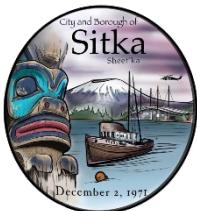


Appendix H: 
Draft EA Meeting

Draft EA Outreach

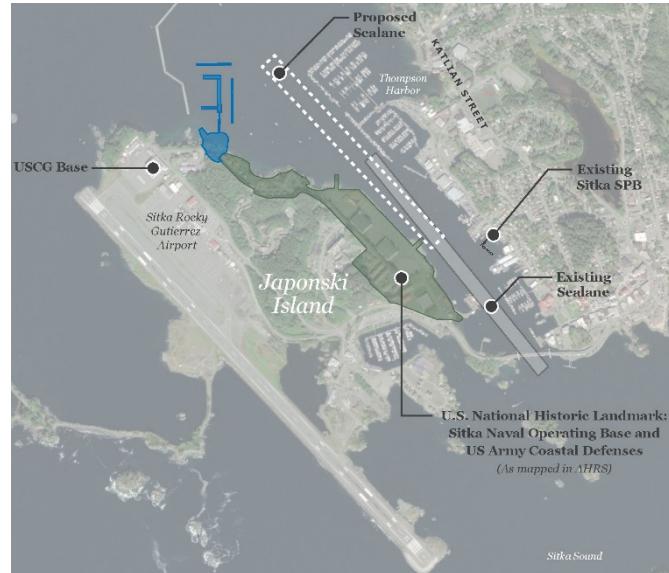


New Sitka Seaplane Base

*Notice of Environmental Assessment (EA) availability and
Notification of Public Meeting*

REMINDER - VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021
6:00 – 7:30 PM

Please join FAA, CBS, and the DOWL team on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 6 p.m. for a virtual Zoom meeting to learn more about the Draft EA and provide your input on the document. If you have any questions and require additional information, please contact Kelli Cropper, CBS Project Manager, at kelli.cropper@cityofsitka.org.



The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) is proposing development of a new Sitka Seaplane Base (SPB) on the north end of Japonski Island. The existing SPB, located on the east shore of Sitka Channel, has been operating for 65 years and is at the end of its useful life.

In cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), CBS has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA was prepared consistent with FAA Order 1050 which guides the FAA's environmental review process. The EA documents the purpose and need for the project, the proposed action, and the environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the seaplane base.

The Draft EA is available at www.dowl.com/outreach. Please click on the Sitka Seaplane Base project and download the project files. Comments will be accepted through February 28, 2021. Comments may be submitted to sitkaspb@dowl.com.

Public input on the EA is encouraged. Please participate in the environmental review and provide your input on:

- the purpose and need for the project,
- the proposed action and alternatives that were considered,
- potential environmental effects, and
- mitigation measures that could reduce environmental impacts.

Zoom/ Teleconference Meeting



Meeting ID: 979 5807 1005
Passcode: 287236

Presentations will be given at 6:00 pm.
Questions and Answer period begins at
6:30 pm

Join the meeting in one of three ways:

1. Scan the above QR code with your smart phone camera. This will take you directly to the Zoom meeting.
2. Open your Zoom app or web browser (www.zoom.com) and type in the meeting ID and passcode provided above.
3. Participate by teleconference only at 1 (253) 215-8782, using the same meeting ID and passcode.

For more information about the project and to review the Draft EA, please visit the DOWL outreach website: www.dowl.com/outreach and click on the Sitka Seaplane Base project link.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please email Kelli Cropper, CBS Project Manager, at kelli.cropper@cityofsitka.org

Sitka Seaplane Base ~ EA Notice of Availability and Notice of Public Meeting
Comments will be accepted through February 28, 2021.

SUBUMIT COMMENTS TO

sitkaspb@dowl.com

Through February 28, 2021

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?

CONTACT THE PROJECT TEAM

Kelli Cropper
CBS Project Manager
kelli.cropper@cityofsitka.org

Maryellen Tuttell
DOWL Project Manager
mtuttell@dowl.com

Project Website: dowl.com/outreach - Click on Sitka Seaplane Base

Affidavit of Publication

STATE OF ALASKA
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT) ss.
AT SITKA, ALASKA

Kathy Hope Erickson, being first sworn, says she or he is the publisher, managing editor or business manager of the DAILY SITKA SENTINEL, a newspaper printed and published in Sitka, Alaska, and legally qualified as a medium of official and legal publications, and that the Display ad - CBS Seaplane EA Dow a copy of which is hereto annexed, was published in the Daily Sitka Sentinel on:

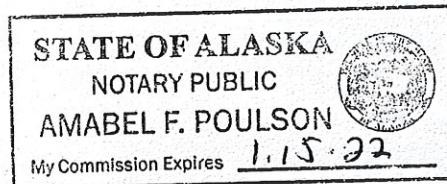
2.5.21, 2.8.21, 2.12.21,
2.14.21, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____.

Signature KH

Sworn and subscribed to
before me this 24th day of February, 2021

Notary Public for Alaska Amabel Poulson

My commission expires _____, 20 _____



**CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA
SITKA SEAPLANE BASE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)
NOTICE OF EA AVAILABILITY AND PUBLIC MEETING**

Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

6:00 - 6:30 p.m. Presentation

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Q&A and Discussion

**Virtual Zoom Meeting
Meeting ID: 979 5807 1005**

Passcode: 287236

Teleconference Only: 1 (253) 215-8782



The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) is proposing development of a new Sitka Seaplane Base (SPB) on the north end of Japonski Island. The existing SPB, located on the east shore of Sitka Channel, has been operating for 65 years and is at the end of its useful life.

In cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), CBS has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA was prepared consistent with FAA Order 1050 which guides the FAA's environmental review process. The EA documents the purpose and need for the project, the proposed action, and the environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the seaplane base.

The Draft EA is available at www.dowl.com/outreach. Please click on the Sitka Seaplane Base project for the project files. Comments will be accepted through February 28, 2021. Comments may be submitted to sitkaspb@dowl.com.

Public input on the EA is encouraged. Please participate in the environmental review and provide your input on:

- the purpose and need for the project,
- the proposed action and alternatives that were considered,
- potential environmental effects, and
- mitigation measures that could reduce environmental impacts.

Please join FAA, CBS, and the DOWL team on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at 6 p.m. to learn more about the Draft EA and provide your input on the document. If you have any questions and require additional information, please contact Kelli Cropper, CBS Project Manager, at kelli.cropper@cityofsitka.org and a link to the virtual meeting will be available at www.dowl.com/outreach when you click on the Sitka Seaplane Base Project link.

Published: February 5, 8, 12, 16, 2021

Text for Public Service Announcement (PSA)

Will be placed in radio station KCAW 104.7, 90.1 FM, KIFW-AM 1230, AND KSBZ-FM 103.1 to run for the following public scoping meeting:

Start Date: Friday 1/29/21 (Peak times – morning and evening local news)
Kill Date: Wednesday, 2/18/21
Contact: Alexa Greene
Address: DOWL - 3535 College Road, Suite 100, Fairbanks, AK 99709
Phone: (907) 371-2011

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

EDITED TEXT – UNDER 30-SECONDS

THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA IS PROPOSING DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SITKA SEAPLANE BASE (SPB) ON THE NORTH END OF JAPONSKI ISLAND. A PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH, FROM 6-7:30PM. A LINK TO THE MEETING, AS WELL AS A DOWNLOAD OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, IS AVAILABLE AT D-O-W-L-DOT-COM-SLASH-OUTREACH. FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT KELLI CROPPER AT KELLI.CROPPER@CITYOFSITKA.ORG.

ORIGINAL TEXT – OVER 30-SECONDS

THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA (CBS) IS PROPOSING DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SITKA SEAPLANE BASE (SPB) ON THE NORTH END OF JAPONSKI ISLAND. THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED NEW SPB PROJECT HAVE BEEN EVALUATED AND ARE DOCUMENTED IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT UNDER THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION'S NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT PROCEDURES. THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT IS AVAILABLE FOR

DOWNLOAD ONLINE BY SELECTING THE SITKA SEAPLANE BASE PROJECT AT
WWW.DOWL.COM/OUTREACH.

PLEASE JOIN CBS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND PROVIDE YOUR INPUT
ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT. **THE PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD
VIRTUALLY ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021 FROM 6:00 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M. A
LINK TO THE VIRTUAL MEETING WILL BE AVAILABLE BY CLICKING ON THE
SITKA SEAPLANE BASE PROJECT ON WWW.DOWL.COM/OUTREACH. THERE WILL
BE A PRESENTATION FROM 6:00 TO 6:30, AND COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM
6:30 TO 7:30 P.M.** FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT KELLI CROPPER, CBS PROJECT
MANAGER, AT kelli.cropper@cityofsitka.org.



104.7, 90.1 FM IN SITKA
SERVING ANGOON, ELFIN COVE, KAKE, PELICAN,
PORT ALEXANDER, TENAKEE SPRINGS, & YAKUTAT

Raven Radio Community Calendar



Spinning Moon Apothecary

Organic Teas, Tinctures, Body Care. Catalysts for Whole-Being Health.
907-738-7444 327 Seward Street, Suite 7 (next to Highliner)

To submit Community Calendar events scroll to bottom of the page or [CLICK HERE](#). Allow 3-5 days for the submission to be approved before appearing on the calendar and being read on the air. More Community Calendars: [Yakutat](#) - [Haines](#) - [Juneau](#) - [Petersburg](#) - [Wrangell](#) - [Ketchikan](#)

Orange = One-Time & Blue = Recurring

[Today](#) [◀](#) [▶](#) [Tuesday, February 16](#) [Week](#) [Month](#) [Agenda](#) ▾

Food Business Contest
National Park Trails
Subsistence Project Grant
11:00am Senior Chair Yoga
3:00pm Uncle's House
5:30pm Alzheimer's Resource Discussion
7:00pm Uncle's House
Wednesday, February 17
White's Vaccination Clinics
1:00pm Science Mobile
6:00pm Seaplane Base Meeting
When Wed, February 17, 6:00pm – 7:30pm
Description
The City and Borough of Sitka holds a meeting 6 p.m. Wednesday, February 17, via Zoom, regarding the proposed seaplane base on the north end of Japonski Island.
More: Comments will be taken from the public. The environmental assessment is available at dowl.com/outreach . For more information email kelli.cropper@cityofsitka.org . more details copy to my calendar
7:00pm Menopause Discussion Group
Thursday, February 18
Parent Teacher Conference
11:00am Senior Chair Yoga
3:00pm Uncle's House
3:00pm Auntie's House
7:00pm Uncle's House
Friday, February 19
No School
Crewmember Apprenticeships
Park Visitor Center Open
Scholarships Offered
12:00pm Health Summit Coalition
Saturday, February 20

Events shown in time zone: Alaska Time - Anchorage

[+ Google Calendar](#)

Raven Radio Community Calendar Event Submission

Submissions will appear on our online calendar, and will be read over the air. Please allow 3-5 days for the submission to be approved. We encourage you to submit events at least 2 weeks in advance.

Public Service Announcements can also be submitted at www.kcaw.org/contact-us/

* Required

Submitters Name and Phone Number *

In case we need to contact you - not for publication

Your answer

Event Title *

Your answer

Month *

[Choose](#) ▾

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LATEST | NEWSCAST

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NEWSLETTER

A Moment Together



Community Calendar

[Today](#) [◀](#) [▶](#)

Thursday, February 4

Pelican Clinic

Boards/Commissions Positions

Heart Health Quizzes

Sea Lion

SEARHC Vaccinations

Wine Making Registration

9:30am Infant Massage

11:00am Senior Chair Yoga

3:00pm Uncle's House

3:00pm Auntie's House

5:00pm Art Color Series

7:00pm Uncle's House

Friday, February 5

Pelican Clinic

Wear Red

Crewmember Apprenticeships

Heart Health Quizzes

Kids for Peace

Park Visitor Center Open

Scholarships Offered

7:00pm Winemaking Class

Saturday, February 6

[+ Google Calendar](#)

Buoy Observations

Cruise Ship Calendar

Inside Marine Wx

Outside Marine Wx

Sitka Ride Bus Schedule

Sitka Tides

Sunrise & Sunset

The Moon and Stars

Day *
(If Event is several days running, post to the first day and explain how many days the event runs in the description)

Choose

Start Time/End Time (please estimate if unsure) *
example: 4pm to 6pm

Your answer

Announcement *
This is what our host will read on the air. Please be brief: WHAT is happening, WHEN, and WHERE. Also, a contact name and number for more information.

Your answer

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KCAW Prize Drawings: click on the links for winner info.

Quiet Drive – ended 10/21/2020

Quiet Drive – ended 4/5/2020

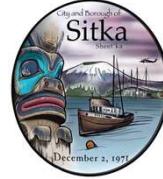
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CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

New Sitka Seaplane Base





Environmental Assessment (EA)

Public Meeting

Sitka, Alaska
Wednesday, February 17, 2021

1

Public Meeting Agenda



1 Welcome/Project Team Introductions

4 Consultations Underway

2 Project Overview

5 Design and Permitting Phase

3 EA Overview

6 Comment Period/Schedule

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

2



2

Project Team & Roles

City and Borough of Sitka:

Kelli Cropper, MPM | *Project Manager*

Amy Ainslie | *Planning Director*

Stan Eliason | *Harbor Master*

Michael Harmon, PE | *Public Works Director*

John Leach | *Municipal Administrator*

DOWL Team

- Ken Nichols, PE | *Aviation Engineer*
- Maryellen Tuttell, ACIP | *Environmental Planner*
- PND | *Marine Design*
- Solstice | *Marine Biology*
- North 57 | *Survey Support*

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

3

3



Project Overview



4

2

Purpose & Need

Purpose

Replace existing seaplane base with new facility on Japonski Island

Need

1. Seaplane operations critical transportation element in Southeast Alaska
2. Existing seaplane base is over 65 years old and in poor condition
3. Existing site is constrained and has operational and safety limitations

The purpose of the proposed project is to address capacity, safety, and operational and condition deficiencies at the existing Sitka SPB.



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Project History



2000
2002
2012
2016

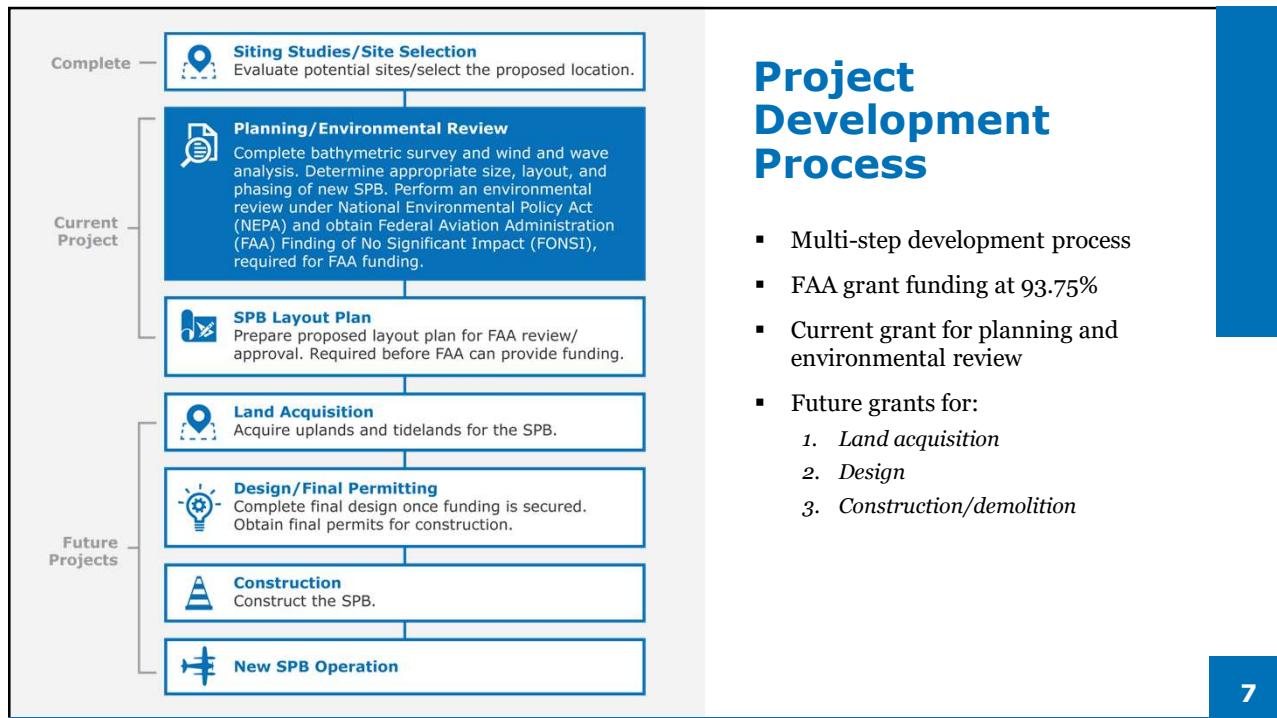
- Site selection studies began
- Japonski Island site selected
- SPB master plan completed
- Sites re-evaluated
- Damage occurs to existing SPB
- Siting study updated

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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6

3



7

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Existing SPB

Features:

- ✓ 8 float slips (4 not accessible at low tide)
- ✓ Access to floats from Katlian Street by elevated gangway/ramp
- ✓ Parking for 2 vehicles on Katlian Street

Deficiencies:

- ✗ At end of useful life/expensive to maintain
- ✗ Insufficient parking for aircraft/vehicles
- ✗ No on-site fueling, aircraft maintenance area, or aircraft pull out ramp
- ✗ Conflicts with boat traffic in narrow channel
- ✗ Conflicts and bird hazards from adjacent seafood processing facility
- ✗ Difficult access to some slips when tide is low

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

The map shows the Baranof Island area with the existing SPB. It includes labels for the North arrow, Baranof Island, Parking Spaces (2), Pedestrian Gangway, Transient & Loading Float (Removed 2016), and Permanent Slips.

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8

EA Process



9

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Overview

1. Covers all major federal actions
2. Documentation of project purpose/need
3. Consideration of alternatives
4. Documentation of environmental impacts
5. Consideration of impact minimization/mitigation
6. Requires public involvement

Goals

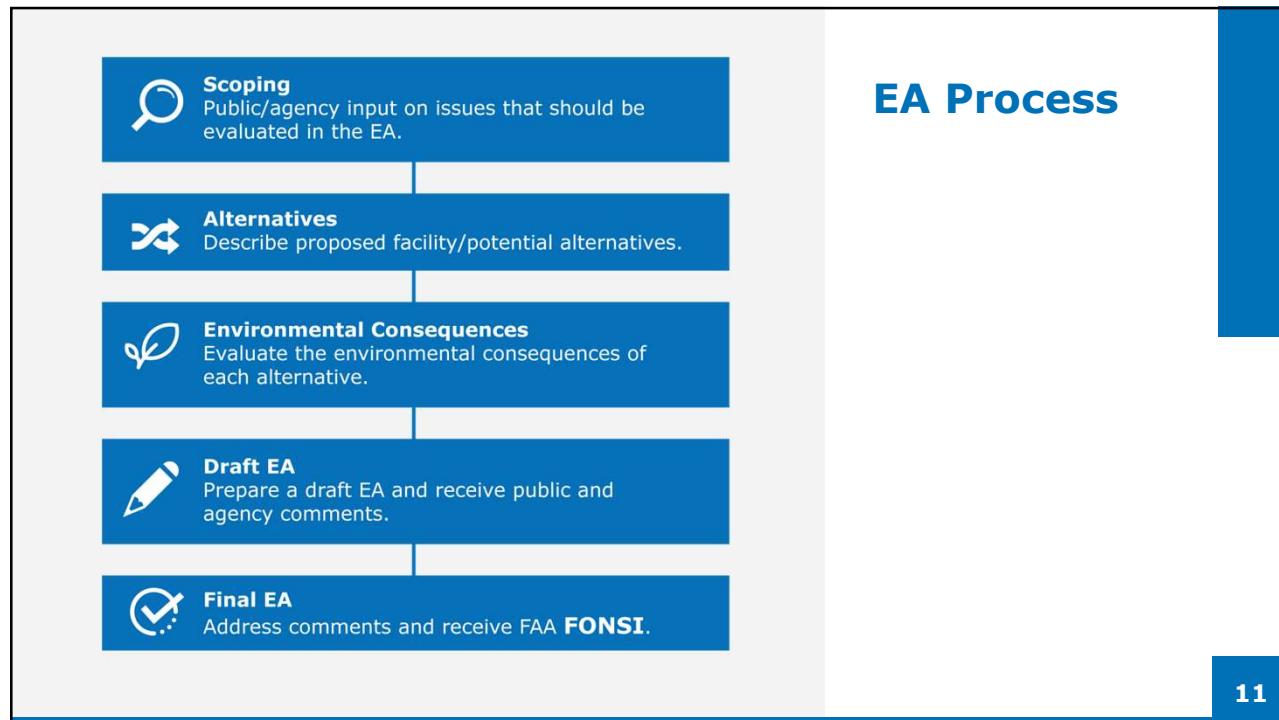
1. Encourage harmony between people/environment
2. Prevent environmental damage
3. Stimulate the health/welfare of people



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

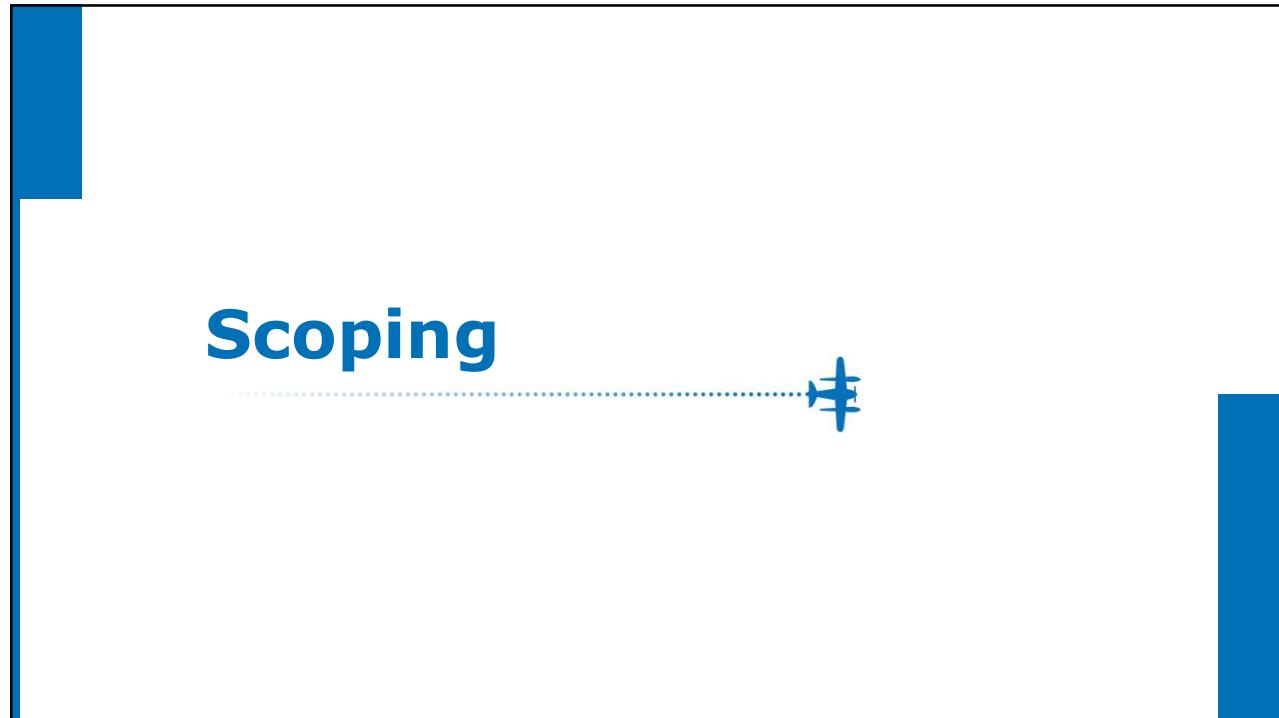
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Sitka SPB Scoping Process

1. Scoping period was December 2019
2. Scoping advertised on radio and in Sitka Sentinel
3. Scoping Meetings held December 10-11, 2019
 - a. *Public meeting*
 - b. *Agency meeting*
 - c. *Pilot meeting*
4. Primary NEPA issues raised during scoping
 - a. *Traffic/Noise impacts on adjacent land uses*
 - b. *Marine impacts – fish, marine mammals, habitat*
 - c. *Cultural resource impacts*



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Alternatives



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Sitka SPB Alternatives

Primary Issues with Alternative Sites

- Safety Concerns
 - Wind and wave exposure
 - Wildlife hazards near seafood plant outfalls
 - Conflicts with other marine or aviation users in takeoff/taxi areas
- Distance from city facilities and airport
- Lack of potential to construct upland facilities

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Proposed Action



17

Sitka SPB Proposed Action

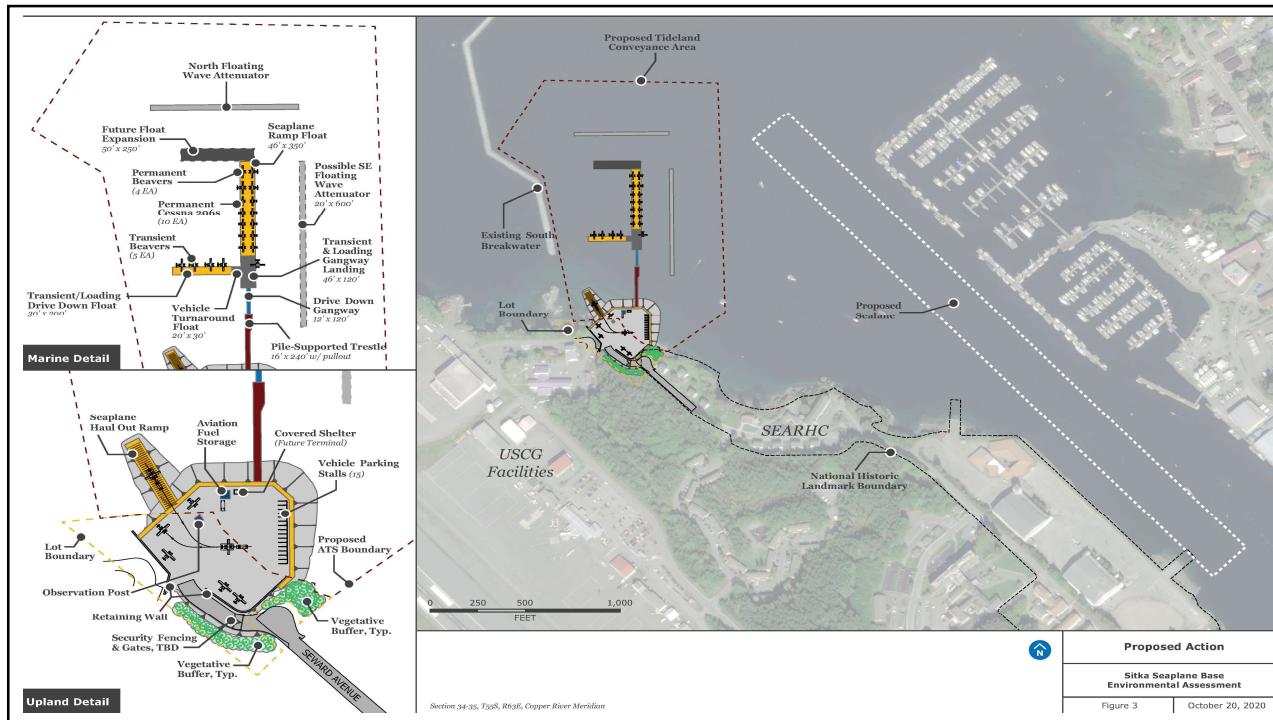
- ✓ Drive-down ramp to the SPB floats
- ✓ Electricity, water/sewer, and lighting
- ✓ Float slips for based seaplanes/ positions for transient seaplanes
- ✓ Future growth accommodation options
- ✓ Haul-out ramp, tiedowns, maintenance facilities
- ✓ Fuel storage and distribution system
- ✓ Covered shelter
- ✓ Security fencing and gate
- ✓ Retaining wall
- ✓ Access road sloping down into site
- ✓ Vegetation buffer



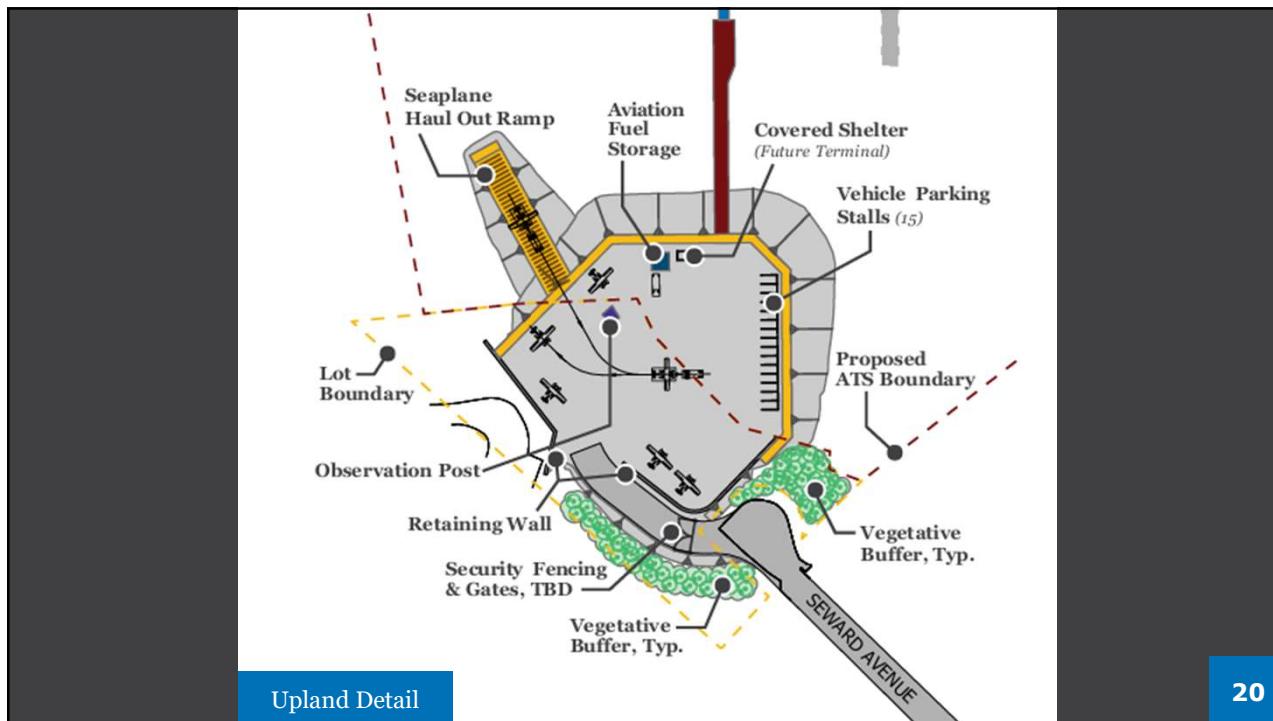
Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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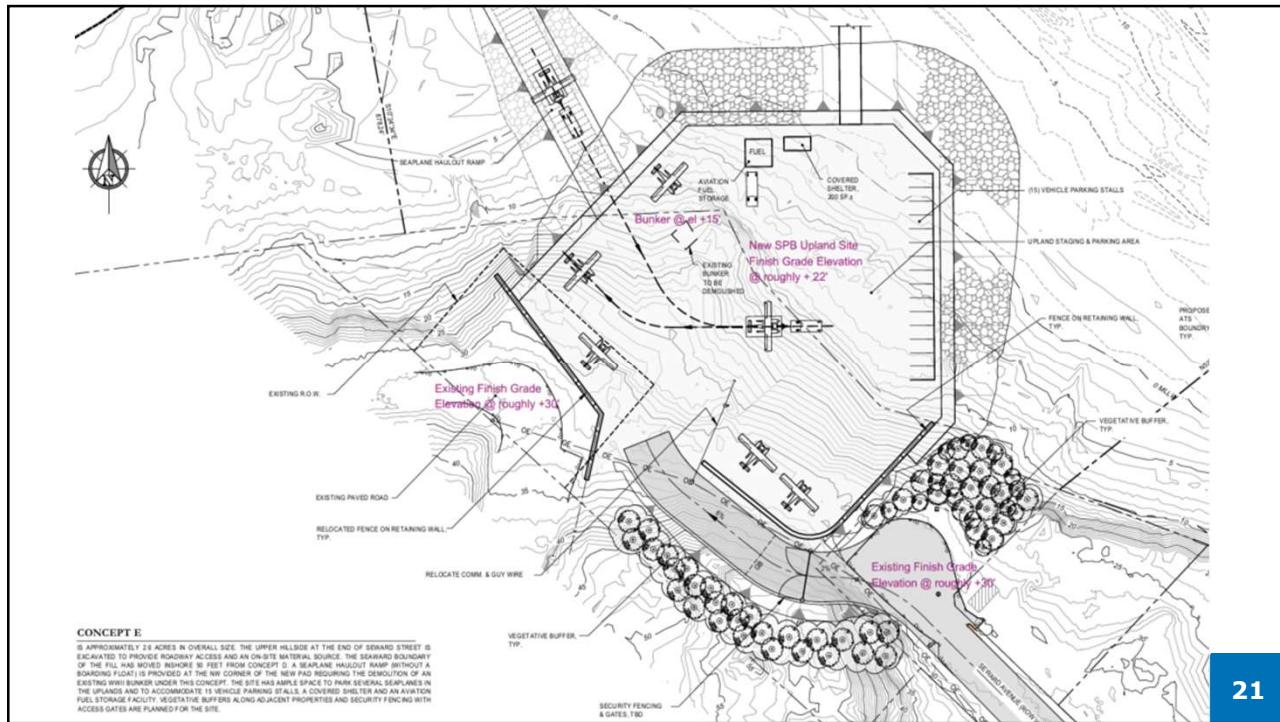
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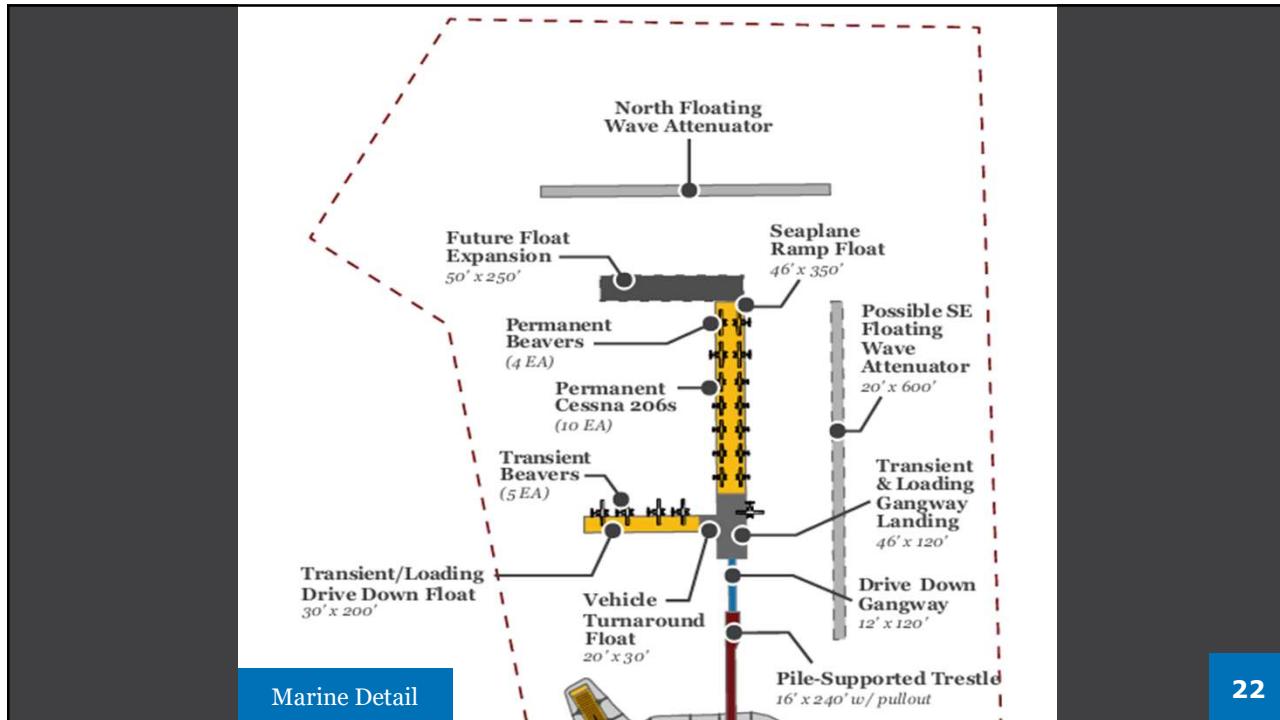
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23

Environmental Consequences



24

Environmental Consequences

Physical

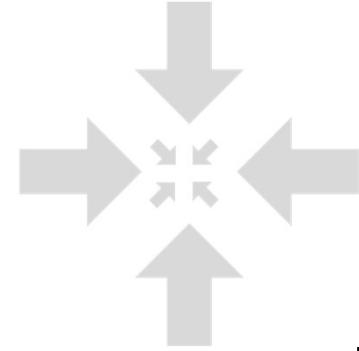
- Requires cut and fill to level site, includes blasting of hillside, fill in small terrestrial wetlands, fill in tidal area/marine waters

Biological

- Affects marine habitats, fish, marine mammals
- Affects terrestrial vegetation and wetlands

Social/Cultural

- Supports local and regional transportation system and economy
- Increased noise and traffic levels along Seward Avenue
- Removes observation post located on site



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Marine Environment

- Fill in marine waters reduces EFH habitat by 1.47 acres
- Dock and floats impact (shadow) 1.34 acres of EFH and marine mammal habitat
- Pile driving and other construction noise impacts marine mammals, including:
 - *Humpback whales (threatened)*
 - *Steller sea lions (endangered)*
 - *Sea otters, harbor seals, killer whales*



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Historic Resources

Sitka Naval Operating Base and Coastal Defenses National Historic Landmark

- WWII structures located throughout coastal Alaska
- Observation post not recorded
- Consultation underway on eligibility for National Register of Historic Places and potential mitigation required for adverse effects on it



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Land Use & Noise

- Construction noise including blasting and pile driving
 - Temporary construction effects
- Increased vehicle traffic and traffic noise on Seward Avenue
 - Estimated at 10-12 one-way vehicle trips/day
- Increased seaplane takeoff/landing noise in channel
 - Noise would primarily occur during summer
 - Average noise levels would not exceed guidance level for compatibility with educational and health care uses



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Noise Analysis

Receptor ID	Receptor Name	Elevation (ft)	Noise Level (dB)	Metric
1	Mt. Edgecumbe High School	15	64	DNL
2	Mt. Edgecumbe Dormitory	21	57	DNL
3	SEARHC Hospital – Existing	21	52	DNL
4	SEARHC Hospital – Proposed	21	49	DNL
5	SEARHC Community Health Services	20	54	DNL
6	Building 1200-1202	11	55	DNL

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Permits, Reviews, & Approvals

Agency	Permit/Approval	Law
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	MMPA Consultation Section 7 Consultation EFH Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine Mammal Protection Act Endangered Species Act Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation & Management Act
United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	ESA Section 7 Consultation Bald Eagle Take Permit MBTA Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endangered Species Act Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act Migratory Bird Treaty Act
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	NHPA Section 106 Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Historic Preservation Act
United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)	Section 4(f) Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Transportation Act
United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Section 404/Section 10 Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean Water Act/Rivers and Harbors Act
United States Coast Guard (USCG)	Section 10 Permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers and Harbors Act

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Stay Involved



31

What We Need From You

Comments can be submitted to: SitkaSPB@dowl.com

1. Please provide comments on:
 - a. Purpose and Need for the Project
 - b. Project Alternatives that were or should have been considered
 - c. Environmental effects that are not adequately addressed
 - d. Mitigation measures that may reduce the adverse effects of the Project
2. Please submit comments by **February 28, 2021**.

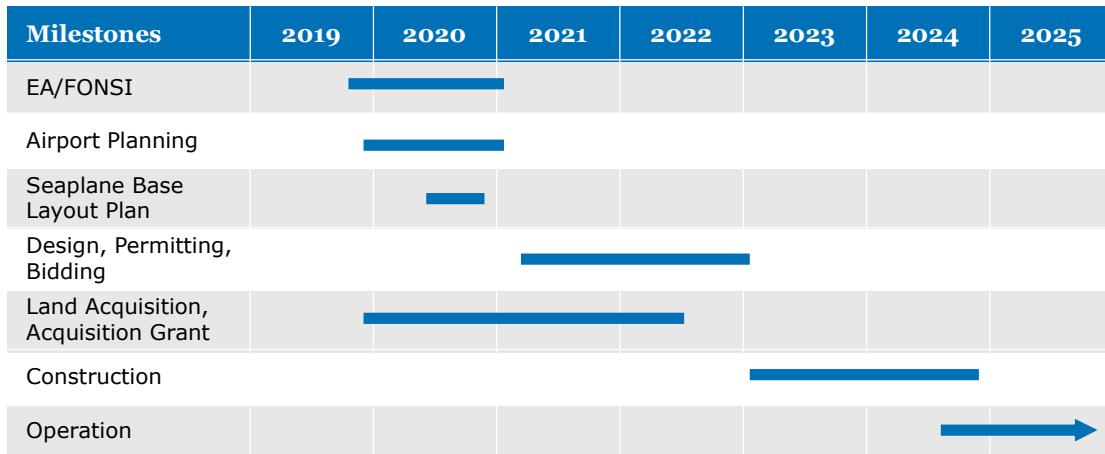


Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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Overall Project Schedule



Wednesday, February 17, 2021

33

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Remember...

**Submit comments by
February 28, 2021**

Project Team:

SitkaSPB@dowl.com



**Join the
Mailing List**

Send an email to
SitkaSPB@dowl.com

34

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Number of Participants: 27 (including 5 Project Team see list at end)

Presentation Summary:

- The meeting started with a 40-minute presentation that provided an overview of the project purpose and need, the environmental review process, the proposed action, the environmental consequences, and the schedule for project completion.
- The presentation is attached.

Summarized Public Comments (Project Team Responses in Text Boxes in Italic)

Purpose & Need

- There were several commentors that currently or previously have operated seaplanes from the existing seaplane base and in the channel. They emphasized the deficiencies associated with the existing seaplane base and the need for the new facility.
- Seaplanes are essential transportation for food, medical care, and other goods for many of the regional small communities. In particular, seaplanes used to transport people into Sitka for health care at SEARHC facilities and getting vaccines out to communities.
- Bringing tourists into regional lodges from Sitka vs Juneau would increase spending in Sitka and have economic benefits.
- Commercial seaplanes serve all the local communities and also boats. The seaplane base is needed to support these commercial operations. The lack of a good seaplane base has resulted in a lack of commercial operators operating out of Sitka. The demand is here. Without a good seaplane base, the economic benefits go to Juneau instead of coming in to Sitka.
- There is a pilot shortage in the world. This is an opportunity for University of Alaska to train pilots, aviation mechanics, etc. A lot of the students at Mt. Edgecumbe come from rural communities that are dependent on aircraft. This is an economic opportunity to train and employ pilots, mechanics, trainers, etc. Schools should embrace this opportunity.
- Because Canada isn't allowing cruise ships through to southeast Alaska, there will be more large yachts coming in. And they like to park their yachts out remotely and fly in to see Sitka and its historic sites.

The Project Team agrees that there is strong support for the project and that it has benefits to the economy as well as to the overall transportation system.

Alternatives

- There was a question about the evaluation of the proposed site near the Sitka commercial airport and whether the problem with using that site.



Virtual (ZOOM) Public Meeting

Draft Environmental Assessment

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

6:00 – 7:30 PM

There were some safety issues with wind and wave exposure as well as some conflicts with trying to use airport facilities for support and getting between airport and seaplane base. Information on the sites evaluated in the previous studies is summarized in Appendix A of the Draft EA. We will put the previous siting studies onto the public outreach site.

Cultural Resources

- There were questions about whether this project would have to comply with procedures to stop work and consult if cultural resources were found during construction.

This is a federally-funded project and so it must comply with the National Historic Preservation Act and would have a plan to stop work and consult if unexpected cultural resources are found.

- There was discussion about whether there was any way to retain the observation post on the site and develop around it.

The upland site area has to be at 22 feet of elevation to be out of the floodplain. Since the observation post is at 15 feet, it doesn't look like this would be possible. The team did look at trying to retain it but it doesn't look possible.

- There was a question as to whether comments from the National Park Service on the cultural resource documentation are available to the public.

The cultural resource documents are available in Appendix D of the Draft EA but team has not received comments on them yet from the NPS or State Historic Preservation Office. Hopefully comments will be received soon.

Marine Resources

- The site will disturb marine animals, to what degree? And how much tribal harvest occurs in this area that may no longer be available?

The biggest impact is about 1.5 acres of intertidal area would be filled. Then there will also be the floats. It is likely that marine life may stay farther away from this area when it is developed and in operation. There will also be disturbance of marine life during construction, as pile driving can affect them. There will need to be monitors to make sure that no marine mammals get too close to the construction site; pile driving may need to stop if they get too close. An authorization to disturb marine mammals will be needed. People will be able to go under the facility and still get around to shoreline areas.

Noise

- There was discussion about the noise levels at Mt. Edgecumbe High School and the SEARHC hospital sites (existing and proposed).



The EA indicates that overall noise levels would be within acceptable compatibility limits based on using FAA noise model for analysis.

- Most takeoffs from existing seaplane base are to northwest and are at full power near the high school and hospital. With the new facility being farther north, some of the operations are likely to occur north of this and so it should mitigate some of the noise to the school and hospital.
- Pilots could develop a Fly Friendly program to encourage pilots to power back once seaplane has left the water and is in the air.
- SEARHC's proposed new hospital could have more noise than the current location.

The FAA modeling showed that the noise would be a bit less at the proposed facility vs the existing facility.

- The state airport has noise already: turboprops, helicopters, etc. Even pyrotechnics used to mitigation bird hazards on the runway. Seaplane takeoff run only takes 45 seconds-1 minute and then decreases quickly. Seaplane noise seems like it wouldn't be an issue with the noise from the state airport. And, new site to the north will reduce noise from seaplanes. Don't let noise concerns result in keeping project from moving forward. Seaplanes are needed for Sitka, so consider that when considering noise.
- Most seaplane traffic is in the summer. Winter flight operations are almost exclusively essential flight services. And seaplanes don't fly at night, especially the commercial operations.

Wetland Permitting/Compensatory Mitigation

- Question as to what is being proposed for compensatory wetland mitigation or are there reasons that compensatory mitigation may not be required.

Design is not at the level where we can complete our wetland permit at this point and so the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) cannot make a determination on whether compensatory mitigation would be required and if so, what would be appropriate. CBS is consulting with USACE and appropriate mitigation would be detailed, if needed, during final design and permitting process.

Potential Contaminated Sites

- Question as to whether the site has been evaluated for contamination from WWII operations.

As part of the environmental review, research was done on known contaminated site on Japonski Island. There was no evidence of contamination documented on the site. During development, if contaminated materials were encountered, construction would stop until consultation with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation on appropriate measures to deal with the contamination.

- The Sitka tribe has done a lot of work on cleaning up old WWII sites and Jeff Feldpausch would have information on those activities.



Virtual (ZOOM) Public Meeting

Draft Environmental Assessment

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Potential Marine Use Conflicts/Safety

- Channel is congested; always has been. That won't change. But new site is better.
- There were questions regarding whether the proposed action would adversely impact those fishing boats that avoid harbor fees by anchoring in the channel. Have there been discussions with the commercial fisherman about this project? Most of the boats tend to anchor south and east of the proposed seaplane base and there would still be room for them to anchor in the channel.

We appreciate the additional information on fishing boat anchoring areas. This will be addressed further in the EA.

- There was discussion of the potential for conflicts between boats and seaplane takeoff and departures in the channel and whether there was a way to designate and/or mark the sea lane and communicate that to boats using the area.
- It was noted that when seaplanes are landing they have good view of any potential conflicts but when they are taking off it is more difficult to see/avoid small skiffs crossing channel.
- Safest way to takeoff is to the northwest because it is more congested in the channel to the southeast and you don't have to go under the bridge. But the boats do anchor across the channel from Thompson Harbor and that area can get pretty congested. The safety concern is if a seaplane was on step for take off and a skiff was to try to shoot across from the anchored boats to the harbor could be dangerous. However, no known collisions between seaplanes and boats in the channel. This is a concern now and could be a concern in the future.

There is an option in the FAA guidance for seaplane lanes to be marked. This could be considered in consultation with FAA, USCG for navigational aids, etc.

- In British Columbia, most of the small port towns have a system where pilot can activate a beacon that alerts folks that a plane is coming in or taking off. Could there be a strobe put up near Thompson Harbor like that?
- There are more birds than boats to avoid.
- Boats anchor throughout the area. There are no regulations saying you have to anchor here or you can't anchor there. But overall the commercial fisherman and others know that there is seaplane activities on the channel and are respectful of that fact. This is common in many areas where seaplanes operate (that there are also boats operating and anchored). Not a problem when seaplanes are landing because they have a good view; could be an issue when seaplanes are taking off because when you are on the water you might not notice seaplane taking off until it gets close to you.
- Don't think you need to spend the money to mark a sea lane, unless USCG thinks some marking will be required. Seaplanes don't operate at night because of depth perception and the trickiness of landing on water at night. When seaplane is on the water it has to abide with the same navigation regulations as the boats on the channel.



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Other Comments

- Question on whether there has been a study of the takeoff routes from new seaplane base and whether there would be any conflicts with state airport flight paths.

The takeoff and landing area is not very different than the existing area, so that had not been raised as a concern.

- FAA has established traffic patterns for arriving or departing the state airport and the seaplane base as well as communications requirements. There have been no notable conflicts between operations at the two due to communications and traffic patterns.
- Tribal member didn't have access to the graphics on the presentation.

The project team will provide a hard copy of the Draft EA and biological assessment to the tribe's Resource Protection Committee.

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Insert Meeting Notes and Public Comments/Responses