



FY22

### Introduction

The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce is currently in contract with the City of Sitka to provide Convention & Visitor Services (initial contract began Oct. 15; current contract beganJan. 1, 2019). The Sitka Chamber as Visit Sitka provided the 3-year Strategic Marketing Plan 2019-2021 and Annual Marketing Workplan FY19/20 to the Assembly in a work-session on Jan. 8, 2019.

Exhibit B CVS Contract: "The annual contract amountshall 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 a base budget and supplemental budget based on the needs of the marketing program in order to maintain service levels.

Recognizing the reduction in collected transient lodging tax, the total of this supplemental budget is 22% less than funded amount in FY21. But we also need to realize that in the summer of 2022, the current cruise ship schedule reflects an 87% increase in cruise traffic.

The supplemental budget is for the FY22 full fiscal year. Examples of investments have been detailed in the following narratives and will be presented at a work session of the Assembly on March 23, 2021.

## **Highlights**

- Sitka will see an 87% increase in cruise traffic from 2019 to 2022
- 15% of all cruise passengers visit Sitka
- 90% of visitors to Southeast are cruisers, 8%arrive via air, & 2% arrive via ferry
- Tourism accounts for 18% of SE AK's jobs,
- \$793 million in tourist spending
- Sitka was selected to host the 2022 AlaskaTravel Industry Association Convention
- Cruise Critic selected Sitka as Top 5
   AlaskaCruise Destination for 4 years in a row

### FY22-Q1-Q4 Request

Base \$300,000

Supplemental \$158,600

FY21 funding level \$500,200 FY20 funding level \$500,200

### **Promotion**

Cruise/Yacht FY22: \$15,000

The 2022 summer visitor season will see an estimated 400,000 passengers, an increase of 87% over 2019. Creating and maintaining relationships with cruise line partners is key to growing cruise market share and maintaining a great relationship with your cruise line partners. With the vast distance between the cruise company home offices and Alaska it is key to attend events that give face to face contact with cruise line executives, and those who sell cruises.

There are three key opportunities for FY22. At Seatrade Cruise Global in Miami, Florida, Visit Sitka will be one of the 8 Premium Sponsor ports represented with a separate podium and strong presence among ports in the "North to Alaska" Booth. A premium placement gets us in front of the cruise industry market and allows us to connect with the more than 70 cruise lines and 11,000 professionals who are anticipated to attend the cruise industry's premier promotion and networking event. At the Holland America Line Alaska Cruise & Travel Shows in Seattle and Vancouver, Visit Sitka connects with the "triangle" of cruise line executives, cruise sellers and consumers. Education is key for the professionals that sell cruises and their shore activities and the best way to accomplish this is through call center staff trainings of those who directly engage with consumers as they choose their itinerary and book their cruise. Call center trainings will give cruise staff direct knowledge of Sitka, our community, and its offerings.

Visit Sitka will continue to increase engagement with the yacht market including membership with the US Superyacht Association. One of the best places to reach out to yacht owners and operators is the **Seattle Boat Show** and Visit Sitka will attend to increase awareness of Sitka. Visit Sitka will create a welcome packet to be distributed through the Yacht Services of Alaska and the Sitka Harbormaster's office.

### **Meetings & Conventions**

FY22: \$13,750

The next phase in developing Visit Sitka's Meeting & Convention program is to build relationships with decisionmakers in incentive travel and C-suite retreats, along with instate trade, government and school travel. Projects to complement this strategy include travel to business-to-business (B2B) meeting planner events, creating Visit Sitka in-state meeting planner trainings, continue developing visitsitka.org to encompass more information and tools, brand aligned Meeting & Convention promotional items for both hosted events and travel. Promotional items are especially important for our emphasis on enhancing visitor experience and taking advantage of word-of-mouth marketing which research still shows is the number one driver of travel.

\*Special Project for FY22: Sitka is the host community for the 2022 Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) Annual Convention & Trade Show in October 2022.. The requirements for this include a hosted community night reception for 400 people, a sponsored community welcome session, AV support, transportation, and onsite logistical support. In anticipation of

these events there will behosted site visits, preparatory meetings and advance collateral creation.

Tourism FY22: \$14,000

It is important to continue marketing Sitka as a destination for fully independent travelers, cruise travelers, sport fishers, international & domestic tour operators, airlines, other travel, friends andfamily. Attendance at consumer travel shows continues to be a great way to increase consumer awareness of Sitka's uniqueness as a destination. Visit Sitka will attend at least two direct to consumer shows, focusing on west coast locations with easy flight access to Sitka, including the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay Area Adventure & Travel Shows. Attendance at a travel-tradeshows to reach ready-to-buy travelers for leisure and destination fishing increasing overnight stays in Sitka. 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. Visit Sitka can also leverage attendance of Travel Alaska (State of Alaska's tourism marketing program) by sending collateral to trade shows they attend.

# **Media, Partnerships & Cooperative Marketing**

FY21: \$20,000

Media outreach & Public Relations amplifies our message beyond our own fiscal constraints. Partnerships with media help us maintain control over the message of Sitka especially specific issues including ferry services, air travel, etc. Media relationships are built over time, so it is important to keep the message of Sitka in front of as many media outlets as possible. To accomplish this Visit Sitka will represent Sitka at **two Alaska Media Roadshows** – on the west coast at Las Vegas and on the east coast in New York City. The Roadshows are a day of face-to- face meetings with the most influential travel media in the United States to increase editorial coverage of Sitka.

Visit Sitka also hosts visiting travel writers and social media influencers in Sitka throughout the year. As travel opens Visit Sitka will be prepared to host journalists, which includes 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 it's doors to all media and journalists to continue the message of Sitka as a unique destination.

Co-op marketing is the opportunity for Sitka to buy into larger advertising markets and return more value for our spend. An example of this is co-hosting a travel writer or influencer who is traveling around southeast while being hosted by various communities. In FY21 Visit Sitka invested in a cloud based digital asset management tool called **Canto**. This powerful tool catalogs all of our digital assets including images, video, graphics and

documents, into one organized location, and allows us to easily share and acquire assets. It streamlines the process of accessing our digital assets and we continue to find new and better ways to use the program.

# **Advertising**

Digital FY21: \$4,000

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 give us the opportunity to promote Sitka across multiple digital platforms, reaching new and different markets.

Print FY21: \$6,200

In general print vs. digital is a more expensive buy and we plan to focus on partners who can helpreach audiences that are ready to travel and in planning stages. Print presents ROI challenges, asit is often difficult to track the audience, though through use of unique url links you can capture information as people enter the website. Though print can have a long shelf life depending on thepublication, and often print advertising includes a digital component as well. Visit Sitka will maintain our presence in Travel Alaska's printed visitor guide.

Social Media FY21: \$11,500

Social media allows us to reach ever new audiences, improve customer service with real-time feedback, gain market share and increase brand awareness for relatively low cost compared to traditional outlets. It also establishes Visit Sitka as the expert for both visitors and partners. Social media marketing includes video & image creation, paid promotion and ads and platform management. For increased engagement Visit Sitka will promote our new short-form videos, instructional videos- to enhance visitor experience, enhanced Pinterest boards, and "Insta-take overs" with partners to share messages and audiences.

Branded Content FY21: \$5,500

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 organicand authentic rather than traditional advertising. When a consumer watches branded content, their brand recall is up to 59% higher than it is with display ads. Developing branded content often includes working with writers and photographers.

### **Branded Collateral/Infrastructure**

Infrastructure projects help visitors and locals find the resources they need to fully experience Sitka. To continue to give excellent service Visit Sitka will add much needed resource equipmentat visitor information locations and update signage

FY21: \$2,000

Visitors' Guide FY21: \$33,500

With a rapid increase in visitors,. Visit Sitka will need to maintain a circulation of at least 20,000 printed guides. The guides will continue to feature branded editorial content, featuring full-page visuals and content segmented to reflect the interests of the high potential target audiences. Visit Sitka sends a small percentage of magazines to visitor centers across the state, to increase awareness and interest in Sitka. These magazines will be directly shipped from the printer to save on shipping costs. There will also be an interactive digital on-line version that will include video inserts, scrolling photo galleries and directto website links.

# **VisitSitka.org Website**

### **Website Development**

Visit Sitka engages visitors to inspire their travel choices and one of our most important platforms to accomplish this is our website. Destination Marketing Organization websites are trusted and value resources for travel planning. In order tokeep our website "live" and relevant for visitors, locals and search engines, fresh content and updating is critical. Frequently added content such as a blog, images, updated vendor descriptions or article postings mean more engagement, better search engine rankings and lower bounce rate (the amount of time people spend on your website).

To keep content fresh and relevant examples of projects include to expanding the a yacht services section, developing the travel trade section with a tool kit to better sell Sitka, developing the destination weddings page, creating digital niche guides for specialty travel groups and expanding the Sitka blog, and updating our tourism business images with professional or targetedphotography.

Website Maintenance FY21: \$5,900

In order for the website to function its best, it is necessary to invest in maintenance which includes software updates and bug fixes, security scans, minor modifications, and maintaining overall site health.

# **Tourism Business Training & Events**

FY21: \$1,000

FY21: \$10,000

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 Visit Sitka Summer Expo, where locals are encouraged to learn about Sitka's tourism industry; Alaska Host trainings, Convention & Visitor Service meetings and Visit Sitka monthly informational newsletters.

# **Special Project**

### **Alaska Fellows Program**

The Alaska Fellows Program, a nine-month postgraduate fellowship program, will place a dynamic recent graduate with Visit Sitka, through Sitka Chamber's non-profit status. The Sitka Winter Fellow would join the team and work on projects that will expand our social media presence on the global stage. The Fellow's research and development of new social media strategies will help grow our message into new markets.

FY21: \$11,500

FY22 Visit Sitka Comprehensive Budget						
Category	Total Budget Required for Program	Base Contract Revenue	% of Budget	Supplemental Budget Revenue	% of Budget	
City Contract FY22 (FY21 total \$500,200)	\$458,600	\$300,000	65.4%	\$158,600	34.6%	
Income Total		\$300,000		\$158,600		
ESTIMATED CVS CONT	RACT GRAND TOTAL	\$300,000		\$158,600		

Category	Total Budget Required for Program	Base Budget Expense	Percentage in Base Budget	Supplemental Budget Expense	% Total Budget
Travel- Trade and Promotion					
Promotion- Cruise/Yacht	\$18,500	\$3,500	18.9%	\$15,000	81.1%
Promotion- Meetings & Conventions	\$15,750	\$2,000	12.7%	\$13,750	87.3%
Promotion- Tourism	\$15,000	\$1,000	6.7%	\$14,000	93.3%
Travel Trade Costs Total	\$49,2 <b>5</b> 0	\$6,500	2.2%	\$42,750	
Media, Partnerships & Co-op Marketing					
Editorial/Sponsored Content/PR	\$15,000	\$1,500	10.0%	\$13,500	90.0%
Dues, Partnerships & Subcriptions	\$8,000	\$1,500	18.8%	\$6,500	81.3%
SATC Membership	\$1,000	\$1,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Media and Co-op Costs Total	\$24,000	\$4,000	1.3%	\$20,000	
Advertising					
Advertising-Digital					
Advertising-Digital Subtotal	\$5,000	\$1,000		\$4,000	
Advertising-Print					
Advertising-Print Subtotal	\$6,200	\$0		\$6,200	
Advertising-Social Media					
Advertising-Social Media Subtotal	\$12,000	\$500		\$11,500	
Branded Collateral					
Printed Collateral Subtotal	\$8,500	\$1,000		\$7,500	
Advertising Costs Total	\$31,700	\$19,250	6.4%	\$63,200	
Sitka Visitor Guide					
Printing	\$16,000	\$8,000	50.0%	\$8,000	50.0%
Online Hosting of Digital Magazine	\$1,750	\$1,750	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Graphic Design/Content Development	\$20,000	\$3,000	15.0%	\$17,000	85.0%
Photo Usage	\$1,000	\$500	50.0%	\$500	50.0%
Shipping	\$12,000	\$3,500	29.2%	\$8,500	70.8%
Sitka Visitor Guide Total	\$50,750	\$16,750	5.6%	\$34,000	
Website					
Website Development	\$10,000	\$0	0.0%	\$10,000	100.0%
Website Maintenance	\$9,000	\$3,100	34.4%	\$5,900	65.6%
Website Costs Total	\$19,000	\$3,100	1.0%	\$15,900	

Category	Total Budget Required for Program	Base Budget Expense	Percentage in Base Budget	Supplemental Budget Expense	% Total Budget
Tourism Business Training and Events					
Tourism Business Training	\$1,000	\$500	50.0%	\$500	50.0%
Tourism Business Events	\$1,000	\$500	50.0%	\$500	50.0%
Partner Training & Event Costs Total	\$2,000	\$1,000	0.3%	\$1,000	
Special Projects					
Fellows Contract non-payroll	\$11,500	\$0	0.0%	\$11,500	100.0%
Special Projects Costs Total	\$11,500	\$0	0.0%	\$11,500	
Operating Expenses					
Accounting Services	\$9,000	\$9,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Professional Services	\$1,000	\$1,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Rent	\$25,200	\$25,200	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Telephone/Internet	\$6,900	\$6,900	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Insurance	\$3,300	\$3,300	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Utilities	\$6,000	\$6,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Office Technology	\$3,500	\$3,500	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Office Supplies	\$5,000	\$2,500	50.0%	\$2,500	50.0%
Operating Costs Total	\$59,900	\$57,400	19.1%	\$2,500	
Administration					
Salaries	\$189,500	\$189,500	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Payroll Tax	\$16,000	\$16,000	100.0%	\$0	0.0%
Professional Development/Training	\$5,000	\$3,250	65.0%	\$1,750	35.0%
Administration Costs Total	\$210,500	\$208,750	69.6%	\$1,750	
ESTIMATED EXPENSE GRAND TOTAL	AL	\$300,000		\$158,600	
FY21 CVS CONTRACT TOTAL		\$300,000		\$200,200	
FY22 CONTRACT FUNDING TOTAL		\$300,000		\$158,600	
* Reduction in Supplemental Budget -22%					
Reduction in Supplemental Budget -22%					

Supplemental Budget Request (Loss)

\$0

(\$41,600)



#### Visit Sitka Operation Update

#### General Overview of Sitka Travel Industry – Outlook to 2021

Based on current travel research, general sentiment is that Americans continue to plan to travel as soon as travel restrictions are lifted. VS partners have shared that independent travelers continue to book trips for 2021 as well as into 2022. We have also learned that accommodations are almost full for July of 2021, and many Sitka area resorts are fully booked for the summer season.

As of the end of December, the draft cruise line calendar continues to show the majority of cruise ships originally scheduled to visit Sitka, are maintaining their schedules. With so much "up in the air" in the tourism industry, everyone is waiting to see what will happen, and hoping for the best.

There is still a lot of uncertainty around 2021 ferry travel. Not only is the ferry schedule and service an unknown, but with limited travel due to COVID-19, this is also an area where the industry is on pause.

#### Marketing & Promotion Updates: 10/1-12/31

Visit Sitka (VS) has been focusing on reaching independent visitors who are "dreaming" of travel. In this quarter the Visit Sitka website <u>visitsitka.org</u> had 9,437 visits with 20,504 pageviews and 8,059 unique visitors. 83% of the website visits were from the United States, and 18% of all visits were from Alaska. Visit Sitka's Instagram account continues to gain followers a total of 8,506 at the end of December (increase of 2,658 over 2019) and reached a total of 79,997 unique viewers. Visit Sitka's Facebook page maintained a high level of engagement with an average of 10 posts per month and a reach of 184,707 unique viewers.

To keep Sitka top of mind, in October VS mailed a printed 2020-21 guide to our mailing list requests from 2019. This reminded approximately 5,000 travelers that they want to come visit Sitka.

In this quarter VS finalized the content, layout and advertising sales for the 2021-22 guide. The visitor guide will be published in mid-February, with a circulation of 20,000 copies. All of the content was created in-house, with the layout completed by Element Agency (our Sitka based marketing firm). New images were captured by multiple local photographers.

VS team members worked closely with the editors at Driven Equation to edit and produce five 30 second Sitka focused videos from footage collected this past June. Video topics include:

Outdoor Adventure, Attractions, Shopping & Dining, History & Culture, and Meetings & Conventions. The videos will be ready for distribution in early 2021 and will be hosted on visitsitka.org and a new Visit Sitka YouTube channel.

#### Meetings & Conventions (M&C) Update: 10/1-12/31

Due to COVID-19 schedule changes, the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has modified the dates of their annual convention that was originally scheduled for October 2021. ATIA will now bring their convention to Sitka in October of 2022. An initial planning meeting was held, and Sitka is tasked with developing a convention theme, transportation support and hosting a community night event.

This quarter the new Alaska Fellow assigned to work with Visit Sitka, focused on research for the new M&C collateral and online toolkit. Her focus was to gather data and samples of best programs and practices for a M&C program. She also was instrumental in supporting events in Sitka such as virtual Whalefest, the Chamber's new virtual Fall Speaker Series and it's new Facebook Live program.

### Visitor Services Update: 10/1-12/31

Between October and December, VS visitor center welcomed 93 guests, including visitors from ten states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Vermont) in addition to local Sitka community members. 11.2% of visitors were in-state travelers from six Alaska localities (Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kodiak, Prince of Wales and Wasilla). VS team members provided telephone support services for visitors and locals looking for most up-to-date travel protocols and mandates. VS continued to distribute Visit Sitka Magazines by mail, locally and throughout the state including distribution racks at Westmark Sitka Hotel, Totem Square Inn and 2 racks at the Airport.

VS team members continued to modify the Visitor Information Center according to updating COVID-19 protocols. VS updated their COVID-19 resources flier (available at the Sitka airport, hotel front desks and harbor ramps) and continued to supply biweekly COVID-19 email updates between November and December. In November, VS staff began working remotely with one team member in the office during Visitor Information Center hours.

#### Industry Partner Update: FY2021- Q2

VS staff met with representatives of Royal Caribbean Lines and discussed ways that RCL could support the Sitka community. As a result of this meeting RCL met with leaders of local non-profit organizations and sponsored Alaska Raptor Center, Salvation Army, ANS Christmas Dinner and SAFV.

On November 24, VS presented its quarterly special report to the Sitka Assembly.

VS leadership participated in Southeast Conference Tourism Committee and Economic Development Committee meetings, Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) COVID-19 Return to Cruising Workgroup meetings, Virtual Wooch.een Health Networking and Learning

Lunch and various industry lead trainings and workshops. They also attended the ATIA Annual Conference (Virtual), the Western Association of Chamber Executives' Workforce Boot Camp, and provided marketing support for Whalefest.

Financial Update: FY2021- Q2

The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce utilized bookkeeping services from Balance Accounting Solutions. The Chamber operates on a calendar year with budgets and financials reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors.

The Chamber board of directors completed a request for proposals process and selected a new accounting contractor to begin January 1, 2021. The Foraker Group will be performing accounting functions and creating financial reports as per the contract. Transition activities began in November.

Income Update: 10/1-12/31

The Income Statement reflects income from the CBS Contract in the amount of \$500,200. This amount reflects \$125,050 per quarter for four quarters of calendar year 2020. The Sitka Chamber raises revenues outside the contract through marketing partnerships and sales. Partners of Visit Sitka, which include local tourism businesses and organizations contributed \$70,497 towards the marketing programs in 2020. This income is \$46,237 less than 2019's industry investment, as tourism businesses struggled to afford advertising and contracted their spending during the challenging financial year.

Expense Updates: 10/1-12/31

In the expense report, you will see all expense related to advertising, marketing and operating expenses for Visit Sitka. The full contract amount was expended, in addition to the \$31,614 reflected in the report.

Attachment: The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Visit Sitka Income Statement, January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020

Respectfully,

Rachel Roy, Executive Director

Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce | Visit Sitka

#### Visit Sitka Income Statement December 31, 2020

December 31, 2020	0	
		Actuals
REVENUE		YTD
Income		
CBS contract revenue	\$ <b>\$</b>	500,200
Total Income	\$	500,200
Offset to Income	_	
Planner Printing	\$	17,695
Planner Graphic Design	\$	23,751
Planner Photo Usage	\$	950
Fundraising Expense	\$ \$ <b>\$</b>	-
Total Offset to Income	<u>   \$                                 </u>	42,396
	Gross Profit \$	457,804
0 4 5		
Operating Expenses	Φ.	70
Special events expense	\$	76
Salaries	\$	178,625
Advertising	\$	104,081
Alaska Co-op Marketing	\$	-
Website/Digital Media	\$	22,704
Webpage (2018 Brand Voice)	\$	361
Bank online fees	\$	1,575
Dues & Subscriptions	\$	3,245
Insurance: Liability	\$	2,357
Insurance: worker's comp	\$	985
Accounting Services	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	3,608
Professional Services	\$	843
Postage & freight (Planner)	\$	13,753
Office supplies	\$	5,011
Office Equipment	\$	-
Telephone & internet	\$	8,945
Office Technology	\$	6,062
Rent	\$	25,200
Utilities	\$	3,383
Leasehold improvements	\$	4,011
Payroll tax expense	\$	15,063
Professional Development/Training	\$	1,559
Promotion: Cruise	\$	14,635
Promotion: Conventions	\$	18,973
Promotion: Tourism	\$	28,471
Travel Writers & FAM Tours	\$	23,800
Travel/Training	\$	-
Membership/Volunteer Events	\$	1,229
Membership/Volunteer Training: CVS	\$	862
Misc Expense	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	
Total Visit Sitka Expenses	\$	489,418
TOTAL NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$	(31,614)
	\$	(31,614)