

Sitka Seawalk Phase II (SFHWY00312) Public Comments - Personal information is redacted for those that requested their name not be associated with their comment.

Comment #	Date	Commenter Organization	Comment	Response Date
	9/22/2022	Sitka Woman's Club	I am the treasurer of the Sitka Woman's Club. We own the cottage at 300 Harbor Drive. This is the first we are hearing of the sea walk on Harbor Dr. in Sitka project in which your plans seem to cut through half our yard. We would like to set up phone call with our execute board and you about your project plans please. Please let us know the status of the project and when we may schedule a call.	9/23/2022
	9/23/2022	Sitka Woman's Club	More detailed map please	9/26/2022
	9/26/2022	Sitka Woman's Club	Suggestions for advertising public meeting and comment period - mailers, KCAW, KIFW, Daily Sitka Sentinel newspaper, report at the city assembly	
	11/21/2022	Sitka Woman's Club	Requested updated design plans	11/22/2022
26	12/14/2022	3 and 5 Maksoutoff Street	Email - Increasing pedestrian traffic along sidewalk; sight lines from porch and windows; beach and rock access - safety issue; signs to lead folks to Totem Park (real beach); photo point at Sitka Realty parking lot, smoking weed on the Rock, people on porches; signage to discourage porch use and private road use (see full email - open to a phone call)	12/14/2023
6	12/11/2022	Survey Monkey #6	I love the sea walk project especially the Section 3 Alternative. However I suggest the sea walk should not go along Harbor Rd but instead go onto the driveway that goes behind Beak Restaurant and next to Petro Marine Services. Then the sea walk would continue close to the shore on the NW side of Lincoln St to Totem Park, without needing any crosswalks! I believe this would be safer and allow for better flow of traffic. This would encourage more people to follow along to Totem Park so that fewer people cross Harbor Rd. They also have the option to continue along the shoreline toward Totem Square Inn. For those continuing on toward downtown, they can cross Lincoln St or Katlian St on the other side of Totem Square. I imagine the driveway next to Petro will need some improvements. Maybe that's a project for the well known army of Sitka volunteers.	2/8/2023
5	12/8/2022	Survey Monkey #5	Riprap with occasional vertical ridges to appear more natural. Planting areas to accommodate growth of large shrubs, trees. Provide locations along route to be available for vendors. Include tie down points in pavements to secure 10x10 canopies. Consider fuel truck traffic safety at Lincoln St. crossing. Retain hi tide pattern feature. Improve waterfront pathway from HCH to hwy at Library Acquire vacant lot at Real Estate office for public parking for Maksoutoff St Residents. Provide many benches. Use design that do not hold rain water on the seats.	2/8/2023
4	12/6/2022	Survey Monkey #4	As a 35 year resident of Sitka, I think this is a wonderful project!	2/8/2023
3	11/30/2022	Survey Monkey #3	I oppose section on ocean side seawalk. Intrusive to my privacy. Think More economical to go from Maksoutoff st. To church on library side of Maksoutoff. Want channel visitor to downtown. I dreading upcoming season with double visitors. Visited town Arizona worst experience! Nothing of real town. Use \$ instead bus from there in & spend dollars for that. Mill site be good place. Get beautiful view on way to town & land in surges instead all at once. Don't want Us be another Juneau. Went to meeting tonite voice few conversations. Here in writing so appreciate confirmation of this message. Oh yes environmental impacts far more then you think. I've lived in front of this location 20 years plus seen sea lions, seals, sea otters, multiple seabirds & herring over the years. Wish talk to me further have my contact info. Yes one closest to your project....	2/8/2023
2	11/17/2022	Survey Monkey #2	A perfectly good sidewalk already exists. Stop valuing a positive visitor experience over the residents of this community. If the concern is about having space for the cruise ship tourists then limit the number allowed and stop lining your pockets at the cost of every community member. Additionally, there is no reason to disturb the historic clam garden and eel grass bed; especially when we are predicting green crabs to present a threat to the eel grass in the near future.	No email
1	11/10/2022	Survey Monkey #1	I approve and support the Sitka Seawalk Project because this project will improve pedestrian safety.	2/8/2023
7	12/17/2022	Survey Monkey #7	Please make it a priority to preserve the integrity of KCAW's public radio satellite system downlink infrastructure - for the long term... and during construction. It's critical to preserve for the public benefit KCAW brings to Sitka... and translator communities. Thank you!	2/8/2023
8	12/19/2022	Survey Monkey #8	Today I talked to someone who moved to Sitka, he works remotely and could go anywhere. He said that walkability was his top priority. This is a fantastic project that will help our town to be more walkable. Phase two honors the waterfront and adds another route for people to get downtown, in a safer way. Looking at the map and imagining the angles, it doesn't appear to have a major impact on the handful on houses next to the library. One person was quoted on KCAW as siting that as a concern. Relators created walkability scores because the more walkable a place is the higher the value. Becoming more walkable was the top community selected goal at the 2007 Sitka Health Summit. This project will help with that and I'm strongly in support of the plan. The only addition that I'd like to add for consideration is connecting to Totem Square and replacing/revamping the concrete barrier between Totem Square and Petro Marine. This was discussed during the downtown revitalization effort of 2011.	2/8/2023

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9	12/23/2022	Survey Monkey #9	The proposed rock rip-rap seaward of the sidewalk goes over electrical submarine cable that provide electric service to islands. What plan are there to protect/shield these cables from construction damage? Do contract documents provide enough insurance to cover replacement of damaged high voltage power lines, or loss of life?	2/8/2023
10	12/23/2022	Survey Monkey #10	NOAA Habitat would comment during the permitting process with the Corps of Engineers. Minimize impacts to wetlands, eelgrass beds, and design for fill encroaching on the shoreline to be at shallow gradients to allow juvenile salmonids refuge from predation. Our Protected Resources Division should be consulted for the issues relating to marine mammals and threatened and endangered species.	NOAA - generic comment
11	12/27/2022	Survey Monkey #11	Sitka Trail Works would like to support Section 3b to provide the most scenic waterfront walking opportunity. We would also advocate for a safe crossing facility at the project terminus on Lincoln street to ensure an accessible connection to Totem Square.	2/8/2023
12	12/29/2022	Survey Monkey #12	The pedestrian crossing on Lincoln St at Totem Square will need to be an ADA crosswalk with a curb cut to the sidewalk along the water in Totem Park. Otherwise this world-class trail just dumps out at an intersection. A stop sign is needed on all three ways at the intersection on that corner. I also support Section 3b along the water as drawn. I support the use of cohesive and even whimsical artwork along its length instead of an industrial/engineered design. This walk should be a showcase for Sitka and Sitka Sound. Seating with a view of the water is essential for visitors and residents, alike.	2/8/2023
13	12/30/2022	Survey Monkey #13	Thank-you for this opportunity to comment. I was not able to attend the original meeting. I reviewed the documents on line and watched the recording of the meeting. On the recording there was much discussion of "here" and "this" with very little indication on the actual recording of where "here" and "this" were. That said, I have lived in Sitka for almost 12 years. I live downtown. I do not have a car and I try to walk everywhere. I am therefore very excited to see the plans for the extension of the seawalk. As you suggest I think it will be very popular with residents as well as tourists. Having lived in northern and western Alaska I am used to boardwalks and liked the idea of a boardwalk around the base of the bridge. I was surprised to hear that the boardwalk option was more expensive than the first option but will accept your representation on that. If you did build the boardwalk it would need to be built out of non-slippery material. The current seawalk has a stretch that is built with wood and more often than not I will cross the street to avoid it when it has been raining or it is icy because the plain wood is too dangerous for me to walk on. You asked for comments about specific items: 1. surface type - asphalt vs concrete. Concrete looks nicer but my preference is for the surface that is the least slipper and that will best resist icing over. 2. please provide as much lighting as possible. There is a pretty stretch on the original seawalk that I will not walk on when it is dark because it lacks lighting. 3. Phase 3 route along Harbor Way or around the outside of the parking area? My preference is to go around the outside of the parking area. This would be prettier, would be less noisy and would avoid the problem of having snow plowed onto the sidewalk in the winter. I appreciate you incorporating overlooks into phase 2. I think this will be popular with locals as well as the tourists. The loss of four parking spaces on the street with the widening of the sidewalk/ reduction of the shoulder by 2 feet. From watching the video there was no way to tell where those four parking spots were. As a walker I don't really notice many vehicles parked at that end of the road on a regular basis so I am not sure how much they would be missed. The real estate company has its own parking lot and there is parking across the street. That said there seems to be a constant chipping away of available parking downtown. And so, it would be good to avoid losing more parking if possible. One community member expressed concern about the loss of parking because she and her father do not have parking at their homes. She also expressed concern that taking the seawalk on the outside of the bridge would cause people to be able to see right into her living room. This would certainly be distressing. From just viewing the slides it did not appear that the planned seawalk would permit this to happen but I hope that you were able to address the community member's concerns adequately.	2/8/2023
14	1/3/2023	Survey Monkey #14	My concerns about this project include impacts to the eelgrass bed and cultural area in the form of the manmade rock wall in the project's area of construction. Eelgrass is a vital habitat for a variety of marine species and is a habitat in decline across Alaska and elsewhere- anything we can do to protect this key ecological space is essential. There is currently no signage to educate locals or visitors about the manmade rock wall and significance of the tidal area to the Tlingit people. The current infrastructure of this space could be redesigned without pushing further into the tidal area to accommodate locals and visitors without impacting any more of the marine environment. Although the scope of this seawalk project is designed to limit impacts to the marine environment, there will undoubtedly be excess fill, spills, and other issues that will impact the tidal area during construction and I am concerned about those eventualities negatively impacting the habitat and the many species that rely on this habitat.	2/8/2023
15	1/3/2023	Survey Monkey #15	Instead of adding fill to the south side of O'Connell Bridge to add a seawalk, the crosswalk to the other side of the bridge should be improved. Installing a seawalk will make that stretch of land from the foot of the bridge to the parking lot really ugly. You need only look to Siginaka Way, which used to be a charming roadway before Eliason Harbor was expanded. Now that stretch of road is flanked by a parking lot built on a bunch of fill, with Griffith Island at the end of it, industrial and ugly. It is perverse to proceed with installing the Section 2 seawalk, as it will ruin the very view it is supposed to bring people up close to enjoy.	2/8/2023
16	1/3/2023	Survey Monkey #16	I fully support this project as it will add accessibility to downtown while extending the sea walk trail to the park one of my favorite walks as a resident,	2/8/2023
17	1/3/2023	Survey Monkey #17	I absolutely support this project and think it is a great asset to all of us who live here as well as our visitors.	2/8/2023

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18	1/3/2023	Survey Monkey #18	This project, while a commendable idea, minus the tourists, will offer further congestion at the area of Harbor Drive, between the Library and the base of the O'Connell bridge, and will encourage tourists to stay seaside, until they see a place they want to cross, then jaywalk. It will increase congestion and parking problems at the Totem Square end, which will already be challenged during the tourist season, and is difficult for locals in the off season now, due to the need for parking for downtown employees. That parking area will be infused with locals wanting to start at the Totem square end of the Seawalk, plus add careless dog owner's defecation mess in every area along the way. If you want to create a solution to tourist traffic from Centennial Hall, you may want to consider an overpass, with an elevator, if needed, where the Centennial Hall Seawalk ends, right between Yellow Jersey and First National Bank. This would help curtail the jaywalking that occurs along this stretch. The traffic from our only hospital and airport are negatively impacted by the risk of these jaywalkers. If you were to reconsider, and use the route we are suggesting, you will also create a chance for pedestrians to get across to and from town easily, from Centennial Hall, then the trail can continue along the town side of Harbor Drive, and cross to Castle Hill, where there already is a trail that could be widened to reach Totem square on the right side, by the City office building. We already have room there, and may not lose as much parking as with the current ideas. Please consider these suggestions, instead of the current ways of thinking that promote a seawalk over local needs, such as safety issues with people jaywalking on a mainstream highway that provides necessary, and urgent access to our only hospital and airport. This is difficult to edit given the small view you have provided. Please excuse any errors. Clearly the comments are not intended to be extensive. The comment period is at a busy time of year, so also very challenging to participate. Thanks for providing an opportunity to provide feedback, hopefully, before it's already a "Done deal." Klaudia & Michael	2/8/2023
19	1/4/2023	Survey Monkey #19	As a member of the Raven Radio Board of Directors, I want to urge the project planners to be sure that steps are taken to protect the integrity of our Public Radio Satellite System (PRSS) downlink. This satellite is our community's primary NPR/BBC feed, a public service that our whole listening area relies on. Please be certain that care is taken during the construction phases of the project and that the final plans for the Seawalk will not obstruct the satellite.	2/8/2023
20	1/4/2023	Survey Monkey #20	I am very much in support of the inclusion of native artwork, formlines, etc as an integral part of the design. I feel strongly that the local native artists should be consulted and paid for their designs. If the red brick road is not used, I support the use of a concrete stamp to provide a similar design. The tidelines concept was designed by beloved artist, Teri Rofkar.	2/8/2023
21	1/4/2023	Survey Monkey #21	Hello! I attended the public scoping meeting on November 30th and relayed my concerns for the Sitka Seawalk extension; this is a follow-up on behalf of KCAW. Thank you for giving the public an opportunity to comment on the project! The satellite dish under the O'Connell Bridge, in the Phase 2 work section, is KCAW's NPR downlink, receiving a feed from the Public Radio Satellite System. This is a critical piece of broadcast infrastructure for us because it is how we receive all our national and international programming. KCAW is the sole broadcaster in large sections of Southeast Alaska, where many people rely on our radio station for news. Anything that is in front of this dish will decrease its ability to receive a signal - including vegetation, solid structures, and people. On behalf of all stakeholders of the station, we request the following: 1. Please revise the design of the area immediately in front of the dish to have no obstructions. Pedestrians should be encouraged to keep moving as they pass in front of the downlink. The entire look angle of the satellite dish will need to be clear for the dish to function. 2. During the construction of Phase 2, please do not block the downlink with materials or equipment. Also, please take care not to disturb the site where the dish is located. The satellite dish is a sensitive link in our broadcast chain, and vibrations/movement to the site could knock the dish out of alignment - and realigning (or 'peaking') the dish would require engineering expertise, at a cost to KCAW. 3. Please give KCAW notice if there are going to be any unavoidable obstructions to the dish during the construction process. We can temporarily access an IP-based alternative feed, but would need time to make adjustments to our background routing and automation systems. We would appreciate accurate notice, as much as you can spare us. I would also like to make a note on the Phase 3 section of the plan. The historic Cable House is KCAW's studio and property. We would like to encourage the design of this phase to "link up" as much of this section of Lincoln Street to the downtown corridor, and be a pleasing space and commons for the public to enjoy year-round. Personally, I think this area could be an excellent food cart 'pod' location! And finally, please let us know when loud construction can be expected. Our broadcast originates near where the remaining phases of the Seawalk are planned, as our studios are in the Cable House. Noise will impact the quality of our broadcast negatively, and we would appreciate the opportunity to partner with the City and project partners in mitigating this issue. Again, thank you for your consideration and partnership!	2/8/2023
22	1/4/2023	Survey Monkey #22	Editorial in the KTN paper (see comment)	2/8/2023
23	1/4/2023	Survey Monkey #23	I think this project has merit but I wish I had had more time to look at the documents. If you advertised the public comment, it was not a high profile advertisement. It appears that the path is quite wide and I'm wondering why it needs to be that wide (the width will cause more cost and that seems like a waste of public dollars)	No email

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24	1/4/2023	Survey Monkey #24	<p>This is an expensive and unnecessary project. The next portions are already well defined and don't need upgrading.</p> <p>The loss of 4 parking spots is unacceptable. Parking is already tight, especially since several get eliminated by the portable restrooms and the many, many more when closing Lincoln Street on "heavy" tourist days. We already have a hard time getting enough employees to work downtown without making it more difficult to get there and find parking.</p> <p>This next phase of the seawalk directs people where? No where in particular. And if they want to get to that end of Lincoln or onto Katlian, there are plenty of other routes they can take if they want to fight their way through the shoppers. That end of town is not considered a "destination" for tourists unless they are catching a lighter to a ship and that only happens when there is an abundance of ships anchored out. It seems like the lightering dock is only used for occasional commercial fishing-associated vessels and private yachts and doesn't bring in the projected amount of fees anymore. It should be utilized more heavily by tour ships, helping alleviate the congestion at Harrigan Centennial Hall.</p> <p>The seawalk plan mentions moving the crosswalk across Harbor Drive from its present location at a normal intersection but does not say where the planners want to move it. Not having it at a regular intersection would only add to the congestion and confusion by both pedestrians and vehicles on Harbor Drive.</p> <p>This plan was never really vetted with those of us who live here. Please do not go forward with this project until Sitkans have a chance to fully study the information and submit opinions. Thanks.</p>	2/8/2023
25	1/4/2023	Survey Monkey #25	<p>This is largely going under the radar of people I have been talking to.</p> <p>The magnitude of the fill proposed here, and the cost are kind of staggering for a short bit of trail. I think there should be a broader array of alternatives.</p>	2/8/2023
	1/3/2023	Phone comment to Loren Gehring	<p>Parking is an issue, prefers seawalk on opposite side of road, maintenance costs, people climbing on rocks, tourist can take photos from bridge, fix bathrooms under bridge, people walking on boulders in front of house is a problem, I understand the need to do this and am going to have to live with this. Hard to drive out of Maksoutoff with pedestrians.</p>	2/8/2023
27	1/9/2023	Email	<p>Hi Kathryn, to put my comments to simple and quick fashion, I don't believe that the extension of the SeaWalk is necessary. Any fill that reaches the water will have an impact on the local herring spawn.</p>	2/9/2023
28	1/4/2023	Email	<p>Commented on P&N, alternatives to project, EA instead of CE, climate change, eelgrass, rock sources, etc. (see email for full comment)</p>	2/10/2023

From: [Anne Elise Pollnow](#)
To: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Cc: [Robin McNeilley](#); [Sarah J. Allison](#); [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Re: Sitka sea walk
Date: Monday, September 26, 2022 1:25:12 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Sounds great Loren, thanks for the info. and reply.

Getting the word out seems a challenge at times. Often, no matter how hard you try to advertise, word-of-mouth at the last minute it what gets things going.

I know a elderly woman who was very disappointed she didn't get a notice in the mail about the SMC construction project as an adjacent property owner. Whether she was sent a notice or not, I don't know. I might suggest mailing notices to adjacent property owners as many elders don't use the internet. I also suggest advertising the public meeting and comment period on the two radio stations for a good period of time, KCAW and KIFW, and of course, the Daily Sitka Sentinel newspaper. The City does put out notices via email, but their website seems to me to take a lot to navigate to get that kind of information. A report at the city assembly, not having to be anything substantial, but notifying that you're beginning public comment and the open house time may provide good outreach.

All this noted, once the ladies at the Woman's Club become aware, that seems to be the best form of telephone game in Sitka. :)

Anne Elise Pollnow
Sea Level Consulting, LLC
Sitka, Alaska

On Sep 26, 2022, at 9:40 AM, Gehring, Loren K (DOT) <loren.gehring@alaska.gov> wrote:

Hi Anne, Good questions and thank you. The drawing I sent earlier is the correct depiction of the ROW and the proposed improvements in front of the cottage. Please refer back to that drawing as the correct situation. The project does not require additional ROW along Harbor Drive. The scoping drawing you attached below was developed for agency scoping and it shows the broad "area of potential affect" and was not intended to show the precise project footprint. It's easy to see the confusion and we will correct this in future versions. We are just starting the public involvement process so you are a little further ahead of us. There will be a public comment period and most likely an open house sometime in the November-December time frame this year. If you have any ideas how to best involve the public, we'd love to hear your suggestions.

I hope this answers all your questions and hope you have a great day. Talk to you soon

Thank you, Loren

From: Anne Elise Pollnow <anne@sealevelsitka.com>
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2022 8:28 PM
To: Gehring, Loren K (DOT) <loren.gehring@alaska.gov>
Cc: Robin McNeilley <obinray@gmail.com>; Sarah J. Allison <Sarah.Allison@firstbankak.com>; Erickson, Kathryn H (DOT) <kathryn.erickson@alaska.gov>
Subject: Re: Sitka sea walk

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Loren,

Nice to hear from you and thank you for this graphic. A key would be most helpful to share with the members of the Club.

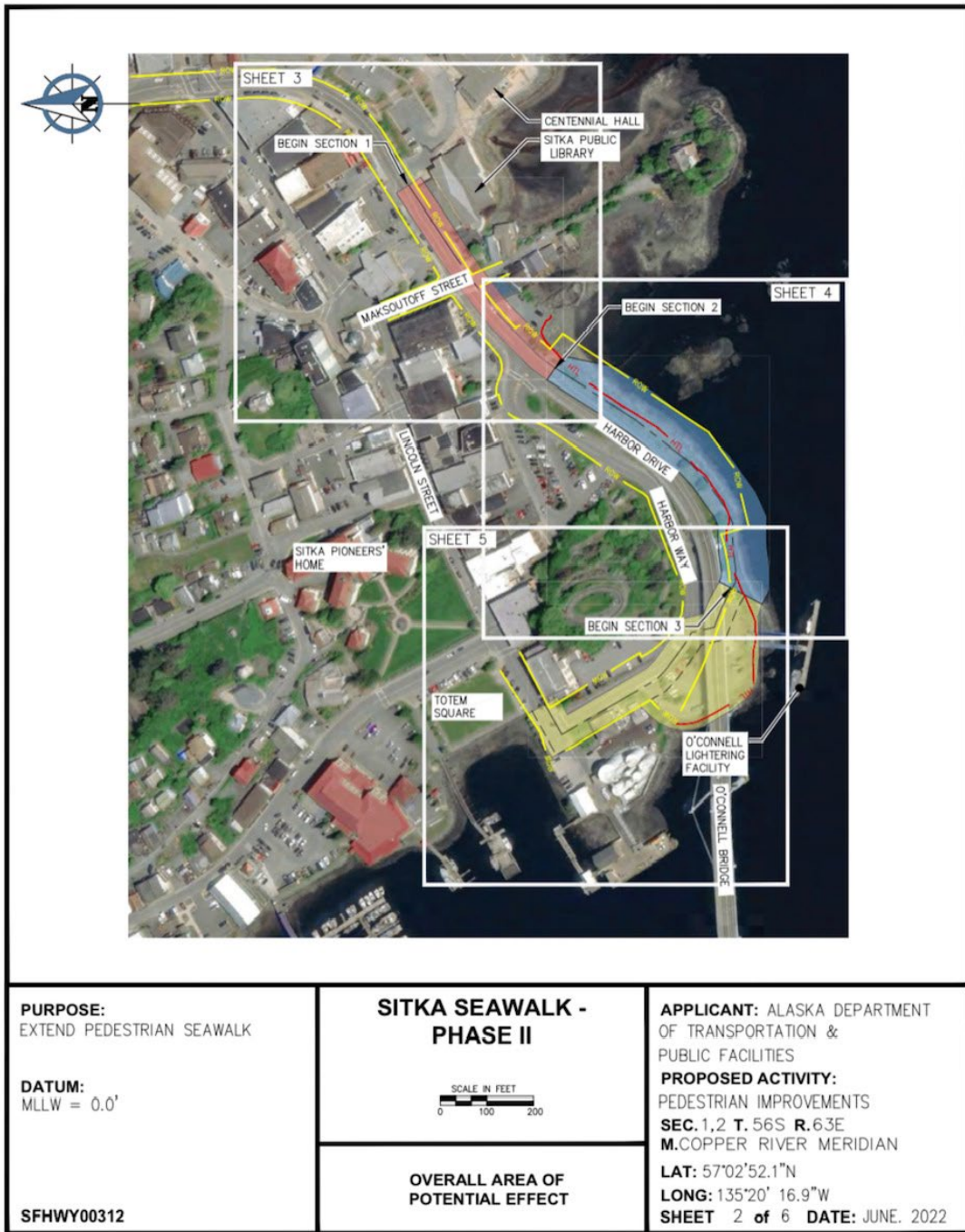
I see now the yellow lines in this public notice graphic are the ROW. The red overlay over our property in your public notice is apparently a ROW take. Is this correct? If it is not, according to the narrative in your email, the graphics must be in error. None of the graphics in this public notice have keys and the shading, I believe, is misleading.

While the surveyors are out collecting topographic data, could we please stake out the ROW in front of our cottage to define the State's ownership?

Was there a public meeting before this August public comment period? We haven't received anything if notices were mailed?

We look forward to the meeting in December to learn more about the project.

Many thanks,
Anne



Anne Elise Pollnow
Sitka, Alaska

On Sep 23, 2022, at 5:43 PM, Gehring, Loren K (DOT) <loren.gehring@alaska.gov> wrote:

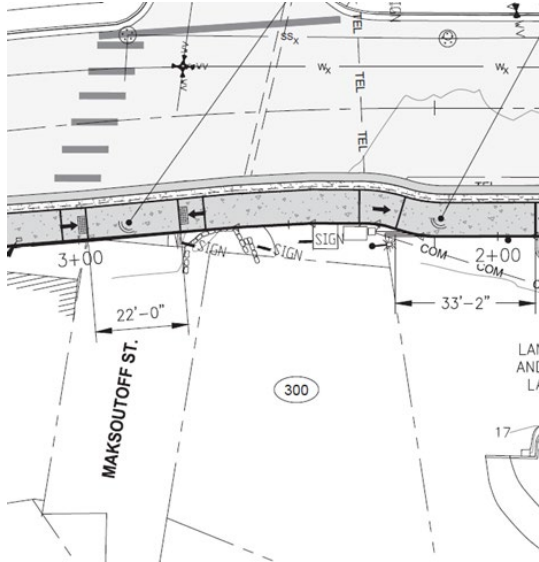
Greetings Ms Pollnow,

Thank you for your comment and we hope this email addresses your concern.

We are currently in preliminary the design phase, and the proposed alignment at your property, 300 Harbor Drive, is shown below. The proposed sidewalk improvements will modify the existing sidewalk width, however, all improvements are contained in existing ROW as shown. The back of the

new sidewalk would be in close proximity to the back of existing sidewalk, with most of the widening occurring into the roadway shoulder.

We will be completing the preliminary design and conducting a public meeting in December in the next few months. We look forward to your participation. Please call with any further questions or concerns.



Regards, Loren

Loren Gehring, PE, SE

Project Manager

DOT&PF Southcoast Region – Design

6860 Glacier Highway

Juneau, AK 99801

Ph: (907) 465-8189

Cell: (907) 321-0219

loren.gehring@alaska.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Anne Elise Pollnow <anne@sealevelsitka.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2022 8:05 PM

To: Erickson, Kathryn H (DOT) <kathryn.erickson@alaska.gov>

Cc: Robin McNeiley <obinray@gmail.com>

Subject: Sitka sea walk

Hi Kathryn,

I am the treasurer of the Sitka Woman's Club. We own the cottage at 300 Harbor Drive. This is the first we are hearing of the sea walk on Harbor Dr. in Sitka project in which your plans seem to cut through half our yard.

We would like to set up phone call with our execute board and you about your project plans please.

Please let us know the status of the project and when we may schedule a call.

Thank you,
Anne

Anne Elise Pollnow
Sitka, Alaska



Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Division of Design & Engineering Services
Preconstruction Southcoast Region

MEMORANDUM

TO: File

DATE: August 1, 2022

FROM: Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst

SUBJECT: SFHWY00312 Sitka
Seawalk Phase II
Sitka Trail Works
Comment

I received a telephone message from Ben Hughey, Executive Director of Sitka Trail Works (907-747-7244, 901-738-1252 Cell, ben@sitkatrailworks.org) saying that they are huge proponents of the Sitka Seawalk Phase II and offered to provide feedback and comments.

Mr. Hughey and I connected by phone, and he reiterated that Sitka Trail Works is very supportive of this project. Gravel is not favored. Pavement (either asphalt or concrete) is necessary for continuity and accessibility. I described the proposed location of the path and discussed how funding is only available for Section 2 but the other sections have existing sidewalk. He asked for a map showing the path alignment. I said that we are still determined the amount of fill needed along Harbor Drive and the planned location should be ready soon.

Mr. Hughey said that they have several hundred members and more on social media. Community projects often get shared on social media and he said that he would be willing to send out a post on this project on social media. The Sitka Cycling Club is associated with the Sitka Trail Works. We discussed that this trail is being designed for pedestrian; however, Phase I of the trail does get used by bicycles in the off-season. Mr. Hughey also asked to be added to the project distribution list.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: ghostlightmater@yahoo.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #1)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:27:00 AM

Dear Mr. Hurst

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document. We appreciate your support of this project.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498



The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

ghostlightmater@yahoo.com

Comment #1

I approve and support the Sitka Seawalk Project because this project will improve pedestrian safety.

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, November 17, 2022 3:28:21 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, November 17, 2022 3:39:22 PM
Time Spent: 00:11:00
IP Address: 24.237.112.21

Page 1: Sitka Seawalk- Phase 2

Q1

Please provide us with your name and location. If you wish to be added to a project mailing list, please provide us with your email address.

Name: [REDACTED]
City/Town: **Sitka**
State: **AK**

Q2

Do you want your name associated with your comment provided below when we make it public?

No

Q3

What would you like to share with us?

A perfectly good sidewalk already exists. Stop valuing a positive visitor experience over the residents of this community. If the concern is about having space for the cruise ship tourists then limit the number allowed and stop lining your pockets at the cost of every community member. Additionally, there is no reason to disturb the historic clam garden and eel grass bed; especially when we are predicting green crabs to present a threat to the eel grass in the near future.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #3)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:38:00 AM

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We understand you oppose the project, and we appreciate you sharing your concerns.

The existing sidewalks and pedestrian ways between the Library, O'Connell Bridge, and downtown (west end of Lincoln Street), are interrupted with street crossings or the abrupt end of the sidewalks, which result in pedestrians back tracking or J-walking. These interruptions in multiple places along the route cause congestion and pedestrian wayfinding confusion.

This problem has been studied and addressed in multiple local planning efforts including the 1997 Community Gateway Planning joint planning effort by National Park Services and CBS, the Sitka Non-Motorized Plan, the 2000 – 2002 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to reduce unsafe crossing of the highway, the 2007 Sitka Visitor Industry Plan, the 2010 Sitka Passenger Fee Implementation Plan, and the 2013 Seawalk Phase I design and construction. The current project was developed through these planning efforts and public processes. It was brought forward in the 2014 FLAP grant funding proposal, which was supported by the Assembly, Resolution 2014-5. The following is from the FLAP Proposal,

"The Sea Walk Phase II is a major element of a downtown transportation network for both visitors and residents. The Sea Walk is a visitor enhancement, marketing tool and safety improvement. It links downtown shopping with multiple visitor destinations and will function with the new wayfinding system as the main thoroughfare for visitor circulation and flow within Sitka."

The proposed Seawalk Phase 2 is intended to complete the planned safe ADA accessible uninterrupted pedestrian path to downtown from the Sitka National Historic Park.

This project is being designed to minimize intertidal fill. Placement of fill would avoid an in-water window established by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to minimize impact to spawning herring. Consultation with the NOAA Fisheries and authorization from an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit would occur prior to construction.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE

Project Manager

DOT&PF Southcoast Region – Design

6860 Glacier Highway

Juneau, AK 99801

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loren.gehring@alaska.gov

Comment #3

I oppose section on ocean side seawalk. Intrusive to my privacy. Think More economical to go from Maksoutoff st. To church on library side of Maksoutoff. Want channel visitor to downtown. I dreading upcoming season with double visitors. Visited town Arizona worst experience! Nothing of real town. Use \$ instead bus from there in & spend dollars for that. Mill site be good place. Get beautiful view on way to town & land in surges instead all at once. Don't want Us be another Juneau. Went to meeting tonite voice few conversations. Here in writing so appreciate confirmation of this message. Oh yes environmental impacts far more then you think. I've lived in front of this location 20 years plus seen sea lions, seals, sea otters, multiple seabirds & herring over the years. Wish talk to me further have my contact info. Yes one closest to your project....

Kathryn Erickson

Environmental Impact Analyst

DOT&PF, Southcoast Region

6860 Glacier Hwy.

P.O. Box 112506

Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506

Phone (907) 465-4498



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From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: Seb43@hotmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #4)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:27:00 AM

Dear Mr. Brady,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document. We appreciate your support of this project.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
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Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
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Comment #4

As a 35 year resident of Sitka, I think this is a wonderful project!

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: john.c.stein@gmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #5)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:44:00 AM

Dear Mr. Stein,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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Riprap with occasional vertical ridges to appear more natural.
Planting areas to accommodate growth of large shrubs, trees.
Provide locations along route to be available for vendors. Include tie down points in pavements to secure 10x10 canopies. Consider fuel truck traffic safety at Lincoln St. crossing.
Retain hi tide pattern feature.
Improve waterfront pathway from HCH to hwy at Library
Acquire vacant lot at Real Estate office for public parking for Maksoutoff St Residents.
Provide many benches. Use design that do not hold rain water on the seats.

Comment #5

Kathryn Erickson
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Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #6)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:44:00 AM

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project.

Your suggested route at the end of section 3b would solve many of the identified pedestrian safety and access issues, but unfortunately, the route would be located on private property instead of in the existing public ROW, which may significantly increase costs and complexity.

Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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I love the sea walk project especially the Section 3 Alternative. However I suggest the sea walk should not go along Harbor Rd but instead go onto the driveway that goes behind Beak Restaurant and next to Petro Marine Services. Then the sea walk would continue close to the shore on the NW side of Lincoln St to Totem Park, without needing any crosswalks! I believe this would be safer and allow for better flow of traffic. This would encourage more people to follow along to Totem Park so that fewer people cross Harbor Rd. They also have the option to continue along the shoreline toward Totem Square Inn. For those continuing on toward downtown, they can cross Lincoln St or Katlian St on the other side of Totem Square.

I imagine the driveway next to Petro will need some improvements. Maybe that's a project for the well known army of Sitka volunteers.

Comment #6

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: Tenakeetwo@yahoo.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #7)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:44:00 AM

Dear Ms. Myron,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We intend to coordinate and collaborate with KCAW during the design and construction of the proposed project regarding the stations public radio satellite system and potential construction noise.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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Please make it a priority to preserve the integrity of KCAW's public radio satellite system downlink infrastructure - for the long term... and during construction. It's critical to preserve for the public benefit KCAW brings to Sitka... and translator communities. Thank you!

[Comment #7](#)

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Phone (907) 465-4498

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #8)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:28:00 AM

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We appreciate your support of this project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
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Comment #8

Today I talked to someone who moved to Sitka, he works remotely and could go anywhere. He said that walkability was his top priority. This is a fantastic project that will help our town to be more walkable. Phase two honors the waterfront and adds another route for people to get downtown, in a safer way. Looking at the map and imagining the angles, it doesn't appear to have a major impact on the handful of houses next to the library. One person was quoted on KCAW as saying that as a concern. Relators created walkability scores because the more walkable a place is the higher the value. Becoming more walkable was the top community selected goal at the 2007 Sitka Health Summit. This project will help with that and I'm strongly in support of the plan. The only addition that I'd like to add for consideration is connecting to Totem Square and replacing/revamping the concrete barrier between Totem Square and Petro Marine. This was discussed during the downtown revitalization effort of 2011.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #9)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:45:00 AM

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We look forward to coordinating/collaborating with the CBS Electric Utility on this project. We value your input on the measures needed to protect the existing submarine cables from damage and other potential risks including additional insurance and/or bonding requirements.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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The proposed rock rip-rap seaward of the sidewalk goes over electrical submarine cable that provide electric service to islands. What plan are there to protect/shield these cables from construction damage? Do contract documents provide enough insurance to cover replacement of damaged high voltage power lines, or loss of life?

Comment #9

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
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P.O. Box 112506

#10

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, December 23, 2022 11:22:52 AM
Last Modified: Friday, December 23, 2022 11:27:26 AM
Time Spent: 00:04:33
IP Address: 24.237.9.171

Page 1: Sitka Seawalk- Phase 2

Q1

Please provide us with your name and location. If you wish to be added to a project mailing list, please provide us with your email address.

Name: Linda Shaw
Organization (if applicable): NOAA Fisheries Habitat
City/Town: Juneau
State: AK
Email Address: linda.shaw@noaa.gov

Q2 Yes

Do you want your name associated with your comment provided below when we make it public?

Q3

What would you like to share with us?

NOAA Habitat would comment during the permitting process with the Corps of Engineers. Minimize impacts to wetlands, eelgrass beds, and design for fill encroaching on the shoreline to be at shallow gradients to allow juvenile salmonids refuge from predation. Our Protected Resources Division should be consulted for the issues relating to marine mammals and threatened and endangered species.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [Ben Hughey](#)
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #11)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:29:00 AM

Ben-

Hello! Thank you for your comments and support of the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We have noted Sitka Trail Work's preference for Section 3b to provide the most scenic waterfront walking opportunity. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team.

Your email address is on the distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
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6860 Glacier Hwy.
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Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498



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Comment #11

Sitka Trail Works would like to support Section 3b to provide the most scenic waterfront walking opportunity. We would also advocate for a safe crossing facility at the project terminus on Lincoln street to ensure an accessible connection to Totem Square.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: capt.blain@soundsailing.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #12)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:45:00 AM

Dear Mr. Anderson,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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The pedestrian crossing on Lincoln St at Totem Square will need to be an ADA crosswalk with a curb cut to the sidewalk along the water in Totem Park. Otherwise this world-class trail just dumps out at an intersection. A stop sign is needed on all three ways at the intersection on that corner. I also support Section 3b along the water as drawn. I support the use of cohesive and even whimsical artwork along its length instead of an industrial/engineered design. This walk should be a showcase for Sitka and Sitka Sound. Seating with a view of the water is essential for visitors and residents, alike.

Comment #12

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: alaskaperegrina@gmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #13)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:46:00 AM

Hello Ms. Hegyi,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

Currently the pathway surface is planned to be asphalt or concrete not wood and lighting is planned, subject to available project funding. Thanks for your input for phase 2 or section 3. Your support of the project is noted and appreciated. Our team is working to adequately address other concerns about the project that have been communicated through the public process.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
DOT&PF Southcoast Region – Design
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, AK 99801
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Cell: (907) 321-0219
loren.gehring@alaska.gov

Thank-you for this opportunity to comment. I was not able to attend the original meeting. I reviewed the documents on line and watched the recording of the meeting. On the recording there was much discussion of "here" and "this" with very little indication on the actual recording of where "here" and "this" were.

That said, I have lived in Sitka for almost 12 years. I live downtown. I do not have a car and I try to walk everywhere. I am therefore very excited to see the plans for the extension of the seawalk. As you suggest I think it will be very popular with residents as well as tourists. Having lived in northern and western Alaska I am used to boardwalks and liked the idea of a boardwalk around the base of the bridge. I was surprised to hear that the boardwalk option was more expensive than the first option but will accept your representation on that. If you did build the boardwalk it would need to be built out of non-slippery material. The current seawalk has a stretch that is built with wood and more often than not I will cross the street to avoid it when it has been raining or it is icy because the plain wood is too dangerous for me to walk on. You asked for comments about specific items:

1. surface type - asphalt vs concrete. Concrete looks nicer but my preference is for the surface that is the least slipper and that will best resist icing over.
2. please provide as much lighting as possible. There is a pretty stretch on the original seawalk that I will not walk on when it is dark because it lacks lighting.
3. Phase 3 route along Harbor Way or around the outside of the parking area? My preference is to go around the outside of the parking area. This would be prettier, would be less noisy and would avoid the problem of having snow plowed onto the sidewalk in the winter.

I appreciate you incorporating overlooks into phase 2. I think this will be popular with locals as well as the tourists.

The loss of four parking spaces on the street with the widening of the sidewalk/ reduction of the shoulder by 2 feet. From watching the video there was no way to tell where those four parking spots were. As a walker I don't really notice many vehicles parked at that end of the road on a regular basis so I am not sure how much they would be missed. The real estate company has its own parking lot and there is parking across the street. That said there seems to be a constant chipping away of available parking downtown. And so, it would be good to avoid losing more parking if possible.

One community member expressed concern about the loss of parking because she and her father do not have parking at their homes. She also expressed concern that taking the seawalk on the outside of the bridge would cause people to be able to see right into her livingroom. This would certainly be distressing. From just viewing the slides it did not appear that the planned seawalk would permit this to happen but I hope that you were able to address the community member's concerns adequately.

Comment #13

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
P.O. Box 112506
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From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: eborneman21@gmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #14)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:30:00 AM

Dear Ms. Borneman,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

This project is being designed to minimize intertidal fill, but there would be impacts to eelgrass beds and the intertidal zone. Fill placement would occur during an established in-water window by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to minimize impact to spawning herring. In addition, consultation with the NOAA Fisheries under Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would occur prior to construction. To address construction impacts, a Hazardous Materials Control Plan would be prepared to ensure the proper use, handling and storage of hazardous materials through the project, along with a stormwater pollution and prevention plan.

The manmade rock wall is currently being evaluated to confirm that it is outside the proposed project's area of potential effect. Although visible, this may be considered a sensitive cultural resource and is, therefore, not being discussed publicly.

Signage is currently being considered for this project and we will share your suggestions for signs to educate locals and visitors on the manmade rockwall and significance of the tidal area to the Tlingit people with the design team. A few of the other topics being considered are eelgrass and historic photos.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
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6860 Glacier Hwy.
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Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498



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Comment #14

My concerns about this project include impacts to the eelgrass bed and cultural area in the form of the manmade rock wall in the project's area of construction. Eelgrass is a vital habitat for a variety of marine species and is a habitat in decline across Alaska and elsewhere- anything we can do to protect this key ecological space is essential. There is currently no signage to educate locals or visitors about the manmade rock wall and significance of the tidal area to the Tlingit people. The current infrastructure of this space could be redesigned without pushing further into the tidal area to accommodate locals and visitors without impacting any more of the marine environment. Although the scope of this seawalk project is designed to limit impacts to the marine environment, there will undoubtedly be excess fill, spills, and other issues that will impact the tidal area during construction and I am concerned about those eventualities negatively impacting the habitat and the many species that rely on this habitat.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: kakki_poulson@hotmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #15)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:46:00 AM

Dear Ms. Poulson,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We appreciate you sharing your concerns and opinion. This project has a countering purpose and need from that which would serve Eliason Harbor's functions, which are focused on automobile access, parking, and the harbor seawall. The Seawalk is intended to provide a safe accessible route to downtown to remedy a pedestrian traffic flow problem and continuity problem in the high-use area identified as the Seawalk Phase II, while also serving to showcase the coastal features of Sitka to visitors and locals alike while walking the path. Our goals are to minimize adverse impacts. The Seawalk Section 2 design is based on integrating the added fill into the existing Bridge embankment fill, both physically and visually. It will include landscaping, viewing areas, and seating. All of which are very different from the Eliason Harbor parking lot.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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6860 Glacier Highway
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loren.gehring@alaska.gov

Instead of adding fill to the south side of O'Connell Bridge to add a seawalk, the crosswalk to the other side of the bridge should be improved. Installing a seawalk will make that stretch of land from the foot of the bridge to the parking lot really ugly. You need only look to Siginaka Way, which used to be a charming roadway before Eliason Harbor was expanded. Now that stretch of road is flanked by a parking lot built on a bunch of fill, with Griffith Island at the end of it, industrial and ugly. It is perverse to proceed with installing the Section 2 seawalk, as it will ruin the very view it is supposed to bring people up close to enjoy.

Comment #15

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #16)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:31:00 AM

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document. We appreciate your support of this project.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
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Phone (907) 465-4498



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Comment #16

I fully support this project as it will add accessibility to downtown while extending the sea walk trail to the park one of my favorite walks as a resident.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #17)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:31:00 AM

Dear [REDACTED],

Hello,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document. We appreciate your support of this project.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
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P.O. Box 112506
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Comment #17

I absolutely support this project and think it is a great asset to all of us who live here as well as our visitors.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: stormysea@rocketmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #18)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:47:00 AM

Dear Klaudia and Michael Leccese,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

Thank you for the support and suggestions to help resolve the pedestrian congestion. Your ideas will be shared with the City and the design team for consideration.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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This project, while a commendable idea, minus the tourists, will offer further congestion at the area of Harbor Drive, between the Library and the base of the O'Connell bridge, and will encourage tourists to stay seaside, until they see a place they want to cross, then jaywalk. It will increase congestion and parking problems at the Totem Square end, which will already be challenged during the tourist season, and is difficult for locals in the off season now, due to the need for parking for downtown employees. That parking area will be infused with locals wanting to start at the Totem square end of the Seawalk, plus add careless dog owner's defecation mess in every area along the way. If you want to create a solution to tourist traffic from Centennial Hall, you may want to consider an overpass, with an elevator, if needed, where the Centennial Hall Seawalk ends, right between Yellow Jersey and First National Bank. This would help curtail the jaywalking that occurs along this stretch. The traffic from our only hospital and airport are negatively impacted by the risk of these jaywalkers. If you were to reconsider, and use the route we are suggesting, you will also create a chance for pedestrians to get across to and from town easily, from Centennial Hall, then the trail can continue along the town side of Harbor Drive, and cross to Castle Hill, where there already is a trail that could be widened to reach Totem square on the right side, by the City office building. We already have room there, and may not lose as much parking as with the current ideas. Please consider these suggestions, instead of the current ways of thinking that promote a seawalk over

local needs, such as safety issues with people jaywalking on a mainstream highway that provides necessary, and urgent access to our only hospital and airport. This is difficult to edit given the small view you have provided. Please excuse any errors. Clearly the comments are not intended to be extensive. The comment period is at a busy time of year, so also very challenging to participate. Thanks for providing an opportunity to provide feedback, hopefully, before it's already a "Done deal." Klaudia & Michael

Comment #18

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498



The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: fteccher@gmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #19)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:47:00 AM

Dear Mr. Eccher,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comment will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We will be in contact with the radio station's general manager to discuss and move forward to evaluate any potential impacts the path may have with respect to the existing satellite dish.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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loren.gehring@alaska.gov

As a member of the Raven Radio Board of Directors, I want to urge the project planners to be sure that steps are taken to protect the integrity of our Public Radio Satellite System (PRSS) downlink. This satellite is our community's primary NPR/BBC feed, a public service that our whole listening area relies on. Please be certain that care is taken during the construction phases of the project and that the final plans for the Seawalk will not obstruct the satellite.

Comment #19

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: Moorelisa719@gmail.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #20)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:32:00 AM

Dear Ms. Moore,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your input is valuable and appreciated. Your ideas will be shared with the City and Design Team and will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
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Comment #20

I am very much in support of the inclusion of native artwork, formlines, etc as an integral part of the design. I feel strongly that the local native artists should be consulted and paid for their designs. If the red brick road is not used, I support the use of a concrete stamp to provide a similar design. The tidelines concept was designed by beloved artist, Teri Rofkar.

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: generalmanager@kcaw.org
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #21)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:47:00 AM

Dear Ms. Meiers,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comment will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

We are interested to learn more from you or an RF engineer about potential impacts to the satellite dish reception. The proposed path would traverse in front of the dish and there will be no permanent obstructions in this area. There is a minimum of about 10' separation between the path and dish foundation. I will be trying to get a hold of you and discuss this in person. Thank you again for your comments.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
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6860 Glacier Highway
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Raven Radio Foundation, Inc. (KCAW)

Hello! I attended the public scoping meeting on November 30th and relayed my concerns for the Sitka Seawalk extension; this is a follow-up on behalf of KCAW. Thank you for giving the public an opportunity to comment on the project!

The satellite dish under the O'Connell Bridge, in the Phase 2 work section, is KCAW's NPR downlink, receiving a feed from the Public Radio Satellite System. This is a critical piece of broadcast infrastructure for us because it is how we receive all our national and international programming. KCAW is the sole broadcaster in large sections of Southeast Alaska, where many people rely on our radio station for news. Anything that is in front of this dish will decrease its ability to receive a signal - including vegetation, solid structures, and people. On behalf of all stakeholders of the station, we request the following:

1. Please revise the design of the area immediately in front of the dish to have no obstructions. Pedestrians should be encouraged to keep moving as they pass in front of the

downlink. The entire look angle of the satellite dish will need to be clear for the dish to function.

2. During the construction of Phase 2, please do not block the downlink with materials or equipment. Also, please take care not to disturb the site where the dish is located. The satellite dish is a sensitive link in our broadcast chain, and vibrations/movement to the site could knock the dish out of alignment - and realigning (or 'peaking') the dish would require engineering expertise, at a cost to KCAW.

3. Please give KCAW notice if there are going to be any unavoidable obstructions to the dish during the construction process. We can temporarily access an IP-based alternative feed, but would need time to make adjustments to our background routing and automation systems. We would appreciate accurate notice, as much as you can spare us.

I would also like to make a note on the Phase 3 section of the plan. The historic Cable House is KCAW's studio and property. We would like to encourage the design of this phase to "link up" as much of this section of Lincoln Street to the downtown corridor, and be a pleasing space and commons for the public to enjoy year-round. Personally, I think this area could be an excellent food cart 'pod' location!

And finally, please let us know when loud construction can be expected. Our broadcast originates near where the remaining phases of the Seawalk are planned, as our studios are in the Cable House. Noise will impact the quality of our broadcast negatively, and we would appreciate the opportunity to partner with the City and project partners in mitigating this issue.

Again, thank you for your consideration and partnership!

Comment #21

Kathryn Erickson
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From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: thadpoulson@yahoo.com
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #22)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 1:12:00 PM

Dear Mr. Poulson,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comment will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

As you pointed out, this was the first public meeting focused on the project's preliminary design. The City and Borough of Sitka has been planning this project since as early as 2014. On April 22, 2014, the Sitka Assembly approved a resolution (2014-05) in support of the project (Sitka Sea Walk Phase II).

The Sitka Assembly's 2014 resolution points out that the Seawalk was publicly identified as a priority in several plans: 2002 Sitka Non-motorized Transportation Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Sitka Tourism Plans 1.0 and 2.0, Sitka Downtown Master Plan, and 2011 Sitka Outdoor Recreation Action Plan. Although it took several years for the project to arrive at this point, this was not the first time the community had been aware of this project.

We hope this information provides some insight into earlier public involvement. Thank you again for the feedback.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE

Project Manager

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Editorial Opinion on Seawalk Phase II

Today is the last day of the 34-day comment period on the Phase II Sitka Seawalk plans.

It is not clear exactly what weight the public comments will have, since it appears the train has left the station on the big question, which is about the project design.

Maybe, maybe not. We don't know.

Perhaps it would be going too far to say the process resulting in the "35 percent" plan unveiled here on Nov. 30 was done in secret. But it is undeniable that it was done without the knowledge or participation of the Sitka general public.

To be sure, extending the seawalk was never a matter of great concern in Sitka. If there is any mention of it in the Sitka Comprehensive Plan, it is not easily discovered. That does not mean that members of the public would not have been pleased to take part in the planning of Seawalk Phase II if they had known it was going on.

For those who don't know Sitka, or who may not be as privileged as your editor to have a 55-year perspective on local public affairs, we'll mention only a few recent projects in which Sitkans asserted their rights in planning their own infrastructure: the community haulout and boatyard, the redesign of Sawmill Creek Highway and bike lanes, the Cross Trail, the Community Hospital property sale, and the planning of Sitka's new Centennial Hall and Sitka Public library. There are many others.

The point we wish to make is that Sitkans are not accustomed to having plans for a major public project put before them as a gift, hope you like it, and maybe you have some ideas about the trimmings.

Another reason we are concerned about this upside down process is that the introduction says priority was given to the wishes of the Sitka public, expressed at some previous time, that any seawalk extension have "the look and feel" of the old seawalk. But where the old seawalk departs from solid ground, there is an elevated eight-foot wide boardwalk with side rails, and Phase II drawings show no boardwalk, no side rails, a paved walkway, and rock fill 19 feet wide at the top and built on tidelands. We'd call that "a new look and feel."

If this were a life-safety priority for Sitka, we'd support the fast track plan that has been laid out for construction of Phase II a decade after the first section was opened. But there is no emergency here. Improved visitor access to Sitka National Historical Park is a worthy goal for Sitka, and it is the basis of the federal and state funding for Phase II. But we and perhaps others would like to know why the National Park Service has not made any improvement at their end of the seawalk in the ten years since it was opened. The narrow sidewalk ends at what appears to be a privacy fence that funnels walkers into a steep vehicle roadway to the side entrance of the visitor center.

We've stated some of our concerns about the Phase II planning, but it's appropriate that we mention here the disaster that the community avoided those many years ago in a similar situation. At that time the same local, state and federal agencies now planning Phase II were finishing Phase I of the Sitka Seawalk.

Briefly, or not briefly, it is this: A city official made a talk to the Chamber of Commerce about the upcoming call for bids on construction of the seawalk through Crescent Harbor Park. The audience listened politely but expressed no interest in seeing the construction drawings the official had with him.

At the end of the meeting a member of the audience walked up, and without asking, picked up the roll of construction plans. This lady, who lives on Lincoln Street across from the park, called a friend and asked if he could come to her house and help her interpret the drawings. The friend was amazed when he saw the plans, drawn by an eminent Northwest landscape architect, showed a sinuously curving walkway running end to end through the center of "the grassy strip."

The friend went immediately to the office of the official who had talked to the Chamber. "You've got to stop this," he said.

"Tourists are not going to keep on this walkway when they only want to get to Totem Park as fast as

possible.” The plans also called for removal of the narrow concrete sidewalk bordering the harbor. Even without the sidewalk, it was obvious that local people would make a path there walking to their boats in the harbor.

“I’ve got no choice, Thad,” the official said. “Mr. Dinley (the administrator) said he wants this done soon as possible. Sitka needs the jobs.” He paused and then said, “Please close the door.” Out of hearing of people in nearby offices the official said, “I’ll see what I can do.”

Bottom line: a hasty public meeting was called on short notice, the 20 or so people who attended agreed without exception that the plan was awful, and that the seawalk should keep the route of the old narrow sidewalk. The prominent landscape architect’s plans were scrapped, and when the bid was awarded it was for the seawalk that we have in the park today.

In response to the invitation for comments on Phase II as they now stand, we’ll add this, from a personal standpoint: Please don’t change the location of the Harbor Drive crosswalk at Maksoutoff Street, and don’t remove any on-street parking.

Comment #22

Kathryn Erickson
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Phone (907) 465-4498



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#23

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, January 04, 2023 4:43:37 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, January 04, 2023 4:45:30 PM
Time Spent: 00:01:52
IP Address: 24.237.112.58

Page 1: Sitka Seawalk- Phase 2

Q1

Please provide us with your name and location. If you wish to be added to a project mailing list, please provide us with your email address.

Name: [REDACTED]
City/Town: **Sitka**
State: **AK**

Q2 No

Do you want your name associated with your comment provided below when we make it public?

Q3

What would you like to share with us?

I think this project has merit but I wish I had had more time to look at the documents. If you advertised the public comment, it was not a high profile advertisement. It appears that the path is quite wide and I'm wondering why it needs to be that wide (the width will cause more cost and that seems like a waste of public dollars)

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: mwpstnk@ptialaska.net
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #24)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:48:00 AM

Dear Ms. Pasternak,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comment will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

The existing sidewalks and pedestrian ways between the Library, O'Connell Bridge, and downtown (west end of Lincoln Street), are interrupted with street crossings or the abrupt end of the sidewalks, which result in pedestrians back tracking or J-walking. These interruptions in multiple places along the route cause congestion and pedestrian wayfinding confusion.

This problem has been studied and addressed in multiple local planning efforts including the 1997 Community Gateway Planning joint planning effort by National Park Services and CBS, the Sitka Non-Motorized Plan, the 2000 – 2002 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to reduce unsafe crossing of the highway, the 2007 Sitka Visitor Industry Plan, the 2010 Sitka Passenger Fee Implementation Plan, and the 2013 Seawalk Phase I design and construction. The current project was developed through these planning efforts and public processes. It was brought forward in the 2014 FLAP grant funding proposal, which was supported by the Assembly, Resolution 2014-5. The following is from the FLAP Proposal,

"The Sea Walk Phase II is a major element of a downtown transportation network for both visitors and residents. The Sea Walk is a visitor enhancement, marketing tool and safety improvement. It links downtown shopping with multiple visitor destinations and will function with the new wayfinding system as the main thoroughfare for visitor circulation and flow within Sitka."

The proposed Seawalk Phase 2 is intended to complete the planned safe ADA accessible uninterrupted pedestrian path to downtown from the Sitka National Historic Park along the waterfront.

The main purpose of having a public meeting was to introduce the preliminary design of this project and receive comments like yours. Thank you again for participating.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
DOT&PF Southcoast Region – Design

6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, AK 99801
Ph: (907) 465-8189

Cell: (907) 321-0219
loren.gehring@alaska.gov

This is an expensive and unnecessary project. The next portions are already well defined and don't need upgrading.

The loss of 4 parking spots is unacceptable. Parking is already tight, especially since several get eliminated by the portable restrooms and the many, many more when closing Lincoln Street on "heavy" tourist days. We already have a hard time getting enough employees to work downtown without making it more difficult to get there and find parking.

This next phase of the seawalk directs people where? No where in particular. And if they want to get to that end of Lincoln or onto Katlian, there are plenty of other routes they can take if they want to fight their way through the shoppers. That end of town is not considered a "destination" for tourists unless they are catching a lighter to a ship and that only happens when there is an abundance of ships anchored out. It seems like the lightering dock is only used for occasional commercial fishing-associated vessels and private yachts and doesn't bring in the projected amount of fees anymore. It should be utilized more heavily by tour ships, helping alleviate the congestion at Harrigan Centennial Hall.

The seawalk plan mentions moving the crosswalk across Harbor Drive from its present location at a normal intersection but does not say where the planners want to move it. Not having it at a regular intersection would only add to the congestion and confusion by both pedestrians and vehicles on Harbor Drive.

This plan was never really vetted with those of us who live here. Please do not go forward with this project until Sitkans have a chance to fully study the information and submit opinions. Thanks.

Comment #24

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498



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From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #25)
Date: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:33:00 AM

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

A safe accessible uninterrupted pedestrian route from the Sitka National Historic Park to downtown has been studied and addressed in multiple local planning efforts including the 1997 Community Gateway Planning joint planning effort by National Park Services and CBS, the Sitka Non-Motorized Plan, the 2000 – 2002 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to reduce unsafe crossing of the highway, the 2007 Sitka Visitor Industry Plan, the 2010 Sitka Passenger Fee Implementation Plan, and the 2013 Seawalk Phase I design and construction. The current project was developed through these planning efforts and public processes. It was brought forward in the 2014 FLAP grant funding proposal, which was supported by the Assembly, Resolution 2014-5. The following is from the FLAP Proposal,

“The Sea Walk Phase II is a major element of a downtown transportation network for both visitors and residents. The Sea Walk is a visitor enhancement, marketing tool and safety improvement. It links downtown shopping with multiple visitor destinations and will function with the new wayfinding system as the main thoroughfare for visitor circulation and flow within Sitka.”

The proposed Seawalk Phase II is intended to complete the planned safe ADA accessible uninterrupted pedestrian path to downtown from the Sitka National Historic Park.

This project is being designed to minimize intertidal fill. Placement of fill would avoid an in-water window established by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to minimize impact to spawning herring. Consultation with the NOAA Fisheries and authorization from an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit would occur prior to construction.

Although, it has taken several years for this project to get to this point, this project has been an identified Sitka priority for several years.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
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6860 Glacier Hwy.

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Comment #25

This is largely going under the radar of people I have been talking to. The magnitude of the fill proposed here, and the cost are kind of staggering for a short bit of trail. I think there should be a broader array of alternatives.

From: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
To: [Matthew Turner](#)
Cc: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: RE: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #26)
Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2023 2:49:41 PM
Attachments: [AK 2014 Access Program Proposal FINALSea walk.pdf](#)

Hi Matthew, Attached is the CBS's application for federal assistance which illustrates the purpose and need for this project way better than I can write. I will see to it that this is posted to the web site.

Mitigation for your concern could consist of signage for pedestrians regarding (your) private property on Maksoutoff. "Please stay on the trail" signs or something to that effect. The proposed red stripe on the Seawalk is intended to do this as well.

This is an interesting project because it combines the needs of both the community and DOT. One of the main city's need is to provide a scenic thoroughfare for visitor enhancement. DOT's need is to increase safety by decreasing the pedestrian/vehicle conflict density. I can refer you to studies regarding levels of how to evaluate conflict density. These studies, obviously, favor separated paths whenever possible for safer facilities. <https://nacto.org/publication/city-limits/the-right-speed-limits/corridor-speed-limits/analyze-existing-conditions/conflict-density/>

Please call if you have any further questions.

Regards, Loren

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
DOT&PF Southcoast Region – Design

6860 Glacier Highway
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Cell: (907) 321-0219
loren.gehring@alaska.gov

From: Matthew Turner <mturner@smallstones.net>
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2023 11:04 AM
To: Erickson, Kathryn H (DOT) <kathryn.erickson@alaska.gov>
Cc: Gehring, Loren K (DOT) <loren.gehring@alaska.gov>

Subject: Re: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #26)

Hey Kathryn (and Loren) -

Thanks for your response. When I wrote my email to Mr. Gehring, I had foolishly thought that we were going to engage in a conversation, but of course this is a government process and so my written remarks go on record.

I'm going to have to reject the assertion that increase movement of pedestrians past Maksoutoff St. and the rocks, without any mitigation, will somehow reduce the number of folks that roam off pist. To my mind, this seems more like a hope than a fact. If you can point me to any pedestrian studies that would change my mind on this I would appreciate it.

Again, thank you for your time and attention.

Matthew Turner

On Feb 8, 2023, at 10:48 AM, Erickson, Kathryn H (DOT)
<kathryn.erickson@alaska.gov> wrote:

Dear Mathew,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project, particularly in regards to how the project may relate to your houses, #3 and #5 Maksoutoff Street. Your comment will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

The new pathway will create a corridor for the movement of pedestrians where there currently is not one. This will help to reduce the congestion in your neighborhood. It may also help to keep people from wandering down Maksoutoff Street in search of a view of the waterfront as the Seawalk will provide the waterfront view.

The elevation of the Seawalk will be roughly the same as the existing sidewalk. There are no plans to construct site line mitigation, but landscaping is planned and may be implemented in a way to visually separate the streetscape from the waterscape views.

The Seawalk will provide the public an opportunity to safely access coastal viewing areas with seating and relaxation areas without having to cross private property and climb unsafe rocks.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the

distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Loren Gehring

From: Gehring, Loren K (DOT) <loren.gehring@alaska.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 14, 2022 11:18 AM
To: Matthew Turner <mturner@smallstones.net>
Cc: Erickson, Kathryn H (DOT) <kathryn.erickson@alaska.gov>; Christopher Mertl <cmertl@corvus-design.com>
Subject: RE: Sitka Seawalk Phase 2 Section 2

Hi Matthew, Thank you for your comments and support of the project. I am sharing these with the team and we will send a response in a subsequent email. Formal responses will likely be after the comment period. You bring up some good points to consider and we look forward to responding and further discussion.
Regards, Loren

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
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From: Matthew Turner <mturner@smallstones.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 14, 2022 10:35 AM
To: Gehring, Loren K (DOT) <loren.gehring@alaska.gov>
Subject: Sitka Seawalk Phase 2 Section 2

You don't often get email from mturner@smallstones.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hey Loren -

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Seawalk project. Phase One certainly has been a great addition to the community, and hopefully this next phase will be as well.

I own property on Maksoutoff Street that has two houses on it, #3 and #5. - the green and purple ones.

<image002.jpg>

The Phase 2 Section 2 portion of the seawalk will be built adjacent to my “backyard”. I’ve got some concerns that I don’t see addressed from the design drawings that I’ve seen. I’m hoping that you can clarify these for me.

From the maps provided on the slideshow at the public meeting, the focus of Phase Two seems to start where the sidewalk diverts onto the new rip-rap walkway. From my comments below, you’ll see that I have some questions on this new construction, but primarily I’m wondering about increased pedestrian traffic along the sidewalk that connects Phase One and Phase Two, especially the area from Maksoutoff Street to the new path construction.

Sight lines from walkway to my porch and windows

What is the elevation of the walkway in relation to my porch and windows? Will the walkway allow folks to look right in, or is there any mitigation for that?

Beach and The Rock Access

When folks get off the boat, many of them want to get into the tidal zone. While the area along Maksoutoff Street is a crappy beach, it is often the first access that folks can get to. This inevitably leads to folks using the Sitka Realty parking lot to crawl over The Rock (annotated in the picture above) and then along the waterline in front of my houses. Inevitably they exit the beach on my property to get to Maksoutoff Street.

A few concerns here. The Rock is steep, slick and dangerous. It isn’t a good place for greenhorns to galavant. It also puts folks right at porch/window level to the Maksoutoff street houses. And, like I said, it is a crappy beach.

Will the new path discourage access to these areas? Will there be any signage leading folks to the real beach at Totem Park?

- Picture Points

That corner of the Sitka Realty parking lot is a very popular photo spot. It is a clear shot of the lighthouse, which people like. Again, my concern here is how the new design is using helping to provide good photo points without making one of them my living room.

- Gathering Spaces

For whatever reason, visitors like to use The Rock for smoking weed. I guess it is a downtown area that is relatively shielded from view of the current pedestrian and roadway, though it puts ‘em right in front of the Maksoutoff houses. I guess the higher pedestrian traffic might discourage these behaviors, but I wonder if there are design elements that might mitigate impact?

In the evening, visiting folks like to spill out of the Mean Queen and gather at the

parking lot corner before heading to their hotel. This can get pretty loud. In addition to the parking lot, It looks like there is going to be a gathering space at the new divergence from the sidewalk to the new path on the bridge rip-rap . In the evenings, reduced pedestrian traffic may not mitigate drunken gatherings (also, now this might be a good place for evening visitors to smoke weed before³ returning to the bars). Any mitigation here?

People on our porches

That lady at the meeting wasn't kidding - folks walk up Maksoutoff street and walk onto our porches to get the view. Any chance signage or other design elements can be incorporated to help deter folks from thinking that private housing is part of their tour package?

There we go! I hope most of this makes sense - it would have been much easier to have been in the same space with maps in front of us. I had to miss that meeting as I am spending some time helping out my folks on the East coast. I'd welcome the opportunity to save you some typing and have a chat. Let me know if you want to set up a time.

Cheers!

Matthew

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: eliason@gci.net
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #27)
Date: Thursday, February 9, 2023 10:18:00 AM

Dear Mr. Eliason,

Thank you for submitting comments for the Sitka Seawalk Phase II Project. Your comment will be recorded in the project's environmental document.

The City has been planning this project since as early as 2014. April 22, 2014 the Assembly approved a resolution to support this project (Sitka Sea Walk Phase II). Although, it took several years for this project to get to this point, this project has been a publicly identified priority for several years. The proposed Seawalk Phase 2 is intended to complete the planned safe ADA accessible uninterrupted pedestrian path to downtown from the Sitka National Historic Park.

The project is being designed to minimize fill in the intertidal zone. Fill placement would occur during an established in-water window by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to minimize impact to spawning herring. In addition, consultation with the NOAA Fisheries and authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would occur prior to construction.

Your email address has been added to a distribution list to receive project updates. Please let me know if you would like to be removed from the distribution list, or if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kathryn Erickson

Kathryn Erickson
Environmental Impact Analyst
DOT&PF, Southcoast Region
6860 Glacier Hwy.
P.O. Box 112506
Juneau, Alaska USA 99811-2506
Phone (907) 465-4498



The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

Comment #27

Hi Kathryn, to put my comments to simple and quick fashion, I don't believe that the extension of the SeaWalk is necessary. Any fill that reaches the water will have an impact on the local herring spawn.

Regards,
George Eliason

From: [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
To: larryedwards@gci.net
Cc: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: Response to Comment on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II (Comment #28)
Date: Friday, February 10, 2023 1:57:00 PM

Dear Mr. Edwards,

Thank you for submitting comments on the Sitka Seawalk Phase II project. Your comments will be recorded in the project's environmental document. This is a joint project between the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) and the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT&PF) with support from the National Park Service and funding from Western Federal Lands and a match from CBS. DOT&PF has assumed responsibilities of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated November 3, 2017 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

Preliminary Design

The purpose and need for the project is as follows: "The Sitka Seawalk would be a continuation of an effort to enhance visitor and resident accessibility to the Sitka National Historical Park (SNHP) and downtown Sitka while also improving safety. The Sitka Seawalk would also function as a wayfinding system and guide for visitor traffic and simultaneously provide opportunities for exercise and recreation." The Seawalk would serve as the main thoroughfare for visitor circulation and flow within Sitka. It would be a visitor enhancement for recreation and scenic opportunities and provide a safe pedestrian link to the downtown shopping district and other visitor destinations. City & Borough of Sitka's priorities have been incorporated into the current preliminary design. Ideas for interpretative signage are currently being discussed for inclusion.

-

Alternatives for Segments 1, 2 and 3

DOT&PF Traffic Engineers and CBS are planning an additional Harbor Way pedestrian crossing near Harrigan Centennial Hall (not part of the Seawalk project). This is to address the large number of pedestrians that are arriving at this location and needing to cross Harbor Way to get to the downtown and other tourist destinations. The existing crossings at the Maksoutoff and the Harrigan crossing are used to evaluate the impacts of adding a third crossing at the location you suggest.

Adding a third sidewalk at the O'Connell Bridge location would result in having 3 mid-block crossings within a stretch of 500-ft of Harbor Drive. Conflict Density method analysis, from the [National Association of City Transportation Officials](#), can be used to evaluate the impacts. What this approach shows is that the added crossing will significantly increase the existing

conflict density to unacceptable levels. This proposed Seawalk Phase II project would provide a separated path option which would significantly reduce the conflict density.

We can also assume that during the summer months the majority of the pedestrians who are crossing Harbor Way would not cross if there was a safer, more scenic route to the same desired destination. The proposed Seawalk Phase II would provide a separated pathway for the majority of the users, thereby, reducing the conflict density even further.

Alternatives suggested to narrow the path in sections would create bottlenecks and may discourage the use of the sidewalk, perhaps moving people onto Harbor Drive and encouraging jaywalking. The Seawalk is intended to function as a wayfinding system and guide for visitor traffic, so a continuous, uniform width sidewalk with a colored concrete band throughout the entire project area would accomplish this.

Free money

This is a beneficial project that reached this stage with community support. CBS performed multiple local planning efforts including the 1997 Community Gateway Planning joint planning effort by National Park Service and CBS, the 2002 Sitka Non-Motorized Plan, Comprehensive Plan, the 2000 – 2002 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to reduce unsafe crossing of the highway, the 2007 Sitka Visitor Industry Plan, the 2010 Sitka Passenger Fee Implementation Plan, and the 2013 Seawalk Phase I design and construction. The current project was developed through these planning efforts and public processes. It was brought forward in the 2014 Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant funding proposal, which was supported by the Assembly, Resolution 2014-5. Although it took several years for this project to get to this point, this project has been a publicly identified Sitka priority since the early 2000s for several years.

Sidewalk Specifications

The scoping documents prior to preliminary design were shown as 10 feet as you observed. However, during the preliminary design phase, the Seawalk typical section has been reduced to 8-feet of sidewalk.

Impacts of the Seawalk Phase II projects

Climate

The Seawalk would encourage more people to walk instead of riding in vehicles along this corridor; therefore, using fewer fossil fuels and reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

-

Limited Resources

Adequate resources exist at the levels needed for the construction of this proposed project.

-

On-going expense to the CBS

This proposed Seawalk would be maintained by the CBS. Maintenance costs were considered during the preliminary design.

Per your concern about fluctuating cruise ship passenger volumes, cruise ships have been consistently visiting Southeast Alaska, except for 2020 and low numbers in 2021 due to Covid. A review of cruise ship passengers to Sitka in the past 30 years show variable numbers and there are no signs to indicate that those numbers are decreasing. Recreational and visitor enhancements of downtown Sitka have been a public priority in numerous planning studies: 2002 Sitka Non-motorized Transportation Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Sitka Tourism Plans 1.0 and 2.0, Sitka Downtown Master Plan, and 2011 Sitka Outdoor Recreation Action Plan.

Loss of parking spaces

A total of 3 parking spaces along Harbor Drive would be lost with the proposed project. These spaces appear to be primarily used for overflow parking for Maksoutoff St. residents. The CBS is currently considering replacing these spaces with dedicated resident parking spaces. It is important to point out that adding a cross walk at the O'Connell bridge would result in a similar number of parking spaces being removed.

Eelgrass

This project is being designed to minimize intertidal fill, but there would be some minor impacts to eelgrass beds and the intertidal zone. Fill placement would occur during an established in-water work window by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to minimize impacts to spawning herring. In addition, consultation with the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries under Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would occur prior to construction.

Categorical Exclusion Determination

DOT&PF determined that this project qualifies under CFR Title 23 §771.117 (c)(3), based on DOT&PF's and FHWA's experience with projects with similar actions and impacts. This project would not cause any significant impact to the human environment, individually or cumulatively. There are no unusual circumstances or significant impacts that would require an environmental assessment. The Categorical Exclusion document will evaluate the environmental consequences for the project, including right-of-way impacts, social and cultural impacts, economic impacts, land use and transportation plans, impacts to historic properties, wetland impacts, water body involvement, fish and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, invasive species, contaminated sites, air quality, floodplain impacts, noise impacts, water quality impacts, construction impacts, and section 4(f)/6(f) per the requirements of NEPA and DOT&PF's MOU with FHWA. In addition, required permits and authorizations would be noted, environmental commitments and mitigation measures listed, and a record of comments and coordination.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this further. I can be reached at (907) 465-8189.

Thank you,
Loren Gehring

Loren Gehring, PE, SE

Project Manager

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Phone (907) 465-4498



The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated November 3, 2017 and executed by FHWA and DOT&PF.

Larry Edwards
Box 6484
Sitka, Ak 99835

4 Jan 2023

Loren Gehring, ADOT/PF Project Manager
via email: loren.gehring@alaska.gov
Mike Schmetzer, Proj. Manager, SeaWalk Phase II
via email: mike.schmetzer@cityofsitka.org
Kelli Cropper, Proj. Manager, SeaWalk Phase II
via email: kelli.cropper@cityofsitka.org

Subj: Comments regarding preliminary design & NEPA scoping of Sea Walk Phase II

Dear Ms. Gehring, Mr. Schmetzer & Ms. Cropper;

These are my timely comments on the Sea Walk Phase II project, both regarding the preliminary design and for the NEPA process, submitted on the extended date of Jan. 4.

While Sitka can be proud of its earlier Sea Walk Phase I project, for a number of reasons the Phase II project is unjustified, harmful and a waste of millions of dollars of government funds. Accordingly, the project should be modified in accordance with alternatives proposed below, or be cancelled. A categorical exclusion from NEPA is not appropriate, so an environmental assessment should be prepared.

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I. Comments on the preliminary design

A. Remarkably, the project lacks a compelling Purpose and Need statement

On p.iii of both the January and September 2020 Scoping Reports, the cause for the project is stated as:

The Sitka Sea Walk is a continuation of an effort to enhance visitor and resident accessibility to the Sitka National Historical Park (SNHP) and downtown Sitka while also improving safety. The Sitka Sea Walk will also function as a wayfinding system and guide for visitor traffic and simultaneously provide opportunities for exercise and recreation. ... Phase II will continue the Sea Walk from the Sitka Public Library to the

O'Connell Lightering Facility and on to Totem Square and Lincoln Street while maintaining the "look and feel" of Phase I and improving ADA accessibility of the existing facilities.

The City & Borough's priorities for dispensable features of the project are listed on p.6 of the Sept. 2020 Scoping Report, and also bear on the perceived need and intended purpose for the project:

CBS has provided the following list of priorities to assist in determining which features can be excluded to keep project costs within funding limits. The following is listed in order of decreasing importance.

1. Maintain full 8-foot width
2. Maintain "look and feel" of Phase I Sea Walk
3. Maintain ADA accessibility
4. Safety lighting as Sea Walk wraps around O'Connell Bridge in Section 2
5. Opportunity for scenic lookouts and interpretive signage

Strikingly, appearance (items 1 & 2) seem to be the primary motivations for the project, ahead of ADA considerations. The last two items are merely potential, less important additions.

As such, the stated purpose and need for the project is a very slight justification in comparison to the high cost of the project and the harms it will cause (as discussed later).

B. Consideration of alternatives that may satisfy related real world needs is absent

The two scoping reports treat the intended features of the project as a *fait accompli*, without consideration of alternatives. In fact, alternatives that were overlooked appear capable of satisfying the primary goals of the project described above: enhanced accessibility and safety, a functional wayfinding system. The alternatives can do at a cost and level of impacts substantially smaller than those of the proposed design.

Alternative for Segment-2. Creating a pathway around the outside of the bridge abutment is unnecessary, because a sidewalk of the desired 8-foot width already exists on other (East) side of the bridge, the full distance from the lightering facility to the existing crosswalk at the East side of Harbor Drive (i.e. in the area adjacent to the back of the Lutheran Church), and at where a new crosswalk that could be made – with flashing crossing light – across Harbor Drive to the existing bench and tidewater viewpoint near the shore. *See attached map*, with red dots showing this alternative route and the presently marked and unmarked crossings. The lines-of-sight to the presently unmarked common jaywalking location at the entry to the bridge are good from both sides, and project staff searched but found no crash history at this location. Adding the crosswalk and the flashing light will provide adequate, additional safety.

The desired 8-foot-width functionality already exists without going to the \$4.6 million expense (85% of the total project cost) for Segment-2 and without causing impacts of building a pathway on the outside of the bridge abutment. The described crossing with flashing light will improve the existing safety situation, and is the same method and technology used at Halibut Pt. Road and Peterson St. and Sawmill Creek Road and Indian River Road. The "look and feel" of this segment would be much like Sea Walk I in terms of width, even if the coloration is the more standard (and authentic) Last Frontier look – and that's OK.

In summary, the existing sidewalk paving between the lightering facility and the described crossing would be retained, and as a cost saving measure and to minimize impacts. Wayfinding and guidance can be provided with signage, of which there presently is none along this alternative Segment-2 route. A new crosswalk across the entry to the bridge would be provided and have user-activated flashing lights.

Alternative for Segment-1: I propose an alternative for Segment-1 that will not eliminate any parking spaces and will still improve sidewalk width.

The two Scoping Reports rely on "Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way, Part R302.3." However, R302 needs to be considered in its entirety, including some key points:

R302 Pedestrian Access Routes. General (R302.1). The technical requirements for pedestrian access routes are contained in R302, and adapt the technical requirements for accessible routes in the 2004 ADA and ABA Accessibility Guidelines to the public right-of-way. In alterations where existing physical constraints make it impractical to fully comply with the technical requirements, compliance is required to the extent practicable within the scope of the project (see R202.3.1).

R202.3.1 Existing Physical Constraints. Where existing physical constraints make it impracticable for altered elements, spaces, or facilities to fully comply with the requirements for new construction, compliance is required to the extent practicable within the scope of the project. Existing physical constraints include, but are not limited to, underlying terrain, right-of-way availability, underground structures, adjacent developed facilities, drainage, or the presence of a notable natural or historic feature.

Continuous Width (R302.3). The continuous clear width of pedestrian access routes (exclusive of the width of the curb) must be 1.2 meters (4 feet) minimum, except for medians and pedestrian refuge islands where the clear width must be 1.5 meters (5 feet) minimum in order to allow for passing space. The AASHTO 'Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities' recommends that sidewalks be wider than 1.2 meters (4 feet), particularly in urban areas. Where sidewalks are wider than 1.2 meters (4 feet), only a portion of the sidewalk is required to comply with the technical requirements in R302.3 through R302.7.

Passing Spaces (R302.4). Where the clear width of pedestrian access routes is less than 1.5 meters (5 feet), passing spaces must be provided at intervals of 61 meters (200 feet) maximum. Passing spaces must be 1.5 meters (5 feet) minimum by 1.5 meters (5 feet) minimum. Passing spaces are permitted to overlap pedestrian access routes.

Now, let's evaluate Segment-1, starting from the end of the bridge and proceeding to the library. A full 8-foot width along almost the entire distance is possible. There are three bottleneck points. The first is an electrical box at which a sidewalk width of 79" (6'7") is possible between the concrete pad and the curb. There is ample passing possible before and after this point (per R302.4), where the sidewalk could be a full 8 feet.

The next bottleneck point is at the corner of the real estate office. The width here is five feet, but again there is ample opportunity to pass before and after this point. Between this point and the above electric box, a narrow strip of right-of-way could be obtained from the private landowner, in order to have the 8-foot width – and this acquisition could use some of the savings from not building the outside-the-bridge-abutment pathway; it should be no problem.

Continuing, after crossing Maksoutoff Street there is another bottleneck point, and beyond that is the stretch to the Library where having the full 8-foot width is no problem. If need be, with the savings from the alternative Segment-2, the electric box and rock wall could be moved slightly, and the needed right-of-way obtained in that bottleneck.

Along Segment-1, the sidewalk color would match that of Segments 2 & 3; standard Last Frontier sidewalk grey.

Alternative for Segment-3. The sidewalk is already of the preferred 8-foot width. Instead of removing all of the existing sidewalk, it would save cost and impacts to repair or replace only the damaged slabs. As above for Segment-2, the finish would be Last Frontier sidewalk grey.

C. Free money is not responsibility-free

The attitude underlying the Sea Walk Phase II project seems to be that money is free, so anything goes. The funds, in entirety, are state, federal or from the cruise ship head tax. However, Sitka should show responsibility in using funds from elsewhere, from whatever sources, in a way that satisfies real needs and not fancy whims that cause impacts either locally or globally. To me it is incredible – in fact I would say ridiculous – to spend \$5.4 million (and likely more with cost overruns) on this very short distance of walkways, when there is already existing access. This isn't to say that the project should be abandoned entirely, but I believe that at least it should be very substantially redesigned, per my proposed alternatives.

As mentioned, what especially needs a reality check is the notion that spending \$4.6 million for a walkway outside of the bridge abutment is an acceptable idea. There are existing ocean views at both ends of this Segment-2, and a great, existing 8-foot wide sidewalk. There are other great existing great sea views from the bridge and Castle Hill, and Sitka has no lack of recreation opportunities.

It is our option to use free money or not, and in this case it is best to avoid its temptation and let the funds go to a better use somewhere else (or even potentially not be used at all).

D. A note on Segment 1 & 3 sidewalk specifications in the Scoping Report

The January 2020 Scoping Report provides for a "travel way width" of 8 feet in Segment-1 (p.13). However, the cross-sectional drawing for this sidewalk shows a width of 10 feet to the joint with the curb (p.17). The difference is not explained by the scoping report.

The 10-foot width in the Segment-1 drawing is in contrast to the similar cross-sectional drawing for Segment-3, which shows an 8-foot width to the joint with the curb (with the curb and gutter taking up an additional 2 feet that are not part of the sidewalk), p.25.

The drawing on p.25 should be used for both Segment-1 and Segment-2. This will be sufficient for access and will help avoid the elimination of parking spaces.

E. Impacts of the Sea Walk Phase II project.

Impact on the climate. The project will contribute to degradation of the climate through carbon dioxide emissions from the chemical processes of producing Portland cement and curing concrete, and from the fossil fuels used in producing, transporting and applying rock fill material, armor rock, sand and gravel and perhaps asphalt. The scoping reports do not disclose the volumes of those materials that would be involved, nor the resulting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. It is however apparent from scale of the project that these volumes and emissions are considerable.

There presently is insufficient national-level climate policy in the US to prevent breaching the 1.5C temperature limit in the 2015 Paris Agreement. Moreover, in view of the rapidly accelerating degree and scale of climate impacts that have become evident since 2015 across the US and around the world, there is a strong argument that the Paris Agreement does not provide for rapid-enough mitigation of carbon dioxide emissions in the US. The Paris Agreement's call for international equity for allocating the remaining 1.5C carbon budget among nations, and because of United State's extraordinary historic and present annual

quantities of emissions, the US has the highest ethical burden under the Paris Agreement to rapidly reduce its emissions. (Stoddard & Anderson 2021,¹ Calverley & Anderson 2022.²)

Because sufficient US national-level climate policy has not yet been adopted (the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act notwithstanding), climate action at the local level is of highest importance, including foregoing construction projects that are unjustified or have a low level of justification.

As shown above, there are alternatives for all three segments of the Sea Walk Phase II project that would require far less materials and cause far fewer climate-harming emissions, and which will meet the purpose and needs of the project except for having a “look and feel” color match to Phase 1 of the project. To substantially mitigate the climate impacts of the project and act locally for sufficiency in a project instead of pursuing what amounts to a luxury that will contribute to harms to others from on-going climate change, the City and Borough of Sitka and its partner agencies should forego the preliminary design and adopt the above proposed alternatives for the three segments of Phase II.

Limited resources. Off and on for decades, Sitka has endured crises of limited availability of rock and other fill material. The volume of rock and fill required by the Phase II preliminary design is considerable and unjustifiable in view of the thin purpose and need for the project. The purpose and need can be substantially accomplished through the above proposed alternatives and with a negligible requirement for such materials.

On-going expense to the City. Segment-2 of the project will require maintenance by the city that is additional to the existing maintenance burden. While this may be paid for by head tax funds for the next several years, the new infrastructure should be expected to require long-term maintenance. Given the rapidly deteriorating state of the climate, it is an open question how long travel by cruise ship – a luxury with high per capita emissions – will occur at anywhere close to the passenger volumes of recent years or decades. Annual and periodic maintenance costs for the infrastructure and potentially for its eventual abandonment can be expected to fall on local taxpayers. Does the very marginal utility of the proposed design, compared to already existing and sufficient-to-purpose infrastructure, justify such future expense? I think not.

Loss of parking spaces. Similarly, the very marginal utility of the proposed design, compared to simpler modifications of existing infrastructure for Segment-1 does not justify the loss of parking spaces. Though the scoping report suggests spaces could be added across the street, there is likely reason that parking is not been allowed in that area; and if adding parking there is justified that does not the justify eliminating the other parking spots.

F. Conclusion

For the reasons given, the alternatives for Segments 1, 2 and 3 discussed above in section I.B should be adopted, or the project should be cancelled.

II. NEPA scoping comments

All of the above comments on the preliminary design are included by reference in this section.

¹ Stoddard, I. and Anderson, K. (2021). Three Decades of Climate Mitigation: Why Haven't We Bent the Global Emissions Curve? *Ann. Review of Env. & Resources*, Vol. 46:653-689. Open Access. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-environ-012220-011104>

² Calverley, D. and Anderson, K. (2022). Phaseout Pathways for Fossil Fuel Production Within Paris-compliant Carbon Budgets. Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/213256008/Tyndall_Production_Phaseout_Report_final_text_3_.pdf

Impacts of the project on eel grass and on the climate will be incremental additions to cumulative impacts, and the commitment of resources is adverse to future needs.

Eel grass: Over time there has been considerable loss of eel grass in the broad area extending from the mouth of Indian River and through to the far end of Sitka Channel. It is necessary for the overall historic loss of eel grass, the project's additional contribution to that loss, and the resulting cumulative impacts on herring and other marine life to be fully disclosed. Disclosure of the impacts should include an analysis comparing the negligible justification for Segment-2 of the project (discussed above in the section on Purpose and Need). The disclosures and analysis require an environmental assessment, precluding using a categorical exclusion from NEPA.

Climate impacts. Similarly, over time Sitka and the US have contributed emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, at per capita rates that are extraordinarily high from the global perspective. The project will add to those emissions, yet there is a high need to rapidly reduce the rate of emissions and where possible to forego causing emissions. It is necessary for the project to disclose its contribution to cumulative emissions of the city and nation (past, present and foreseeable), and to evaluate the ethics involved in relation to the negligible justification for the project in the above discussed purpose and need of the project. The disclosures and analysis require an environmental assessment, and precludes using a categorical exclusion from NEPA.

Impacts from the commitment of resources. Segment-2 of the project requires a substantial volume of rock and other fill material, which over time have been chronically in short supply in Sitka. The volumes of these materials need to be disclosed and evaluated in the cumulative sense regarding supply, looking into the foreseeable future. The evaluation should include consideration of the negligible justification for the project in the above discussed purpose and need. The disclosures and analysis require an environmental assessment, and precludes using a categorical exclusion from NEPA.

In conclusion. This project is not suited to a categorical exclusion from NEPA, so an environmental assessment is required.

Sincerely,

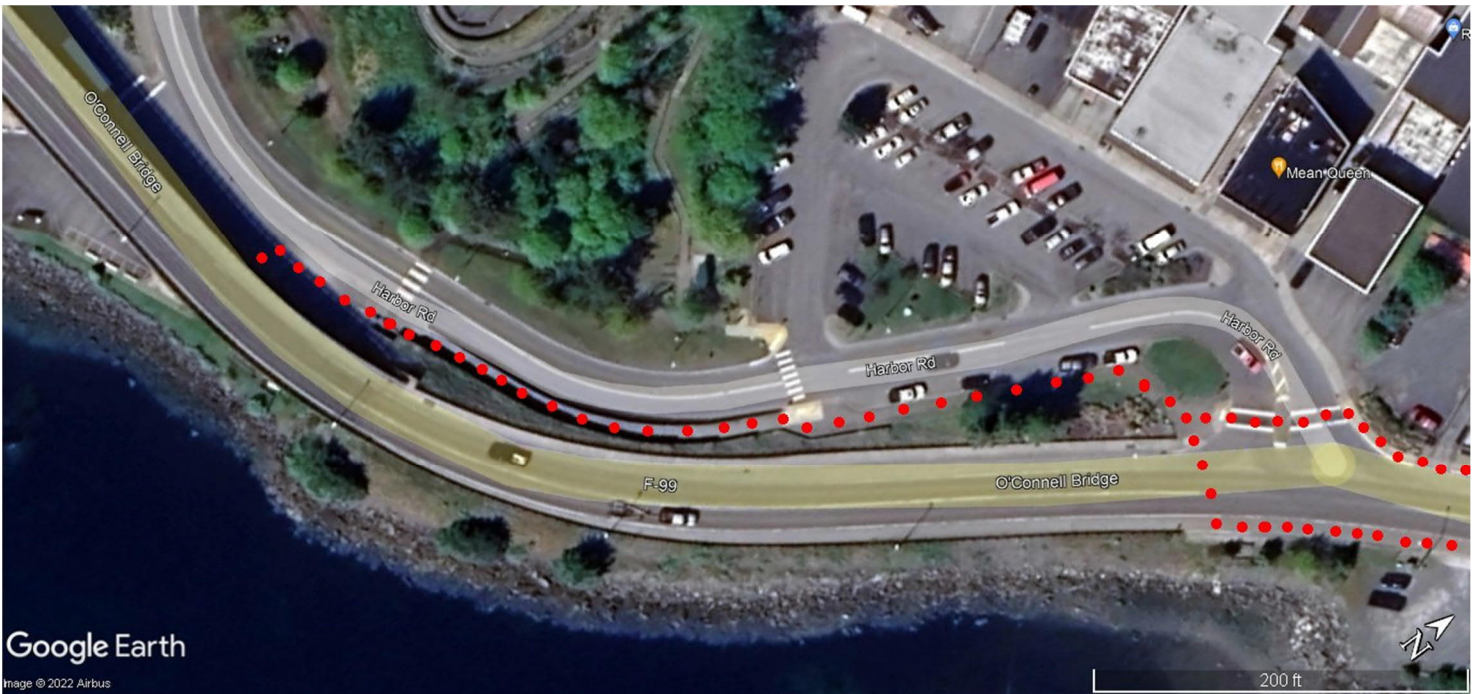
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Edwards

Attachment: A google-earth image of part of the Segment-2 area, with red dots showing existing 8-foot width pedestrian access.

Attachment to Edwards comments, 4 Jan 2023

Existing 8-foot walkway from the lightening facility to and beyond the foot of the bridge.



From: [Gehring, Loren K \(DOT\)](#)
To: [Galen Paine](#)
Cc: [Tyler Bradshaw](#); [Erickson, Kathryn H \(DOT\)](#)
Subject: FW: Sitka Seawalk Project/ Impact on KCAW
Date: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 2:52:55 PM

Galen, Thank you for the timely feedback. We do recognize the importance of your facility and your comments are essential. What would be helpful in case further discussion is needed is to put our design team in contact with you or one of your RF engineer's to best accommodate the needs of your facility and those of the project.

We will be in touch soon after we absorb these comments and come up with some ideas.

Regards, Loren

Loren Gehring, PE, SE
Project Manager
DOT&PF Southcoast Region – Design
6860 Glacier Highway
Juneau, AK 99801
Ph: (907) 465-8189
Cell: (907) 321-0219
loren.gehring@alaska.gov

From: Galen Paine <way2drenched@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 7, 2023 2:33 PM
To: Gehring, Loren K (DOT) <loren.gehring@alaska.gov>
Subject: Sitka Seawalk Project/ Impact on KCAW

You don't often get email from way2drenched@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

June 7, 2023

Loren Gehring
Project Manager
Department of Transportation
Sitka Seawalk Project Phase 2

Project No. SFHWY00312

RE: CONCERNS RE THE SEAWALK PROJECT INTERFERING WITH THE KCAW DISH,
PRSS Downlink

Dear Mr. Gehring:

The KCAW satellite dish under the O'Connell Bridge is a critical piece of broadcast infrastructure; all national and international programming is received through this dish. KCAW is the sole broadcaster in large sections of Southeast Alaska. Anything that is in front of this dish will decrease its ability to receive a signal - including vegetation, solid structures, light poles and people. If it is unavoidable that there will be obstructions then KCAW may need to move the dish if another location can be found, and will have to ask for mitigation funds to do so.

On behalf of all stakeholders of the station, KCAW requests the following:

1. Please revise the design of the area immediately in front of the dish to have no obstructions. The entire look angle of the satellite dish will need to be clear for the dish to function well. For example, light pole 26 in the plan that KCAW has (current January 2023) will obstruct the dish.
2. During the construction of Phase 2, please give KCAW notice if there are going to be any unavoidable obstructions to the dish during the construction process. KCAW can temporarily access an IP-based alternative feed, but would need time to make adjustments the background routing and automation systems. Please provide accurate notice so KCAW can continue to broadcast.
3. Also, please take care not to disturb the site where the dish is located. The satellite dish is a sensitive link in our broadcast chain, and vibrations/movement to the site could knock the dish out of alignment. Realigning (or 'peaking') the dish would require engineering expertise, at a cost to KCAW.
4. If the lights being used on the site have emissions that will affect the signal

please consider another method of lighting the area. In addition, weed-whackers, leaf blowers and other gas-powered devices can take out the signal due to the high amount of RF hash that the magnetos put out. If these are to be a factor during construction or later planned maintenance please notify KCAW.

A note on Phase 3 section of the plan: the historic Cable House is KCAW's studio and property. KCAW would like to encourage the design of this phase to "link up" as much of this section of Lincoln Street to the downtown corridor, and be a pleasing space and commons for the public to enjoy year-round.

And finally, please let KCAW know when loud construction can be expected. KCAW's broadcast originates near where the remaining phases of the Seawalk are planned. Since KCAW's studios are in the Cable House noise will impact the quality of the broadcast negatively.

KCAW appreciates the opportunity to partner with the City and project partners in mitigating these issues.

Galen Paine
KCAW Board Director
for
KCAW, Raven Radio



TOTEM SQUARE

LINCOLN ST

BARANOF CASTLE STATE HISTORICAL SITE

CITY HALL

HARBOR WAY

100

SECTION 2
SECTION 3

8" CONCRETE SEAWALK, SEE CIVIL
COLORED CONCRETE BAND, SEE CIVIL

ALTERNATE SECTION 3 SEAWALK ROUTE

PROTECT (2) EX. BENCH AND TREE

108

SECTION 2
SECTION 3

SITKA CHANNEL

FUTURE INTERSECTION DESIGN

Why does the improvement stop here?

Food Cart Pod

How will the alt path on phase 3 connect to phase 2?

2A
2B

8" CONCRETE SEAWALK, SEE CIVIL
COLORED CONCRETE BAND, SEE CIVIL

ALTERNATE SECTION 3 SEAWALK ROUTE

WHAT IS THE CITY'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE USE OF THIS SPACE?

ALTERNATE SECTION 3 SEAWALK ROUTE

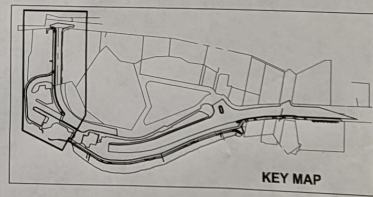
O'CONNELL BRIDGE LIGHTERING

EXISTING LIGHTERING DOCK

ALTERNATE SECTION 3 SEAWALK ROUTE

PETRO MARINE TANKS

around! super popular lunch spot!



REVISIONS			
REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DWN. [CKD.] APP.

DESIGN: MFG	CHECKED: MFG	SCALE: SCALE IN FEET
DRAWN: MFG	APPROVED: MFG	0 20 40 FT.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN

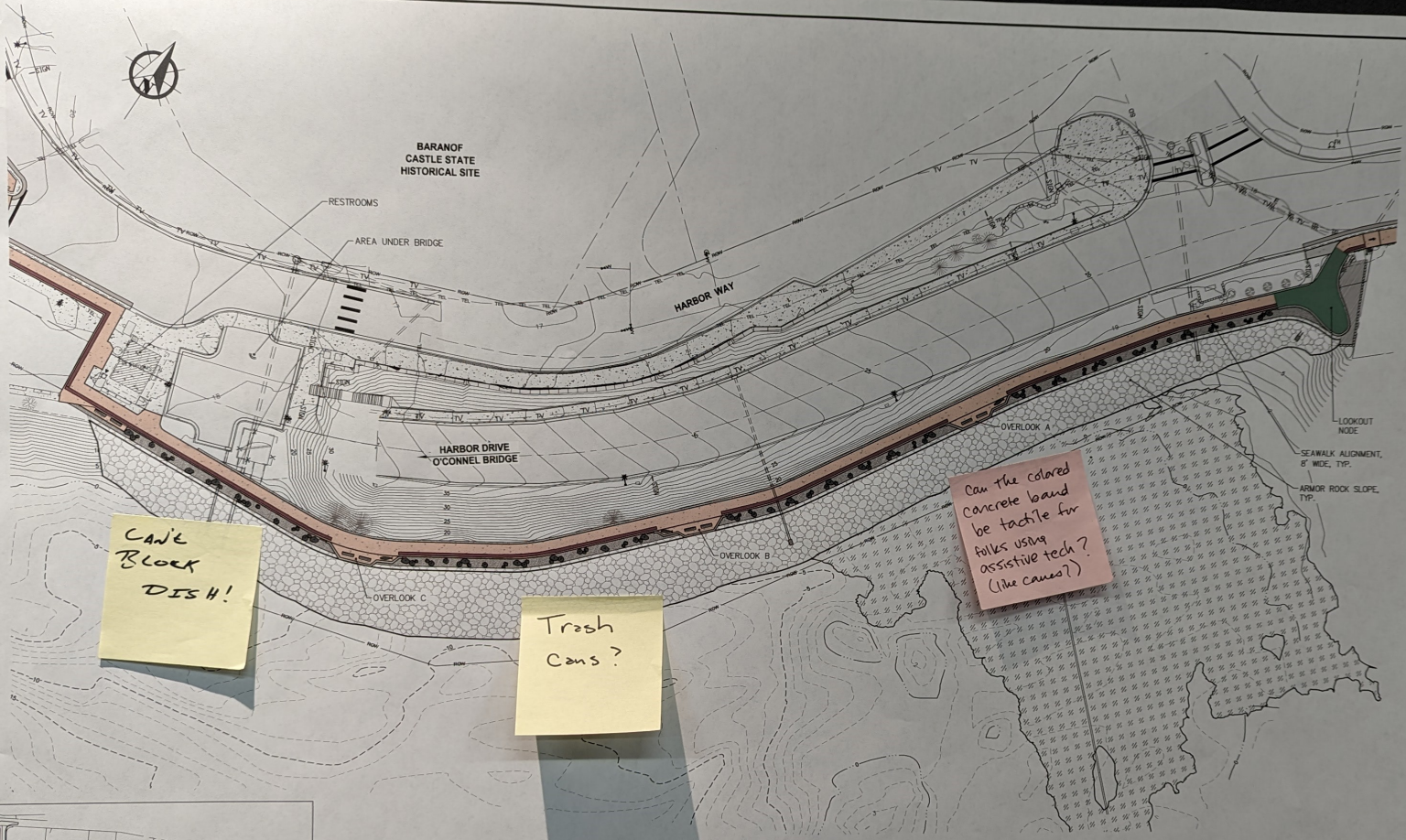
STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
SITKA SEAWALK PHASE II
AKDOT&PF PROJECT NO. SFHWY00312

SHEET TITLE: SECTION 3 LANDSCAPE PLAN

L5

END PROJECT # 222054 | C.A.N.# AECC250

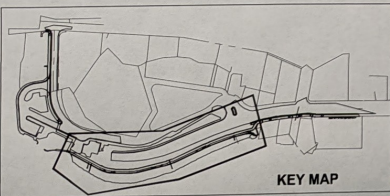
DATE: OCT. 21, 2022



CAN'T
BLOCK
DISH!

Trash
Cans?

Can the colored
concrete band
be tactile for
folks using
assistive tech?
(like causer?)



REVISIONS				
REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DWN.	CKD. APP.

DESIGN: _____ CHECKED: _____ SCALE: SCALE IN FEET
 DRAWN: WRB APPROVED: _____ 0 50 100 FT.

STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
SITRA SEAWALK PHASE II
AKDOT&PF PROJECT NO. SFHWY00312

PRELIMINARY
DESIGN

SHEET TITLE
**SECTION 2 LANDSCAPE
PLAN**

PND PROJECT #: 222064 C.A.N. #: AECO250

DATE: OCT. 21, 2022

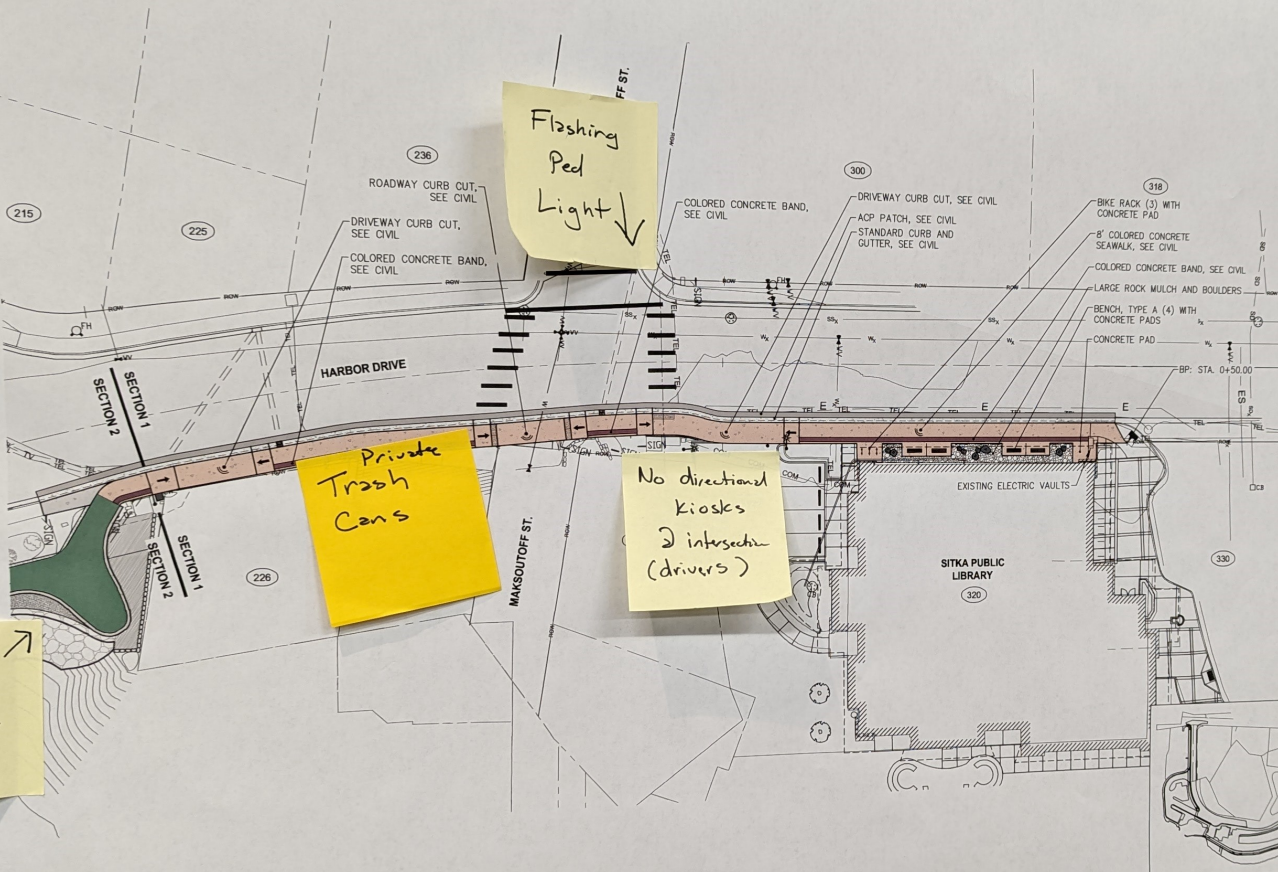
L3



SCHEDULE SECTION 1

SYMBOL	PLANTING DESCRIPTION	QTY
A	Boulder - Type A	1
B	Boulder - Type B	3
C	Boulder - Type C	4
D	Boulder - Type D	1

SYMBOL	SITE FURNISHINGS DESCRIPTION	QTY
—	Bench, Type 1	4
—	Bike Rack	3

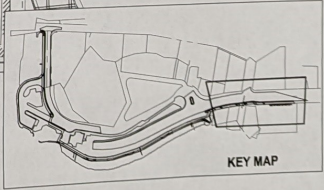


Flashing Ped Light ↓

Private Trash Cans

No directional kiosks @ intersection (drivers)

Interp Signage ↗



REVISIONS			
REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DWN. CKD. APP.

DESIGN:	CHECKED:	SCALE:	SCALE IN FEET:
DRAWN: MFG	APPROVED:	0	20 40 FT.

STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES
 SITKA SEAWALK PHASE II
 AKDOT&PF PROJECT NO. SFHWY00312

PRELIMINARY DESIGN

SHEET TITLE:
 SECTION 1 LANDSCAPE PLAN

L2

DATE: OCT. 21, 2022

P&B PROJECT #: 221064 C.A.N. # AEC0250

