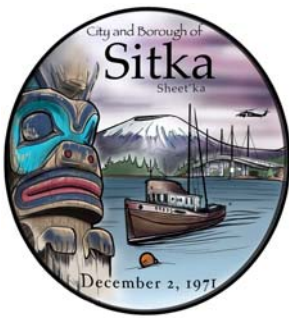


Discussion / Direction / Decision

on applying for the Transportation Alternatives Program projects and match commitments –

- 1) safety improvements for crossing State Right of Way Sawmill Creek Road at Raptor Way, and
- 2) State Right of Way Harbor Drive Improvement Safe Pedestrian Crossing Project.



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Eisenbeisz and Assembly Members

Thru: John Leach, Municipal Administrator *M. Henshaw*

From: Melissa Henshaw, Public and Government Relations Director

Date: February 22, 2023

Subject: Transportation Alternatives Program Projects and Match Commitments

Grant Background

The [Transportation Alternatives](#) (TA) Set-Aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program provides funding for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas; community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management; environmental mitigation related to storm water and habitat connectivity; recreational trails; safe routes to school projects; and vulnerable road user safety assessments.

The Call for Projects is broken into two phases. Phase one consisted of submission of a Notice of Intent to Apply (NOIA) that included project title, location, scope, short justification, and eligibility screening in order to be eligible for phase two call for projects. CBS submitted the NOIA and met with the Regional Planner to discuss scope, eligibility, management responsibilities, match requirements, estimating details, supporting documents, and more.

Phase 2 was a call for projects. DOT&PF used the preliminary project information to determine eligibility and prepare a scope, schedule, and estimate. CBS is responsible to develop the full project application.

Awarded projects will be developed and managed by ADOT&PF as this program does not issue grants to communities directly.

Criteria on a 0–5-point scale include: Health and quality of life, safety, contributions, M&O costs, public support, gaps/barriers, tied to an event, intrinsic qualities, historic transportation facility, capital cost, other factors.

TA grant key factors:

- Applications are due February 28, 2023. Resolutions and financial commitments are due for the Statewide Project Evaluation Board Meeting by end of April.
- Projects proposed on a roadway managed by DOT&PF and within the Right of Way (ROW) supported by ADOT&PF will cover the match.

- Additional funding provided by the community would be considered for additional points.
- The community is responsible for maintenance responsibility for the new facility and open to the public for at least 25 years.
- DOT&PF completes the scope, schedule, and estimate.
- This program is expected to award close to \$20-30 million for this award cycle.
- TA Projects are limited to two project submittals per public entity not to exceed federal share amount of \$5 million per submittal as determined by a DOT&PF certified estimate.
- Project awards will be announced in May 2023.

Project Background

Safety Improvements for Crossing State Right of Way Sawmill Creek Road at Raptor Way

In 2019, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in coordination with the National Park Service (NPS) and DOT&PF completed a safety audit along Sawmill Creek Road in the vicinity of the Alaska Raptor Center. The safety audit also noted evidence of a high-volume crossing location for pedestrians and suggested evaluating this location for high-visibility crosswalk markings and signing, advance yielding to pedestrian signage, or further electrical treatments such as rectangular rapid-flashing beacons (RRFB) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB).

The safety audit noted that pedestrians were observed crossing midblock to access the Alaska Raptor Center; there is an informal path indicating that this is a high crossing area for pedestrians. It states that the gravel roadway along Raptor Way is in visibly poor condition. No crosswalk or pedestrian signing is provided at the Sawmill Creek Road / Raptor Way intersection, though there is a striped crosswalk across Sawmill Creek Road approximately 850 feet to the south at Jarvis Street (where a nature trail connects to the Sitka National Historical Park) and 1500 feet to the west at Indian River Road. Pedestrian crossing volumes across Sawmill Creek Road exceed 20 crossings per hour 5 hours of the day (from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM).

The project is to design and construct a pedestrian crossing across Sawmill Creek near Raptor Way. The desired crossing is a mid-block crossing at Raptor Way and may include a traffic control device such as a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB). Lighting improvements may also be installed. The final design will be in compliance with the Alaska Traffic Manual and supported by engineering analyses.

This crossing is supported by the 2002 Sitka Non-Motorized Transportation Plan; 2018 Sawmill Creek Road Transportation Corridor Assessment (updated in December 2021) conducted by Western Federal lands Highway Division for the National Park Service and CBS; 2022 Traffic Study.

State Right of Way Harbor Drive Improvement Safe Pedestrian Crossing Project

Kittelson & Associates, Inc. (Kittelson) and Huddle AK prepared a tourism focused traffic study, and to conduct related stakeholder outreach, building upon the *Sitka Short-Term Tourism Plan* prepared by CBS staff in advance of the 2022 summer tourist season. Observations included significant pedestrian crossing activities across Harbor Drive between Harrigan Centennial Hall and Lincoln Street of more than 3,000 pedestrians on high volume cruise ship days. The curvature of Harbor Drive along with tall buildings on the northwest side of the road makes it more dangerous for those pedestrians crossing at that blind spot.

The project is to design and construct a pedestrian crossing improvement across Harbor Drive between Maksoutoff Road and Harrigan Centennial Hall. The crossing may include a traffic control device such as a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB). Lighting improvements may also be installed. The final design will be in compliance with the Alaska Traffic Manual and supported by engineering analyses.

This crossing is supported by the 2002 Sitka Non-Motorized Transportation Plan; 2022 Traffic Study

Fiscal Note

We respectfully ask the Assembly if an additional match should be included with these applications. ADOT&PF supports the project and will provide the required match funding of 9.03%. Additional funding provided would be considered for additional points. If the Assembly makes the decision to provide additional funding, the funding will come from the Commercial Passenger Vessel Excise Tax funds. ADOT&PF suggested 1% additional contribution to earn 2 additional points. Zero points are scored for a contribution requirement of 9.03%. As noted in the criteria weight chart below, contribution is weighted at the highest level of 15%.

TAP STANDARD	Weight
Tied to Event	3%
Intrinsic Qualities	3%
Capital Cost	5%
Other Factors	5%
M&O Costs	5%
Historic Transportation	10%
Public Support	12%
Bridges Gaps or Removes Barriers	12%
Contribution	15%
Health & Quality of Life	15%
Safety	15%

Safety Improvements for Crossing State Right of Way Sawmill Creek Road at Raptor Way

Total project cost is \$1,719,400.

- 0% match funding for 0 points (ADOT&PF will cover)
- 1% additional funding of \$17,194 for 2 points
- 5.01% additional funding of \$86,142 for 3 points

State Right of Way Harbor Drive Improvement Safe Pedestrian Crossing Project

Total project cost is \$1,510,000.

- 9.03% match funding for 0 points (ADOT&PF will cover)
- 1% additional match funding of \$15,100 for 2 points
- 5.01% additional funding of \$75,651 for 3 points

Please note that in addition to any match the Assembly approves, ADOT will require that the CBS take on future maintenance for any newly built facilities.

Recommendation

Review the Transportation Alternatives program and discuss match commitment levels.