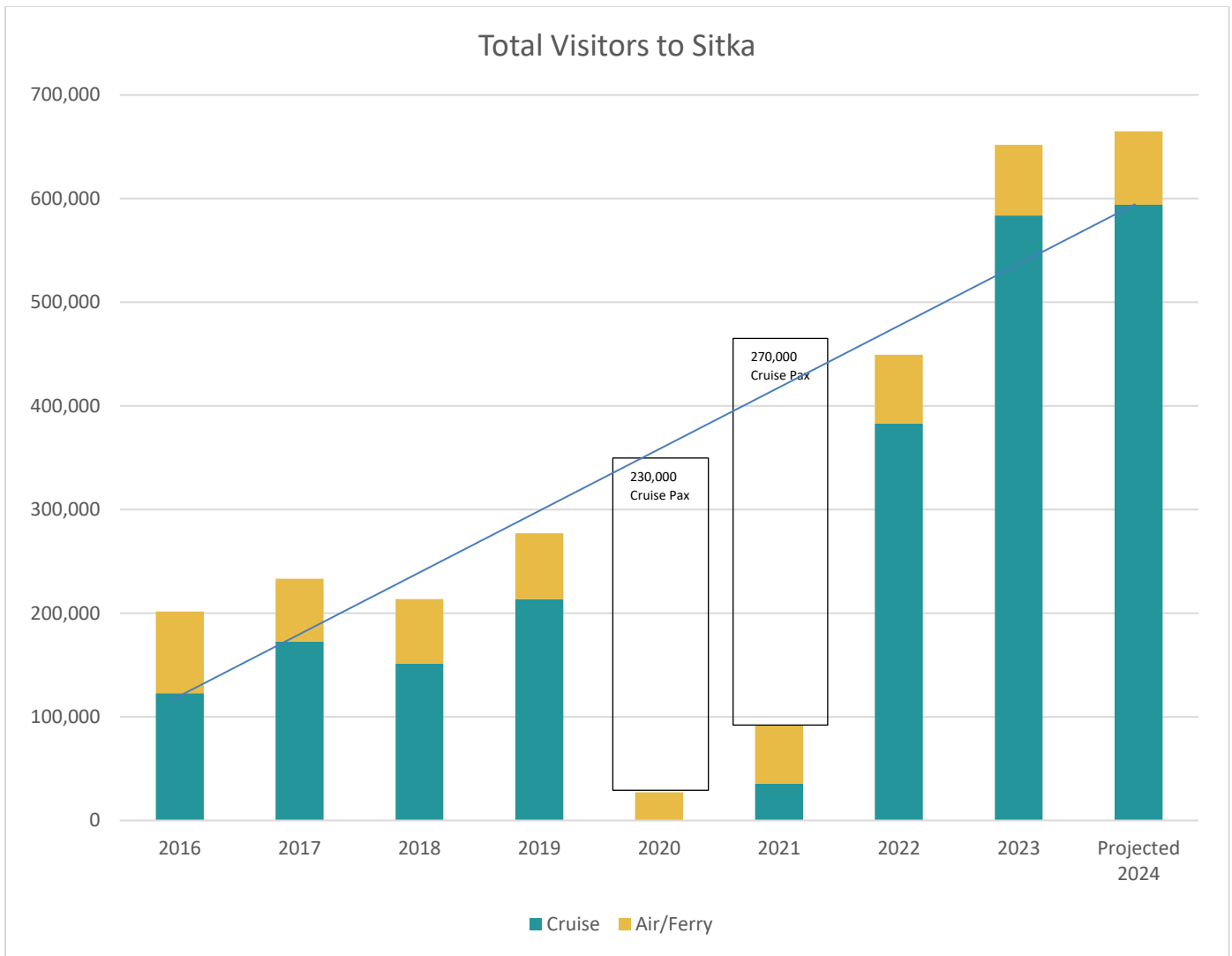
Net Promoter Score is calculated by: **Subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters.** (The percentage of passives is not used in the formula.) For example, if 10% of respondents are detractors, 20% are passives and 70% are promoters, your NPS score would be  $70 - 10 = 60$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

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

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).

### Total Visitors to Sitka

The chart below displays total visitors to Sitka with distinctions for how they arrive. In the years before 2020, Sitka was seeing consistent growth in total visitors, topping 300,000 in 2019. In 2022, travel to Sitka made a full recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic with more than 450,000 total visitors. By the end of 2023, Sitka saw more than 550,000 total visitors industry hard in 2020, air travel is back into full swing. In 2022, Sitka surpassed the highest total air travelers with 93,550 passengers and in 2023, growth was seen with over 95,000 passengers, 66,00 of which were visitors.



There has been an upward trend in air passengers into Sitka since 2009. While the pandemic hit the travel

**Number of passengers to SIT Airport**

Year	Airport passengers	Independent Travelers
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

Source: <https://www.transtats.bts.gov/DataElements.aspx?Data=1>

# Draft

**Draft 2024-25 Meeting & Convention Planners'  
Guide**

**Visit Sitka**

June 2024

HYBRID EVENTS | OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES | UNIQUE LODGING | INSPIRED CATERING

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Meeting &  
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Planners'  
Guide

2024-25

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# Welcome!

**"ON BEHALF OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA,** I would like to invite you to meet in our community. I am extremely proud of Sitka's wide variety of meeting facilities, restaurants, and amenities. We look forward to sharing our community's warm spirit with you. Come and experience all that Sitka has to offer."

*Mayor Steven Eisenbeisz*

4 airline companies flying to Sitka in the summer	3 motorcoach companies	1 marine highway system	6+ harbors
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**TRANSPORTATION** pg.30

**ACTIVITIES** pg.22

- 50+ miles of designated hiking trails
- 2 wildlife rehabilitation centers
- 20+ fishing charter operators
- 1,600 square miles of backcountry wilderness
- 20+ totem poles
- 2 stoplights in town
- 7 dormant volcanoes
- 24+ nationally recognized historic sites
- 8,600 year-round residents
- 14 miles of road

SCAN THE QR CODE TO CHECK OUT OUR DIGITAL VERSION OF THIS GUIDE.



30+ local shops	2 local florists	5 banks
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**SHOP** pg.28

20+ restaurants	5 species of pacific salmon	freshly caught local seafood
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**DINE** pg.25

40+ unique lodging options	40+ unique retreat venues	7 hotels	10+ traditional meeting venues
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**MEET** pg.6 **STAY** pg.18



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# Share in Our History & Culture

**ON THIS ISLAND, WE CELEBRATE THE NATURAL WORLD AROUND US** while also honoring the people who have carved out a unique and rich way of life here.

Sitka is located on Lingít Aaní, the land of an Alaska Native people who have lived here for over 10,000 years. As the ancestral home of the Tlingít, a base for Russian settlers in the 1800's, and the location of Alaska's transfer to the United States, Sitka's legacies are complex and vast.

As a result of Sitka's history, our community is resilient, vibrant, and truly unlike any other. We believe that no matter who you are or where you are from, our unique history, culture, and people offer many learning opportunities.

Incorporating historical and cultural elements into your event allows attendees to carry this experience with them long after it is over. From land acknowledgements, to business success stories, to lectures on Sitka's WWII history, you can enhance your meeting by inviting one of our dynamic local speakers to present at your event. Our historic spaces, like the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall, the Sitka Fine Arts Camp, or the Sheet'ka Kwaán Naa Kahidi Tribal Community House, are also available to rent for a banquet or reception. Entertain attendees with a performance from the Naa Kahidi Dancers, a multigenerational Tlingít dance group, or the New Archangel Dancers, an all-female Russian dance troupe. Learn about Sitka's Russian-influenced history by taking in a performance by the island's newest ensemble, Alaska Storytellers.



Kick off your meeting with welcomes from our Alaska Native community and from Sitka's mayor, or start your event with a live performance of the national anthem and our state's "Alaska's Flag" song sung by local singers. Sitka's unique offerings can also be incorporated into meeting breaks with performances from local storytellers, acrobats and aerial performers, dancers, or string quartets. Create a special reception and dinner experience with live music from local blues or rock bands, or even a DJ.

Wow your attendees with a pop-up art market or an early evening art walk that includes demonstrations from local silversmiths, weavers, and beaders. To help you plan these events for your next gathering, Visit Sitka will work alongside you to coordinate these special moments.

Our community is excited to share our stories, talents, and culture with you. Plan your next meeting in Sitka and give your attendees an experience to remember.

## Planner Spotlight: WhaleFest

The first weekend in November marks the date for Sitka's WhaleFest, a much-loved event that overlaps with the annual presence of humpback whales in the Sitka Sound as they feed before migrating to Hawaii. The spirit of WhaleFest is closely tied to the history and cultural importance of the ocean and its inhabitants, and every year, the event begins with a Tlingít welcome and land acknowledgment.

During this multi-day festival, WhaleFest hosts an array of Sitkan vendors at a marine-themed artisan's market, and scientists from far and wide fly into Sitka to present their research. WhaleFest's most recent theme was Ocean Connections: Culture and Communication, which challenged participants to explore the many forms of culture and communication that are tied to the marine environment through the lens of Indigenous knowledge and scientific discovery.



# Harrigan Centennial Hall

Harrigan Centennial Hall (HCH), located in the harbor of downtown Sitka, is Sitka's civic and convention center. This 32,000-square-foot space was renovated in 2016 and is equipped with state-of-the-art teleconference equipment, multimedia projectors, an audiovisual department, and stunning panoramic views of the nearby mountains.

Interior spaces include seven customizable meeting rooms with retractable divider walls as well as a 4,127-square-foot auditorium, lobby space, and the Sitka Historical Museum. Bring your event outdoors and catch a glimpse of humpback whales breaching in the Sitka Sound with HCH's waterfront plaza and the connecting Sea Walk pathways. With newly remodeled spaces, modernized meeting technology, and an updated commercial kitchen for contracted caterers, HCH is ready to host everything from conventions and tradeshows to symposiums and exhibitions.

Located a short walk away from Sitka's downtown shops, hotel accommodations, restaurants, and attractions, HCH can help you integrate Sitka's unique way of blending the new with the traditional into your event. Find building layouts and more information in our online Meeting Planners' Toolkit.



Heather Holt



Heather Holt



## Planner Spotlight: Alaska Chamber

The Alaska Chamber hosted their Fall Forum in the newly updated convention center. With an agenda full of board meetings, presentations, panel discussions, and breakout sessions, the Chamber's 250 delegates were able to utilize the unique spaces throughout the entire venue. When it was time for lunch, chartered catamarans picked up attendees at Crescent Harbor, conveniently situated next door to Harrigan Centennial Hall's waterfront location. Attendees ate their gourmet boxed lunches on the Sitka Sound alongside bubble feeding humpback whales. Additionally, Harrigan Centennial Hall's central location gave Alaska Chamber attendees ample access to downtown shops, nearby marinas, and comfortable, high-end lodging—all only a short walk away.



Kevin G. Smith Photography



# High-Tech Meeting Venues

**SITKA OFFERS MEETING PLANNERS CURRENT, TOP-NOTCH TECHNOLOGY AND VENUES** to help facilitate successful in-person, virtual, or hybrid meetings. With both large and small venues available, meeting hosts are able to cater their needs to better share information and engage all attendees. Sitka's venues provide smartboard technology, multimedia projectors, state-of-the-art teleconference equipment, lighting and sound design capabilities, and more. For meetings with advanced bandwidth needs, the local internet provider can create a special "hot spot" for your meeting attendees. For those who need on-site tech support, Visit Sitka will help connect you with local vendors who can execute your technology needs.



# Remote Retreat Meeting Venues

**REMOTE RETREAT LOCATIONS IN SITKA ARE WIDELY VARIED**, so if you can dream it, Sitka likely has an option. Sitka's remote lodges offer comfortable accommodations and meeting locations with stunning views and serene experiences. These tight-knit meeting quarters come with daily catered meals and special amenities, such as hot tubs, water activity equipment, spa services, yoga, and live demonstrations from private chefs. Remote retreats can also be hosted in venues such as a lighthouse, beachfront homes, or on private islands. These venues look forward to helping you plan all the meals and activities your attendees need.



# In-Hotel Meeting Venues

**HOTEL MEETING VENUES OFFER CONVENIENCE**, serving as accommodations, meeting spaces, and oftentimes catering sites in one location. Sitka's hotels provide a variety of options and meeting space sizes for small- to medium-sized groups, and many include package discounts to those who use the hotel for their meeting needs. Attendees enjoy the ease of going from their hotel room to a meeting or meal without having to put on a coat, while meeting planners can take advantage of quick access to their hotel room "office." After daily meetings wrap up, all can head to an on-site restaurant and lounge for more networking.



Daily Sitka Sentinel, James Poulson

# Small Group Meeting Venues

**THE BEST THING ABOUT SMALL GROUP MEETINGS IN SITKA** is that Visit Sitka will help you find the perfect venue to carry out your unique meeting goals. If you need a formal meeting space with high-tech capabilities, then our convention center has you covered. Looking for a meeting space that will inspire your group? Sitka offers a wide spectrum of options. From spaces inspired by the American Craftsman style with floor-to-ceiling windows, to historical waterfront buildings, to beachfront covered shelters perfect for team-building exercises, Sitka's venues will help you blend creativity with practicality.





The SFAC campus includes a full stage multiuse event space with both large and small reception areas, four accommodation facilities, a fitness center with a gymnasium, and many different classroom-style rooms. Additionally, SFAC manages the off-campus Sitka Performing Arts Center, which can house up to 600 audience members and is equipped with state-of-the-art sound, lighting, and projection systems. The large lawn at SFAC is great for outdoor events and receptions, with tents to shelter attendees.

When you book their facilities, SFAC provides on-site support staff, access to high-speed internet, and tables and chairs as required. They can also assist with catering and bar service, from beer and wine to multicourse meals.

Regardless of whether you're planning a wedding, an overnight wellness retreat, or a grand convention opening, SFAC has the space and on-site support to accommodate your vision.

# Sitka Fine Arts Campus

At the Sitka Fine Arts Campus (SFAC), diverse and dynamic venues can be found across the historic grounds. The campus was originally constructed in 1911 as a boarding school known as the Sheldon Jackson School; later, it was the site of Sheldon Jackson College, a private two-year college. With a long, historical legacy, striking wooden architecture, and recently renovated Allen Hall meeting spaces, SFAC offers a venue unlike any other.



## Planner Spotlight: ATIA

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) holds an annual membership convention and trade show each fall, and with over 400 attendees, they found the Sitka Fine Arts Campus to be the perfect venue. They were able to utilize most of the campus grounds with keynote speakers, live auctions, and a formal banquet set up in the Hames Center, as well as exhibitor booths and receptions in the Odess Theater. On-campus meeting rooms offered convenient break-out spaces, and on-campus dorms were used for additional housing for attendees. Using the dynamic spaces at the Sitka Fine Arts Campus was a great success, and the community of Sitka offered all the elements ATIA needed for a successful convention.

# Small Group Retreats



## PLAN YOUR PERFECT GROUP RETREAT

With its breathtaking natural beauty and abundance of activities, Sitka is the ideal destination for any group looking to bond and connect in a peaceful and serene environment. Our year-round meeting locations offer a wide range of amenities and services to ensure that your stay is comfortable and enjoyable. From delicious meals prepared with locally sourced ingredients to comfortable lodging options, we have everything you need to create a truly unforgettable experience.

But that's not all - Sitka is also home to a variety of indoor and outdoor activities that are perfect team building for groups of all sizes. Whether you are interested in hiking through the nearby wilderness, fishing in the pristine waters of Sitka Sound, creating art, hosting a golf outing, or simply relaxing, there is something for everyone on your team. So why wait? Contact us today to start planning your perfect group retreat in Sitka!



# Green Meetings

**LOCATED ON THE WEST COAST OF BARANOF ISLAND,** Sitka is blanketed by a temperate rainforest, where spruce green stretches skyward to snowcapped heights.

Eagles, brown bears, whales, sea lions, and all five species of Pacific salmon call this pristine wilderness home. Here, we celebrate the natural world around us, and we encourage you to incorporate Sitka's green practices into your event.

You can reduce your event's carbon footprint by taking advantage of Sitka's centrally located downtown. Hold your meeting in or near your hotel to eliminate the need for vehicle transportation. Encourage guests to explore our walkable city on foot or check out Sitka's local bike shop for electric scooter and bike rentals. When large-scale transportation is needed, consider chartering a shuttle or motor coach to accommodate your guests.

Additionally, you can support energy efficient venues and reduce unnecessary waste for an environmentally friendly event. Harrigan Centennial Hall's recent renovation economized the convention center's energy consumption, cutting the yearly energy use down by more than half. Setting up a recycling station at your venue for proper disposal of materials and taking advantage of the Sitka Green Lending Library, which has 100 reusable place settings, can also keep your event green.

Sitka has always relied on its surrounding waters for sustenance, and today, these waters give us renewable hydroelectric power and a vibrant sustainable fishing industry that supplies our community with fresh seafood. Support our businesses by connecting with local caterers, restaurants, and food suppliers who serve delicious sustainable foods. Check out the Visit Sitka's online Meeting Planners' Toolkit for more ways to make your meeting sustainable.



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# Say "I Do" in Sitka

## Your Dream Destination Wedding Awaits

Get ready to say "I do" surrounded by the pristine wilderness of Sitka.

Our small island community offers a picturesque backdrop for your unforgettable destination wedding. With stunning views of snowcapped mountains and abundant wildlife, you can exchange vows on a boat or in a rustic island lodge surrounded by your loved ones. Make things extra special - Sitka is home to caterers, bakers, chocolate makers, florists, and artisans who will support you every step of the way. Capture your memories with a professional photo shoot around historic downtown or along a totem lined forest trail. Your guests can arrive early to explore the wilderness, take a whale watching tour, or enjoy the fishing trip of a lifetime. Let us help you plan your dream wedding in Sitka and make it an unforgettable experience for you and your guests.







# Hotels

**WHETHER YOU BOOK A WORK-FRIENDLY ROOM** or a suite in one of our boutique, high-end properties, Sitka's hotels will be your oasis after an action-packed convention or ambitious outdoor adventure.



The thoughtful accommodations and one-of-a-kind service allow guests to soak in the beauty of Sitka and its community. With many different options to choose from, including cozy one-bedroom spaces and larger suites, travelers are sure to find something to fit their group size and personal preferences.

Several hotels have on-site restaurants and bars with food so delicious that locals visit regularly to enjoy their favorite dishes. Menus are ever-changing and innovative, created by chefs who are passionate about what they do. Don't forget to sample Sitka's signature cocktails as well! If you are staying for an extended time, book a suite with a kitchenette to recreate some of the dishes you're sure to discover here with local ingredients.

With central, downtown locations, most of Sitka's hotels are within a short walking distance of our main attractions and meeting venues. Art galleries, museums, and our locally owned storefronts are all just a few minutes away. Hotel staff are highly trained and knowledgeable about activities, so don't hesitate to bring your questions or ideas to the front desk. Staff members will make sure you are connected to the best experiences Sitka has to offer. For longer stays, ask about package tours that include activities. Check out the Visit Sitka online Meeting Planners' toolkit for RFP forms and more information.



# Lodges

**SITKA'S LODGES ARE MORE THAN JUST A PLACE TO STAY**; they are perfect locations for retreats and small group meetings. Sitka's lodges offer intimate, customizable experiences for every kind of traveler. Guests can book a half-, full-, or multi-day fishing trip for the catch of a lifetime. If fishing isn't your thing, the lodges provide personalized packages with activities like kayak tours and wildlife viewing. Just want to unwind? Some lodges have spas, saunas, and yoga studios for the ultimate relaxation. Here, staff treat you like family and mealtimes are highly anticipated events. While some lodges are seasonal, others operate year-round.



# Bed & Breakfasts

**IF YOU WANT THE INDEPENDENCE THAT COMES WITH A RENTAL HOUSE** as well as the hospitality of an inn or lodge, consider staying at one of Sitka's cozy bed and breakfasts. Each B&B provides a different experience; some have access to full decks or outdoor hot tubs, while others boast hearty, hot breakfasts and homemade pastries. Regardless of your preference, a stay with a seasoned Sitka local is sure to give you an inside look at our island community and the many activities it offers.



# Vacation Rentals

**FROM DREAMY DOWNTOWN APARTMENTS TO MAJESTIC WATERFRONT PROPERTIES**, Sitka's vacation rentals are the perfect home away from home. Here, you can truly live like a local: cook wild, fresh-caught Alaskan salmon in your kitchen; enjoy a movie from the comfort of a fully furnished living room; or unwind after a busy day of meetings while watching the sun set over the Sitka Sound. Whether you're looking for a rustic, Alaskan feel or a modern living space, there's something for everyone – even your own private island!



# Camping

**DREAM OF WAKING UP TO THE TRILL OF BALD EAGLES, THE SOFT MURMUR OF MOUNTAIN SPRINGS**, and a gentle breeze whispering through Sitka spruce trees? Sitka provides plenty of opportunities in town to mix the excitement of the outdoors with the modern comforts of a rental. For those who want to get even closer to nature, Sitka has three RV parks and two campgrounds, allowing you to spend as much time as possible breathing in our fresh mountain air. If you're seeking a true outdoor escape, plan your stay at one of the rustic U.S. Forest Service cabins peppered throughout the island.

# Calendar of Events

Plan your meeting so it coincides with one of Sitka's annual events! Find out more and explore events when you scan the QR code.



## JANUARY

### Russian Christmas and Starring, St. Michael's Cathedral

Celebrate the Feast of the Nativity, or "Russian Christmas," with week-long festivities, including caroling, feasts, and sharing the holiday spirit. [oca.org/parishes/oca-ak-sitk](http://oca.org/parishes/oca-ak-sitk)

## FEBRUARY

### Sitka Jazz Festival

Enjoy world-class jazz provided by professional jazz musicians and talented students. [sitkajazzfestival.com](http://sitkajazzfestival.com)

### Sitka Wearable Art Show

Come watch locals share their wearable art on the runway, showcasing outfits made of everything from disco balls to fish bones. [sitkaartscouncil.org](http://sitkaartscouncil.org)

## MARCH

### Herring Return

Every spring, witness the abundant wildlife as herring gather to spawn in Sitka Sound, turning the blue waters a milky green. [adfg.alaska.gov](http://adfg.alaska.gov)

## APRIL

### Heritage & Cultural Tourism Conference

This conference gathers professionals and business owners from across the state to discuss cultural tourism development. [facebook.com/TourismConference](https://facebook.com/TourismConference)

## MAY

### Ocean Wave Quilters Guild Show

See an array of stunning quilted creations, and vote for your favorites at the local Quilters Guild. [facebook.com/groups/oceanwave](https://facebook.com/groups/oceanwave)

### Sitka Salmon Derby

Catch prize-winning fish in this angling competition on the sparkling waters of Sitka Sound. [facebook.com/Sitka-Salmon-Derby-219533411398857](https://facebook.com/Sitka-Salmon-Derby-219533411398857)

### Porch Fest

Family-friendly music and arts festival that includes live performance stages in the downtown core along Lincoln Street. The event includes musical and dance performances, art workshops, an art walk and food vendors. [sitkaartscouncil.org/porchfest](http://sitkaartscouncil.org/porchfest)

## JUNE

### Sitka Music Festival

Enjoy Alaska's premier classical music festival, where the best musicians from around the world gather for four weeks of concerts in Sitka. [sitkamusicfestival.org](http://sitkamusicfestival.org)

### Sitka Fine Arts Camp

This creatively rich program develops artistic interests and skills within an intensive residential experience for all ages. [fineartscamp.org](http://fineartscamp.org)

## JULY

### Sitka Farmer's Market

First Saturday of the month.

### Fourth of July Celebration

Join the celebration of our nation's birthday, featuring a parade, a Coast Guard search and rescue demonstration, and the Sitka Fire Department versus Coast Guard water fight. [sitkachamber.com](http://sitkachamber.com)

### Alpine Adventure Run

Ascend 2,500 feet within the first few miles, traverse a rockslide, and climb over hills and valleys in this seven-mile mountain run! [facebook.com/Alpine-Adventure-Run-Sitka-Alaska-224092674299355](https://facebook.com/Alpine-Adventure-Run-Sitka-Alaska-224092674299355)

### Sitka International Cello Seminar

This event showcases top collegiate cellists from around the world who offer public performances. [sitkamusicfestival.org/cello-seminar](http://sitkamusicfestival.org/cello-seminar)

## AUGUST

### Sitka Farmer's Market

First Saturday of the month.

### Change Your Latitude, 57° North Open Water Challenge

Still the northernmost open ocean race in the United States, this event is a combined 10k/6k/3k/1k open water swim in Sitka Sound. [changeyourlatitude.org](http://changeyourlatitude.org)

## SEPTEMBER

### Mudball Classic Softball Tournament

This annual Labor Day weekend tournament -- played rain or shine -- is open for men's, women's, and co-ed softball teams. [facebook.com/groups/SitkaSoftball/events](https://facebook.com/groups/SitkaSoftball/events)

## OCTOBER

### Alaska Day Festival

Commemorate the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States with a reenactment ceremony on Baranof Castle Hill, a period costume ball, a parade, and more. [alaskadayfestival.org](http://alaskadayfestival.org)

## NOVEMBER

### Sitka Whalefest

Take in presentations by world-renowned marine scientists and experience whale watching cruises, concerts, art shows, and a marine-themed market at this multiday festival. [sitkawhalefest.org](http://sitkawhalefest.org)

### Native American Heritage Month

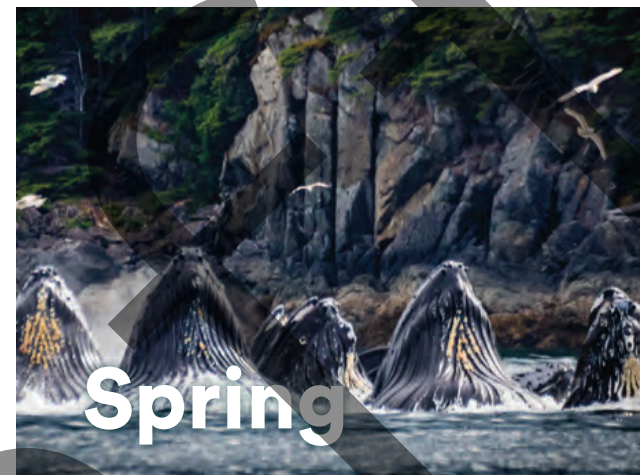
Over the month of November, celebrations of Alaska Natives, storytellers, and films will be held, as well as a regalia showcase, parade, and events to honor elders and veterans. [sitkatribes.org](http://sitkatribes.org)

## DECEMBER

### Sitka Artisans Market

This vibrant event features artists, authors, craftspeople, musicians, and cuisine to showcase the diversity of Sitka's local creativity.

# Sitka - Always in Season



## Spring

**SPRINGTIME IN SITKA MEANS RAPIDLY CHANGING WEATHER** (sometimes four seasons in a single day!), bountiful wild harvests, and the annual return of the herring that spawn in Sitka Sound. Watch as the migratory birds return to our rainforest from one of Sitka's many hiking trails, and enjoy the unique artifacts in our local museums. If you book a boat charter, you may just see one of our resident year-round whales. Roundout your spring visit by restaurant-hopping across town.



## Fall

**WHEN SITKA QUIETS DOWN AFTER A BUSY SUMMER SEASON**, the sun's low angle in the sky allows visitors to bask in the beauty of the alpenglow as the soft autumn light turns the snow-capped mountains pink and gold. Harvest handfuls of ripe blueberries and salmonberries and watch as pink salmon swim upstream through Indian River to spawn, returning to the same place where they hatched to produce their own young.



## Summer

**WITH ABUNDANT FISHING OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIME WILDLIFE VIEWING**, there's a reason why visitors flock to Sitka in the summer. Sitka's seasonal tour operators offer everything from historical walking tours, to half-day kayaking trips, to cultural dance performances. Kick off the season by participating in the Sitka Salmon Derby or wind down with one of our several music festivals.



## Winter

**AS DAYS GROW SHORTER, SITKA'S NIGHT SKIES ARE ILLUMINATED WITH BRILLIANT NORTHERN LIGHTS** that dance over the water of Sitka Sound. Experience the Christmas Bazaar, the Sitka Artisans Market, and festive concerts that showcase local creativity. After a late-winter snowfall, enjoy Sitka's beautiful backcountry by hiking up Bear Mountain and cruising down on a snowboard, or try cross-country skiing at our golf course.





# Meeting Activities & Adventures

**WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING TO GET OUT ON THE WATER OR EXPLORE DOWNTOWN,** give attendees the option to explore Sitka before or after your meetings.

From famous landmarks, to historic buildings, to awe-inspiring totem poles, there's something to see on every corner. Local, expert guides offer historical and cultural tours around town and along Sitka's walking trails.

You can learn about Tlingit history and culture while hiking along the island's rocky coastline, sample local products on a personalized walking tour, or even learn about the ghosts of Sitka's past. Sitka's museums also offer a look at the history and cultures of the island.

The unparalleled, year-round wildlife viewing in Sitka is sure to be one of the most memorable aspects of your stay. Sitka is a premier bird-watching location, and our waters are teeming with whales, porpoises, otters, and sea lions. Our community is also home to two world-class animal rehabilitation centers, where your attendees can learn about Alaska's black and brown bears or get up close and personal with a bald eagle.

Sitka's sportfishing guides allow you to have the Alaskan fishing adventure of a lifetime in fresh and saltwater. Get out on the water with one of our charter operators; they'll bring you to where the fish are.



## Planner Spotlight: SEC

Southeast Conference (SEC), a regional economic organization, held their annual meeting in Sitka. Visit Sitka hosted the SEC pre-convention site visits, which allowed for event planning to take place through tours of hotels and venues as well as meetings with caterers. During the convention, attendees immersed themselves in the Sitka community with after-hour tours on wildlife boat excursions and Sitka's two animal rehabilitation centers, where attendees saw everything from bears to whales to eagles.

Their itinerary was planned around SEC's focus on community and economic development, so Visit Sitka arranged tours of the industrial park and the hydroelectric dam to introduce attendees to the building blocks of Sitka's economy. With Visit Sitka's Show Your Badge program, attendees received special discounts in local shops, and guests spent their free time exploring Sitka's downtown while shopping for unique pieces of memorabilia.

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DINE



## Catering is the Food of Life

**WHEN YOU BOOK A CATERING SERVICE IN SITKA,** you'll enjoy locally sourced foods, like fresh seafood, seasonal berries, wild edibles, all artfully incorporated into a picturesque spread.

Visit our Meetings & Conventions Toolkit for more information and catering resources. <https://visitsitka.org/meetings/catering>

"Sourcing local foods is one of our passions, and we are always excited to share what Sitka has to offer with visitors and locals," says Edith Johnson, a professionally trained Tlingit chef and the founder of Our Town Catering.

Some of their ingredients are sustainably harvested, while others, such as hand-crafted sea salt or crunchy kelp pickles, are sourced from Sitka's thriving local maker community. Customizable menus can accommodate every kind of diet, and day-long coffee service and break snacks with refills are standard offerings.

Whether you want to give your attendees an intimate, memorable meal or a multi-course fine dining experience, menu offerings are limited only by your budget and imagination. For larger meals and banquets, Our Town Catering will also provide servers on site and additional support services.

Have you fallen in love with the menu at one of our local restaurants? Contact the manager to ask about their catering options so you can bring their signature meals – or cocktails – to the table.



# Harry Race

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# Dine & Sip

**SITKA IS OFTEN CALLED A FOODIE'S DREAM.** From before sunrise to well after sunset, your attendees will have a wide range of culinary options for “meal on your own time.”

On the island, the sun rises as early as 4:00 am, and so do our bakers. By the time they open their doors, the smells of freshly baked bread and confectionary treats will leave your mouth watering. Whether you crave sweet, melt-in-your-mouth handmade cake donuts and cinnamon rolls or freshly baked pastries to go along with your espresso drink, our bakers have you covered. Cater these items ahead of time to have a fresh continental breakfast at your first meeting of the day.

Lunch offerings are so varied you will have difficulty choosing! Guests can gather in local restaurants, or ask for takeout and delivery options. If you want a filling meal, check out burgers at a pub or hearty Mexican-style plates. Looking for something quick and on the go? Grab handmade sandwiches and chips or made-to-order salads. Want something fast and from the ocean? How about fish and chips from a seasonal food truck? If light and healthy is your style, then try out Sitka's fresh pressed juices, acai bowls, and made-to-order crepes. If the day is sunny, take lunch to-go and sit at one of the picnic tables or benches along the waterfront. Order box lunches in advance so your attendees can grab food and get some fresh air midday.

After your meetings, encourage your attendees to dine around town! When it comes to dinner in Sitka, local seafood is a must, so try it all! As you stroll around downtown, you will find tasty options every



few storefronts, and even more options a short drive away. For the foodies who search out new flavors, Sitka boasts multiple chefs who create mouthwatering food fusions using local ingredients. If perfectly grilled steak or gourmet pizza is more your style, there are restaurants ready to satisfy your appetite.

To create inspirational receptions, our chefs and bartenders love to work with planners to create signature drinks and appetizers, and local musicians can add a special musical flair to your event. At the end of the day, head downtown for libations and networking. If you are in the mood for a hand-shaken martini, a signature cocktail, or over 20 beers on tap, you will find what you are craving steps away from your meeting venue. Cozy up with a small group in one of Sitka's small wine bar and dining venues, and be sure to check the local entertainment calendar for live entertainment and the best place for karaoke and dancing.



## Planner Spotlight: Rising Tide Communications

When Rising Tide Communications came to town to host a group of culinary media professionals and chefs, Sitka's local food scene embraced them with open arms. While restaurant-hopping in Sitka, the group sampled local cuisine from a variety of our downtown restaurants. They even bought fresh seafood, including local delicacies like spot prawns and salmon, directly from the fisherman who caught them. Attendees met with harvesters who taught them how to sustainably collect ingredients from Sitka's waters and temperate rainforest. From sea asparagus, to beach greens, to berries, they tasted everything Sitka's natural environment had to offer. The group also visited downtown shops like our local salt company, which sources water straight from Sitka Sound to create unique flake salt that's flavored with spruce and blueberries found in the Tongass National Forest.



SHOP

# Supporting Your Vision



## Gifts & Shopping

WHETHER YOU'RE IN THE MARKET FOR VIP WELCOME PACKAGES, speaker gifts, or mementos for your guests, Sitka offers unique, locally made products your attendees can take home after an unforgettable event. Thank your presenters with sea salt made from regionally harvested ingredients, or gift them handcrafted artwork as a keepsake. Contact Visit Sitka for more information on our locally produced items.

### SITKA'S LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS ARE PREPARED to make your event the smoothest one yet. Our thriving business community can provide necessary supplies, repairs, or even an extra pair of hands!

One of the best ways to make your meeting prep less stressful is to print your event collateral locally. Our printing services can take care of your signs, banners, handouts, and all of your additional print needs. Send digital files before you come and then pick up in Sitka when you arrive, or even better, have them delivered to your venue. That also goes for your office supplies—why ship pens, markers, printer paper, notepads, or printer toner cartridges when our office product suppliers can

have them waiting for you? Don't worry if you left behind an HDMI cable, camera SD card, or a laser pointer; our electronic suppliers have what you need. Additionally, Sitka is home to four banks and a federal credit union, offering fast and efficient financial services.

If you are looking for decorating ideas and items, our experienced event supplier has a warehouse full of great ideas. Sitkans also love fresh flowers, and our two local florists would be happy to create and deliver your centerpieces and VIP bouquets. Will your meeting need a digital boost? A local Wi-Fi supplier can create a "hot spot" for your attendees.

Whatever you need, our community is open and ready to support your vision.



# Closer Than You Think

**PART OF SITKA'S MAGIC IS IN ITS REMOTE LOCATION.** Far removed from Alaska's road systems and deep in the heart of the Tongass National Forest, our island community is only accessible by air or water.

Fortunately, you only need a two-hour flight from Seattle or a direct flight from Anchorage with a quick stop in Juneau to get here. Alaska Airlines serves Sitka year-round, and Delta Airlines provides seasonal services between May and September.

If you're looking to transport attendees from around Southeast Alaska or conduct regional site visits, Alaska Seaplanes provides service between our neighboring communities. Sitka is a direct flight away from Kake, Klawock, and Juneau, and depending on the season, trips to Juneau may open up an opportunity to fly to Whitehorse. Want customized service and itineraries for your group? Contact one of our airlines to charter your own flight into Sitka.

While you can't drive here directly by car, the Alaska Marine Highway System operates as Southeast Alaska's "road" system with ferry routes starting from Bellingham, Washington. The Port of Sitka is the largest harbor in Alaska! As a yacht-friendly community, Sitka also houses the facilities needed to support yachts and private charters. For small ship and boat arrivals, the Sitka Harbor Department will answer any questions you have about rates, bookings, and regulations.

If you need to ship freight prior to your arrival, Sitka has many different options to choose from. From general air freight to expedited GoldStreak service, Alaska Air Cargo offers daily shipments to a network of over 100 airports. If you're located within Alaska, ACE Air Cargo is another option for hassle-free air freight.

USPS, UPS, and FedEx all have offices in Sitka, and barge shipments arrive in town twice weekly through both Alaska Marine Lines and Samson Tug & Barge. To get your cargo to Southeast Alaska via barge, ship it to their respective Seattle warehouses.

Even with the peaceful, secluded location of our island community, getting here is easy – no matter how big your group is or how large your shipment may be.

Visit <https://visitsitka.org/visitor-info/getting-here> for more information on getting to Sitka.



# Getting Around Town

**WHETHER YOU'RE PLANNING A LARGE CONVENTION OR A SMALL, INTIMATE GATHERING,** there are multiple ways for your attendees to get around town from the minute they arrive.

Some hotels offer airport shuttle services, so check with yours beforehand to see if that is an option.

Sitka is home to three motorcoach transportation companies with options that vary from full-sized motorcoaches for 40+ passengers to medium-sized sprinter vans and smaller passenger vehicles. Under their care, your guests will travel comfortably, safely, and reliably around Sitka.

Our car rental companies offer cars, vans, and even pick-up trucks! Or, if you want to leave the driving to someone else, you can hire a local chauffeur service by the hour or the day. Sitka also has multiple taxis and a public bus service, including two lines of operations that run along Sitka's main road system.

Most of Sitka's meeting venues are located within walking distance of lodging, but our extensive biking trail system, cyclist-friendly streets, and affordable bike rentals are enough to satisfy any biking enthusiast.

For questions about accessibility in Sitka, contact Southeast Alaska Independent Living to learn more about their "loan closet" of durable medical equipment and assistive technology for temporary use.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## Transportation Itinerary Example

### MONDAY

#### ATTENDEES ARRIVE IN SITKA

#### SHUTTLE TO ACCOMMODATIONS:

- 1st shuttle pick up – 1:00 pm
- 2nd shuttle pick up – 6:30 pm
- 3rd shuttle pick up – 10:00 pm

### WEDNESDAY

#### SITE VISITS AROUND SITKA:

- Coach bus pick up at venue – 11:00 am
- Coach bus arrives at attraction – 11:20 am
- Coach bus pick up at attraction – 12:20 pm
- Coach bus drop off at hotel – 12:40 pm

### FRIDAY

#### SHUTTLE TO AIRPORT:

- 1st shuttle pick up – 4:45 am
- 2nd shuttle pick up – 12:30 pm
- 3rd shuttle pick up – 4:45 pm

#### DEPARTURE FROM SITKA



Sitka Alaska's Tlingit Clan House is an astonishing venue for your next meeting!

reservations@sitkatriben-sns.gov  
www.sitkatriben-sns.gov | (907) 747-7290



# Sitka Venue Guide

SPACE	CAPACITY	TYPE	AGENCY/BUSINESS	WEBSITE	PHONE
<b>LARGE PRESENTATION &amp; CONVENTION</b>					
Sitka Performing Arts Center	608	Theater Stadium Seating	Sitka Fine Arts Camp	fineartscamp.org	(907) 623-8511
Coliseum Theater	225	Theater Stadium Seating	Coliseum Theater	sitkamovies.com	(907) 747-0646
Hames Center Gymnasium	400	Auditorium	Hames Wellness Center	hamescenter.org	(907) 747-5080
Harrigan Centennial Hall	500	Auditorium & Meeting Rooms	Harrigan Centennial Hall	cityofsitka.com/departments/HarriganCentennialHall	(907) 747-4090
Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi	300	Auditorium Stadium Seating	Sitka Tribal Enterprises	sitkatribalenterprises.com	(907) 747-7290
Sitka Fine Arts Campus Odess Theater	200	Auditorium	Sitka Fine Arts Camp	fineartscamp.org	(907) 623-8511
<b>MID-SIZE CONFERENCE &amp; BANQUET</b>					
Alaska Native Brotherhood Founders Hall	120	Auditorium	Alaska Native Brotherhood	sitkaanb@hotmail.com	(907) 747-4562
Alaska Raptor Center	100	Auditorium	Alaska Raptor Center	alaskaraptor.org	(907) 747-8662
Allen Marine Tours Charters	12-145	Marine Vessel	Allen Marine	allenmarinetours.com	(907) 747-8100
Harrigan Centennial Hall	20-100	Meeting Rooms	Harrigan Centennial Hall	cityofsitka.com/departments/HarriganCentennialHall	(907) 747-4090
Sitka Fine Arts Campus	20-100	Classrooms	Sitka Fine Arts Camp	fineartscamp.org	(907) 623-8511
Sitka Lutheran Church	40-180	Auditorium & Meeting Room	Sitka Lutheran Church	sitkalutheranchurch@gmail.com	(907) 747-3338
Swan Lake Senior Center	100	Auditorium	Swan Lake Senior Center	ccsak.org/sitka	(907) 747-8617
The Channel Club	150	Restaurant	Channel Club	info@thechannelclubsitka.com	(907) 747-7440
Westmark Sitka Hotel Meeting Rooms	20-175	Meeting Rooms & Restaurant	Westmark Sitka Hotel	westmarkhotels.com/destinationssitka-hotel	(907) 747-6241
<b>SMALL MEETINGS &amp; EVENTS</b>					
Mean Queen	90	Restaurant & Private Lounge	Mean Queen	meanqueensitka.com	(907) 747-0616
Aspen Suites Hotel Sitka	50	Meeting Room	Aspen Suites Hotel	aspenhotelsak.com/sitka	(907) 747-3477
Fellowship Hall	40	Meeting Room	Sitka United Methodist Church	umcsitka.com	(907) 747-8775
Cottage Industry Development Center	20	Classroom	Sitka Tribal Enterprises	sitkatribalenterprises.com	(907) 747-7290
Sitka Sound Science Center	20	Classroom	Sitka Sound Science Center	sitkascience.org	(907) 747-8878
University of Alaska Southeast - Sitka Campus	10-120	Auditorium & Meeting Rooms	UAS Sitka Campus	uas.alaska.edu/sitka	(907) 747-7701
<b>COMMERCIAL KITCHENS</b>					
Alaska Native Brotherhood Founders Hall	120	Kitchen	Alaska Native Brotherhood	sitkaanb@hotmail.com	(907) 747-4562
Cottage Industry Development Center Kitchen	10	Kitchen	Sitka Tribal Enterprises	sitkatribalenterprises.com	(907) 747-7291
Harrigan Centennial Hall	20-100	Kitchen	Harrigan Centennial Hall	cityofsitka.com/departments/HarriganCentennialHall	(907) 747-4090



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## We're Here to Help

**VISIT SITKA IS A DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION** managed by the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce.

Our dedicated and experienced team is available every step of the way to help you plan, execute, and wrap up your meetings, retreats, and conventions. From personalized services and resources to assistance with scheduling and booking, Visit Sitka is ready to help.

Sitka is a vibrant and tight-knit community, and we love to make our visitors and event attendees feel welcome. Reach out and ask us about welcome packets, a perfect way to introduce your attendees to Sitka's highlights before the event kicks off. Visit Sitka's Show Your Badge program is another way to immerse your event into our city; event attendees wearing badges are offered fantastic discounts at local downtown stores. Welcome signs are proudly displayed around town to greet your attendees, and in-person airport welcomes can also be scheduled. Visit Sitka is happy to accept advanced freight deliveries. Directly ship your supplies to Sitka, and we will have it ready for you when you get to town. Interested in planning exciting post-meeting activities? Visit Sitka can help you build and schedule personalized itineraries tailored to fit your meeting's focus.

We love to host site visits of our venues and attractions to help you plan an event that will knock the socks off your attendees! Visit Sitka is here to help make your event a success. From the nitty-gritty details to the large-scale logistics, we're here to help.



A place as **UNIQUE** as your **MEETING**

Direct flights from Seattle  
Bucket-list activities  
500+ lodging options  
Walkable downtown



Plan your meeting getaway  
[visitsitka.org/meetings](http://visitsitka.org/meetings)



**Harrigan Centennial Hall**  
Civic & Convention Center

**Lots of flexible space.**  
32,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, to be exact.

**Ideal for groups of 8-500.**  
With 8 meeting rooms, you can all be together... or not.

**Commercial kitchen on site.**  
Because food makes *everything* better. Don't you think?

**In the heart of downtown.**  
Translation: ultra convenient.  
Within walking distance of pretty much everything.



[visitsitka.org/meetings](http://visitsitka.org/meetings)



180+  
points of  
interest!



## Sitka in your pocket

**VISIT SITKA HAS PARTNERED WITH DRIFTSCAPE**, an interactive app that offers visitors and locals a unique way to discover all the amazing things to do in Sitka! With Driftscape, explore major attractions, trails, or find the nearest ATMs or mail drop boxes. Take a tour straight from your phone, or find your way around with the interactive Augmented Reality feature. Once downloaded, the app features will still be available to you even when unplugged. The app is available on iOS and Android devices.

Download the app and discover things to do, local businesses, hiking trails, events, and more.











**Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi - Tribal Community House**  
200 Katlian St.  
sitkatours.com  
(907) 747-7137

**Sitka Fine Arts Campus**  
121 John Brady Dr.  
fineartscamp.org  
(907) 747-3085

**Twin Islands Retreat**  
twinislandssitka.com  
(760) 458-2975

**University of Alaska Southeast**  
1332 Seward St.  
uas.alaska.edu/sitka  
(907) 747-7700

**Westmark Sitka Hotel**  
330 Seward St.  
westmarkhotels.com/destinations/sitka-hotel  
(907) 747-6241

**INSURANCE**

**Stedman Insurance Agency**  
118 American St.  
stedmanins.com  
(907) 747-8618

**USI Insurance Services Northwest**  
225 Harbor Dr.  
venneberginsurance.com  
(907) 747-8625

**MEDIA**

**Daily Sitka Sentinel**  
112 Barracks St.  
sitkasentinel.com  
(907) 747-3219

**KIFW/KSBZ - Alaska Broadcast Communications**  
611 Lake St.  
sitkaradio.com  
(907) 747-5439 | (907) 747-6626

**North Star Television**  
520 Lake St.  
(907) 747-8200

**Raven Radio**  
2 Lincoln St. Ste. B  
kcaw.org  
(907) 747-5877

**Sitka Soup**  
3601 Halibut Point Rd.  
sitkasoup.com  
(907) 747-7595

**MEDICAL SERVICES**

**Mountainside Urgent Care**  
209 Moller Ave.  
searhc.org  
(907) 966-9777

**SEARHC - Mount Edgcombe Medical Center**  
222 Tongass Dr.  
searhc.org  
(907) 966-2411 | (907) 966-8942

**Sitka Pregnancy Center**  
180 Price St., Ste. 25  
sitkapregnancycenter.org  
(907) 623-0965

**ORGANIZATIONS**

**Alaska State Parks**  
dnr.alaska.gov/parks  
(907) 465-4563

**Alaska Travel Industry Association**  
alaskatia.org  
(907) 929-2842

**City and Borough of Sitka**  
100 Lincoln St.  
cityofsitka.com  
(907) 747-3294

**Cruise Lines International Association Alaska (Alaska Cruise Association)**  
cliaalaska.org  
(907) 339-9340

**Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum**  
104 College Dr.  
friendsofshjm.com  
(907) 747-6233

**Greater Sitka Arts Council**  
sitkaartscouncil.org

**Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce**  
104 Lake St.  
sitkachamber.com  
(907) 747-8604

**Sitka Conservation Society**  
201 Lincoln St., Ste. 4  
sitkawild.org  
(907) 747-7509

**Sitka Economic Development Association**  
329 Harbor Dr., Ste. 212  
sitka.net  
(907) 747-2660

**Sitka Lutheran Church**  
224 Lincoln St.  
sitkalutheranchurch.com  
(907) 747-3338

**Sitka Public Library**  
320 Harbor Dr.  
cityofsitka.com/government/departments/library

**Sitka Trail Works, Inc.**  
801 Halibut Point Rd.  
sitkatrailworks.org  
(907) 747-7244

**Southeast Alaska Tourism Council**  
alaskasinsidepassage.com  
(907) 321-7231

**Southeast Conference**  
seconference.org  
(907) 586-4360

**University of Alaska Southeast**  
1332 Seward St.  
uas.alaska.edu/sitka  
(907) 747-7700

**PHARMACIES**

**Harry Race Pharmacy & Photo**  
106 Lincoln St.  
sitkapharmacies.com/harry-race  
(907) 313-6750

**White's Pharmacy**  
705 Halibut Point Rd.  
sitkapharmacies.com  
(907) 313-6881

**PORT SERVICES/MOORAGE**

**Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska**  
4513 Halibut Point Rd. Ste. A  
claalaska.com  
(907) 747-3377

**Sitka Harbor Department**  
617 Katlian St.  
cityofsitka.com/government/departments/harbor  
(907) 747-3439

**Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal**  
4513 Halibut Point Rd.  
halibutpointmarine.com  
(907) 747-1089

**PRINT SERVICES / PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS**

**Harry's Custom Services**  
117 Granite Creek Rd.  
whitesalaska.com  
(907) 313-5458

**REAL ESTATE**

**Davis Realty**  
208 D Lake St.  
davisrealty.com  
(907) 747-1032

**Sitka Realty**  
228 Harbor Dr.  
sitkarealty.com  
(907) 747-8922

**TRAVEL SERVICES**

**Alaska Marine Highway**  
5307 Halibut Point Rd.  
ferryalaska.com  
(907) 747-8737 | (907) 465-3941

**Alaska & Yukon Tours**  
bookayt.net  
(907) 531-9140

**Sitka Baby Rentals**  
sitkababyrentals.com  
(907) 738-3351

**YACHT SERVICES**

**Alaska Boat Cruises**  
alaskaboatcruises.com  
(907) 747-6026

**Yacht Services of Alaska**  
4513 Halibut Point Rd. #A  
yachtservicesofalaska.com  
(907) 747-3377

**US Superyacht Association**  
ussuperyacht.com  
(954) 792-8666

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 Visit Sitka Alaska  @visitsitka



**LEARN MORE**  
visitsitka.org

DRAFT



# BIKING MAP

## VISIT Sitka

**TRAIL LEGEND**

Distance = 1 mile

	Trail	Unpaved Road	Paved Road
Rideable Routes			
Ride With Caution			
Hiking Only Trails			

**Share The Trail**

**SHARED USE, KEEP LEFT | RIGHT**

All trails and paths open to bikes in Sitka are shared with pedestrians or traffic.

While enjoying your biking adventure, please take care to yield to pedestrians, watch for traffic, and use bike-designated paths. It's the law!



© Brian Adams 2019,  
Courtesy of Robert Wood  
Johnson Foundation

## RIDING ETIQUETTE

# Rules of the Road

**Sitka is a bike-friendly community**, and the compact road network is ideal for biking. Follow these tips to make the experience safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

### Be Respectful

- **Yield to pedestrians:** All trails open to bikes are shared with people walking. Slowing down keeps everyone safe. Failure to yield is illegal under Alaska State Law.
- **Use bike-designated paths when possible:** Riding on sidewalks in downtown Sitka is prohibited. Walk your bike in heavy foot-traffic and pedestrian-only areas.

### Be Predictable

- Ride with traffic flow on the right side of the road.
- When riding on the road or crossing the street, make eye contact with motorists and signal your intentions clearly.
- Watch out for motorists, pedestrians, and other hazards.

### Be Bear-Aware

Bear activity is highest between spring and fall, but bears are present year-round. If you encounter a bear, **DO NOT RUN**. Back away slowly while facing the bear. Make noise and try to look large. Use bear spray if necessary.

## Sitka Biking Trails

Scan the QR code for more maps and hiking trail information.



Shared with  
Vehicles



Shared with  
ATVs/UTVs







Hilly  
Terrain

Distance + miles/kilometers one way



### Rideable Routes






Enjoy your ride on these bike-friendly routes, but make sure you're familiar with the rules of the road!

- 2 **Starrigavan Campground/Bayside Loop**  600 ft/.18 km
- 5 **Halibut Point Road**  7.3 mi/11.7 km
- 10 **Sawmill Creek Road/Shared-Use Path**  5.6 mi/8.8 km
- 16 **Green Lake Road**  8.2 mi/13.1 km



### Ride With Caution

Routes may include unpaved paths, steep terrain, or unprotected roadways.

- 3 **Starrigavan Multi-Use Trails** 
- 7 **Sitka's Cross Trail**  7.8 mi/12.5 km
- 8 **Downtown Sitka** 
- 14 **Blue Lake Road**   2.2 mi/3.5 km



### Hiking-Only Trails

Park your bike at the trailhead and enjoy the scenery!

- 1 **Táax'aa Geeyí /Mosquito Cove Trail**
- 4 6 **Harbor Mountain & Gavan Hill Trails**
- 9 **Indian River Trail**
- 11 **Sitka National Historical Park**
- 12 **Mt. Verstovia**
- 13 **Thimbleberry/Heart Lake Trail**
- 15 **Beaver Lake Trail**