



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Agenda - Final

Planning Commission

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

6:30 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

****Special Meeting****

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

(Public participation on any item off the agenda. All public testimony is not to exceed 3 minutes for any individual, unless the Chair imposes other time constraints at the beginning of the agenda item.)

IV. THE EVENING BUSINESS

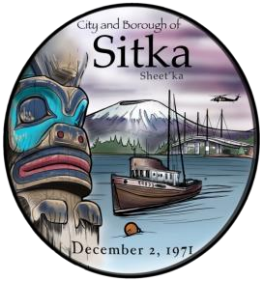
A [MISC 21-09](#) Discussion/Direction on Short-Term Tourism Plan

Attachments: [Staff Memo Dispersion Wrap Up](#)
[Compiled Comments](#)
[Tourism Dispersion Public Comment Map](#)
[Tourism Dispersion Public Comment Map Downtown](#)

V. ADJOURNMENT

NOTE: More information on these agenda items can be found at <https://sitka.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> or by contacting the Planning Office at 100 Lincoln Street. Individuals having concerns or comments on any item are encouraged to provide written comments to the Planning Office or make comments at the Planning Commission meeting. Written comments may be dropped off at the Planning Office in City Hall, emailed to planning@cityofsitka.org, or faxed to (907) 747-6138. Those with questions may call (907) 747-1814.

Publish:



City and Borough of Sitka

PROVIDING FOR TODAY...PREPARING FOR TOMORROW

Coast Guard City, USA

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Spivey and Planning Commission Members

From: Amy Ainslie, Planning Director *AA*

Date: July 2, 2021

Subject: **Tourism Planning – Dispersion Wrap-up**

In wrapping up the dispersion section of the plan, staff wanted to provide the Commission with a few items: the combined comments from the forums held, dispersion maps that results from those meetings, and preliminary findings on this plan section. The combined comments and maps are available as attachments. The preliminary findings for dispersion are as follows:

A. Consensus Findings

1. Quality of experience matters – too many passengers downtown or at any one attraction/site at once can detract from the quality of the passenger's experience.
2. Cruise passengers should continue to be encouraged to come downtown for shopping and dining, seeing historic and culturally significant sites/attractions, and to recreate along the Seawalk and at the National Historical Park.
3. Drop-off points should be chosen carefully to not impact existing users or existing parking/traffic concerns.
4. More tours and attractions will be needed as visitor numbers rise.
5. High quality, high visibility signage is needed to effectively disperse passengers dropped off in the downtown area.
6. Other means of communicating visitor information should be improved to keep things moving smoothly, particularly on large ship days. Particular areas of improvement include local communications of the cruise calendar and potential changes in traffic, a digital guidebook/site or app, shore-ex support at the dock and drop-off points, and training for bus drivers.

B. Contended Findings

1. Implementation of a looping shuttle system.
 - a. Pro: A shuttle system would be an effective means of transporting passengers throughout town and address mobility issues many passengers may experience.
 - b. Con: A public and/or free shuttle system would negatively impact private industry transportation providers.

C. Recommendations

1. Encourage multiple drop-off points for those transporting passengers to the downtown area in mass, particularly on large ship days.
2. Commission large-scale signage to be strategically placed at major drop-off points.
3. Consider implementation of a mobile app and/or QR code system to assist with wayfinding and visitor information access. Limitations of cell and internet service will need to be addressed in order to successfully implement.
4. Consider implementation of a looping shuttle system and investigate ways to work with private industry transportation providers to mitigate potential adverse impacts.

| Drop-off Points | Avoidance Points |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Library/Centennial Hall (x3) ● Under the bridge (x3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ O'C lightering ○ Bus Drop-off ● Totem square (x2) ● Baranof Playground (either side) ● Totem Park upper parking lot ● Science Center ● SMC post office ● Center of town ● Katlian area - Community house ● Fortress of the Bear ● Totem Square Inn ● Multiple stops along SMC and HPR to disperse crowds ● Drop-off points must have signage to encourage visitors to visit downtown (x2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What consideration to visual flow to indicate where to go? (maybe a mural which incorporates visual directions) an arrow saying downtown? But with beautiful art? Mural could be along side of city hall parking lot, or along area with the concrete barriers between Petro and Totem Square? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lincoln Street in general ● The church ● Katlian Street ● Fine arts campus where kids are doing camp activities ● Residential areas ● Anywhere with traffic devices |

Current Concerns





- Insufficient number of public restrooms (x5)
 - Suggestion: Mobile restrooms
- Impacts from buses (x4, x1 counterpoint)
 - Congestion
 - Suggestion: Limit hours the buses/boats can run
 - Noise
 - Air pollution - go electric
 - Who will pay for electric?
 - Pedestrian and road safety, especially around St Michaels
- Safety (x2)
 - Lincoln St won't be safe for traffic & visitors
 - Emergency service access to downtown
- I want our community to maintain local control and authenticity; also don't want to see a separate community developed out the road
- Visitor Congestion
 - Large visitor crowds in relatively few downtown locations
 - Impact on visitor experience
- Logistics
 - Visitors are always worried about getting back to their ship and with such a large increase in traffic the feasibility of actually getting more passengers into town and back to the ship seems like a recipe for disaster. What is the capacity to bus people in/out on any given day, and will some days exceed the capacity?
- Garbage Collection and public garbage cans (x2)
- Shop hours not aligned with cruise ship arrivals/departure
- Traffic
 - Road construction on major arteries
 - Traffic flow - Lake St/ Harbor Drive
- Lack of Taxi Service & non-walking access to the far end of Lincoln St
- Downtown exclusion (x5)
 - Tour operations direct from dock or bus drop-off reduce downtown visitation/shopping opportunities
 - "Free" shuttle drop off away from downtown
 - Many visitors may not even know to visit downtown

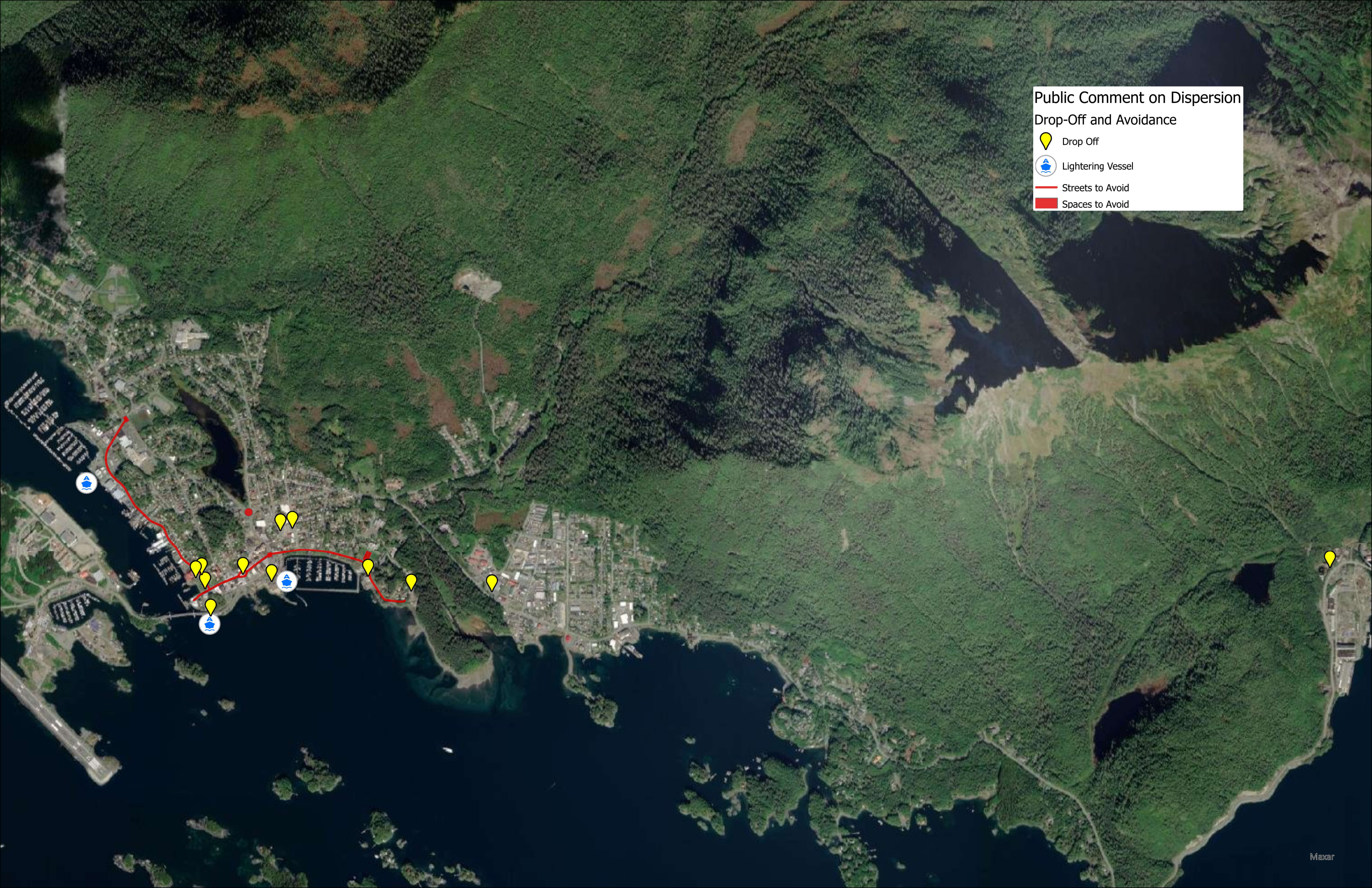
Suggested Improvements

| Processes/Systems/Communications | Infrastructure |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved training for bus drivers to provide visitor information ● Visitor information at dock to coordinate potential multi-point drop-off scenarios ● Changes in ship schedule location ● Clear communication of cruise calendar including arrival times all aboard times and ship docking locations ● Permit process easy to follow/access for start-ups ● Decolonizing historic tours and information ● More tour options ● Work with radio/media to convey process/steps ● Is there a design/charrette process we can do? ● Or urban engineering expertise to contract? ● If there are polar opposite view points, how will the Planning Commission and/or staff decide what goes in the plan? Who has final say? ● Who is going to pay for any additional costs? ● How do we make sure all businesses get a chance at their fair share of business? ● Signage (x5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ KISS principle-clear, effective, readable signs...there is a downtown ○ Keep in mind, many | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public restrooms (x5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suggestion: Mobile restrooms ● Bike stands around town ● More benches downtown ● Improved internet and cell service (x5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internet/Cell service inadequate ○ Free downtown WIFI (possibly fee for extended use) ○ Boost internet for big visitor days so credit card machines don't "clog up" (x2) ● Paint pedestrian crosswalks ● No left on Lincoln St ● No crossing traffic to make turns on Lincoln St ● Concern over wear/tear on roads ● Police officer at intersection (Lincoln-Lake, Harbor) ● Make Lincoln one way/ pedestrian only (x4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Close downtown on big ship days from stoplight to church, allowing for church ○ Church to Katlian ● Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use Baranof Ballfield for industry parking ○ Parking areas away from downtown ● Looping small transit through town ● Another park as alternative walk to Totem Park ● Bear Monitor Program ● Lake/Lincoln traffic pattern ● Increased bus service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Electric hop on/hop off bus going through town ○ Blue line bus extended to GPIIP |

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|---|--|
| <p>tourists can't walk long distances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Include cruise bus pick-up/drop-off locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Close downtown on big ship days from stoplight to church, allowing for church roundabout● Park & Ride for downtown workers (x2)● Water shuttles from dock to downtown● Photo-op selfies<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Harbor w/ fish○ Experiences○ Landmarks |
|---|--|

Public Comment on Dispersion
Drop-Off and Avoidance

-  Drop Off
-  Lightering Vessel
-  Streets to Avoid
-  Spaces to Avoid



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