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# Tourism Task Force Agenda

Monday, March 18, 2024 6:00 p.m.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

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## Commission Members:

**Rich McClear, Barbara Bingham, Camille Ferguson, Cambria Holmes, Chris McGraw, James Michener,  
Jeremy Plank, Scott Wagner, Ryan Gluth, Rachel Roy (ex officio), Amy Ainslie (ex officio)**

**JJ Carlson (Assembly Liaison)**

- I. TBMP 2nd draft review
- II. CBD vacancy tax ordinance
- III. GPIP/City dock small ship berthing policy
- IV. Identify CPV fund harbor projects
- V. CBS Tourism permitting/compliance coordinator
- VI. Waterfront zoning changes
- VII. Discussion of an expected ballot measure by the community group
- VIII. E-bike permitting geofencing
- IX. Proposed Bylaw of the Tourism Commission

## **DRAFT - TTF recommendations to City of Sitka Assembly - DRAFT**

The following subjects will be discussed on 18 March 2024 by the tourism task force during a work session. We would like to receive input by all TTF members in time to have consensus before our final meeting in April where we will bring motions forward to the City of Sitka Assembly. *At least* one more work session should be planned before the formal meeting in April.

### **Actionable items:**

- Vacancy Tax - please see attached draft copy of Vacancy Tax proposal.
- Waterfront Zoning Changes - Please see attached document
- E-bike ordinance in CBS defining E-bikes as motorized vehicles
- CBS permitting requirement of E-bike rentals/tour operators.
- Should rental E-bike rental bikes carry an active GPS with Geofencing shutoff capabilities?
- TBMP Draft #2 review and discussion
- Annual Review and Planning document discussion

### **Brainstorming items:**

- Brainstorm small ship berthing policy at GPIIP
- Identify harbor projects that could use CPV funds
- Discussion of a tourism/compliance coordinator position and using CPV to fund
- Discussion of Assembly directives to TTF and what may be possible to accomplish before deadline
- How does the ruling in federal court regarding Bar Harbor, Maine effect CBS tourism planning and efforts by members of our community to pass a ballot measure regulating visitor numbers.

March 11, 2024  
Sitka, Alaska

The Tourism Task Force TBMP committee is currently composed of three task force members: Barbara Bingham, Rich McClear, and Ryan Gluth. Rachel Roy, Sitka Chamber of Commerce Director and interim Director of Visit Sitka is ex-officio and is responsible for valuable assistance in contacting tourism business owners, and suggestions for inclusions in the program and further recommendations. Included in this packet are the following: Recommendations and partial list of next steps; draft TBMP program; public survey results in a google doc format; and sample monitoring and record keeping forms.

Sitka's TBMP is largely based on Juneau's program, (see draft TBMP introduction). Input for revisions and additions to Sitka's program were compiled from industry review and contributions and from a community wide survey (with both tourism related business and non business respondents). Industry members were specifically contacted by email, phone calls and in person contact from task force members. The community survey was based on the first draft of the program and carried out in October, 2023.

### **TBMP Recommendations—and Beyond**

**A successful tourism best management practices program will have stated goals with a concise framework for administration, communication, training, monitoring and evaluation. Its recommended practices will be practical, adequate for desired outcomes and supported by member partners. It will also fairly and satisfactorily address concerns voiced by the wider community so as to gain broad support.**

**The program could be housed and administered by “Visit Sitka” or the equivalent”, awarded to an independent contractor, through the RFP process, or overseen in some other way.**

### **Next Steps:**

TBMP Program and administration

**Determine program administration structure.**

**Design and implement** a partial rollout process for the 2024 season, including promotion campaign with a feedback capture mechanism for revisions in preparation for full implementation in 2025.

Set up and advertise Hotline program (continued/expanded from 2023 Visit Sitka feedback program?)

### **Maximize participation and compliance:**

**Compile** a list of current business members, with point of contact names, phone numbers, emails, the approximate number of employees, and the type of business (i.e., transportation/shuttle bus or tours, attractions, retail, eateries, etc).

**Incentives:** While conceived and largely implemented as a “voluntary” program in the southeastern Alaska communities using the program (originating in Juneau 25 years ago), Sitka's tourism task force TBMP committee recommends the following:

- Include program participation as a qualification in city required permitting processes for tourism related commercial activities.
- Design and implement a “Preferred Providers Program” to reward program partners for meeting and exceeding applicable guidelines, i.e. **Bronze, Silver and Gold rankings** award measurable levels of compliance. New members begin at bronze level. Work up to silver and gold through defined actions, improvements, good reviews, etc., for instance, documented employee training, partner collaboration, quick and positive response to problems or complaints. Needed materials (partial list, no doubt) TBMP handbook; decals; reproducible TBMP logo for member use; member identification in tourism marketing materials, record keeping and monitoring forms. Several samples from Juneau’s program are attached.

**Training:** Design and implement a training component for members (“partners”), especially for new members and at the beginning of each season. Consider mid-season training review and self-evaluation. Identify and include those who have point of contact with visitors (wait staff, etc, retail clerks). Tourism related business owners need to be actively involved with training. List TBMP partners and organizations who successfully complete implementation and training requirements on the TBMP website and mention them in brochures and other promotional materials. Issue decals to partners for placement on tour vehicles and storefronts, and provide access to the TBMP logo for use in their own promotion.

## Resources Development

**Establish** a searchable inventory of resources: existing regulations and requirements for tour businesses, e.g. USFS land use permits; responsible tourism guidelines, e.g. Whale Sense, Adventure Green Practices; health and safety practices and training recommendations, e.g first aid and CPR; “toolkits”; printable signs advising of city smoking ordinance requirements, etc.

## Potential ordinances and revised permitting policy:

- Emission control (for all commercial vehicles): partners agree to participate in a regular testing program (who provides testing?)
- E-bike regulations
- Link TBMP participation with tourism related city permitting processes.
- Determine if, how and where **taxi and potential rideshare businesses** fit into the program and are monitored. The current permitting process for taxi businesses in general and taxi tour operations needs to be clarified, streamlined, consistently applied. Currently a responsibility of the understaffed Sitka Police Department, it needs another home.

## Additional Suggestions

### Re-establish Crossing Guard program

**Address the issue of “local use only” areas:** Sandy Beach is notably one location locals would like to see off limits to buses, especially. However it is an ideal spot for Tribal Tours to stop and tell the story of L’ux Shaa (Mt Edgecumbe). Halibut Point Rec. is another special stop, especially for some Japanese tourists who want to visit the totem pole honoring Michio Hoshino, the famed wildlife photographer .

**Establish downtown outdoor designated smoking areas.** Current smoking laws prohibit smoking within 25 feet of a business entrance. This makes a good portion of Lincoln Street a non smoking area, at least on sidewalks. Designated smoking areas will better enforce smoking regulations and, with proper receptacles, collect smoking waste.

**Notifications and communications:** Broadcast news of road construction projects, accidents or other potential traffic disruptors by radio psas, text messages or other means to tour operators and the general community, especially on busy ship days. Continue Visit Sitka's public notice of ship schedule/calendar both for street closure days as well as quiet days.

**Guidelines for visitors relating to:** traffic and overall awareness of surroundings for safety; littering; smoking; general courteousness, etc; emphasizing respect for our fragile natural environment; trail etiquette, etc.

**Design and integrate data gathering mechanisms for:**

Ongoing evaluation of the program itself

Establishing a baseline of (cruise) tourism impacts, pro and con, on Sitka's economy, community well-being and local natural resources and environment: Overall cost benefit analysis: better passenger numbers; tourism business demographics: numbers of employees—FT/PT; resident, nonresident. Other?

**Recommendations and budget info from Juneau TBMP administrator**

*From Elizabeth Arnett, Juneau TBMP Administrator email, Aug. 2023:* As far as other logistical pieces, I recommend the following:

1. **Need** A list of current business members, with Point of Contact names, phone numbers, emails, the approximate number of employees, and the type of business (i.e., Transportation/Shuttle Bus or Tours/Excursions/Zipline Tour). This will come in handy when distributing concerns to an industry group or individual.
2. **Samples attached:** Formats for reports (Hotline Submission Log, Calls by Concern Type, Hotline Concern Report -- Year over Year). I will be happy to provide you with the Excel versions we used in the past. Also if you wish to incorporate them into a CRM system, I will be happy to share ours.
3. **Sample Attached:** A Procedures & Timeline list of month by month tasks with deadlines (again, I'll be happy to share ours).
4. **Draft attached:** A working TBMP Guidelines document.
5. **Confirm:** A hotline phone number and/or email and/or web form for concern submissions.

**Budget:** From Elizabeth Arnett; Juneau TBMP administrator.

*Phone call 2.26.24 w/Barb Bingham:*

Their 2023 budget was 26K, and is increasing to 40K for 2024, mostly for advertising to locals: hotline; crossing guard stations and need for complying with their directions; advertising daily ship schedule.

# Sitka’s Draft Tourism Best Practices (TBMP) Program

## PARTNER HANDBOOK AND PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR SITKA’S VISITOR INDUSTRY

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# Sitka's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) Program

## Introduction

*Sitka and Baranof Island, Alaska is Lingít Aaní, ancestral homeland of the Tlingít people who have been practicing their culture and way of life on these lands and waters for over 10,000 years. Gunalchéesh to the Tlingít people for their stewardship of this land since time immemorial.*

The Sitka Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program is modeled after the TBMP program first established in Juneau, 25 years ago. Ketchikan and Skagway have also modeled their TBMPs after Juneau's program. The SitkaTBMP is a voluntary compliance program for partners and organizations in the City and Borough of Sitka. Our TBMP is intended to minimize the impacts of tourism in a manner which addresses both resident and industry concerns while maintaining our quality of life and enhancing the visitor experience in Sitka.

**These guidelines do not replace applicable city, state, or federal regulations.**

As Sitka's visitor industry has grown, so have concerns about impacts to the community. By actively participating in this voluntary program, participants demonstrate their commitment to address key community concerns.

Partners agree to implement appropriate best practices, including but not limited to the recommendations of the TBMP, in their own policies and training of their staff.

Partners also agree to address issues or concerns raised by other partners, community partners and/or the City and Borough and other governmental agencies within a timely manner.

**Partners comprise anyone signing on to the plan, including all tour and attractions operators, retail businesses serving visitor clientele, restaurants, shuttle, van and taxi operators, cruise ship docking facilities and the cruise lines themselves.**

TBD: Sitka's TBMP program is administered by \_\_\_?\_\_\_ with oversight and support from the Tourism Commission and the municipality and is funded through cruise vessel passenger tax revenue.

TBMP participating partners and organizations who successfully complete implementation and training requirements will be listed on the TBMP website and included in brochures and other promotional materials. Decals will be issued to partners for placement on tour vehicles and storefronts. Partners may include the TBMP logo in their own promotion.

## General Agreements for All TBMP Partners

Sitka TBMP partners strive to provide a positive experience for our visitors while minimizing impacts to our community. Partners, organizations and individuals who wish to be recognized as TBMP compliant will abide by the agreements and standards set forth in the handbook and/or posted on a Sitka TBMP website.

Partners will be expected to observe the following practices:

- Conduct business in a legal and ethical manner and not use business practices that damage others through association.
- Emulate the highest standard of customer service.
- Take responsibility to ensure that visitors and community partners are treated with courtesy and respect, in such a way as to leave a positive impression on them.
- Accurately describe our products and services to address any safety, health related, legal or physical restrictions that customers should be aware of and to provide complete information on pricing, duration and location of tours and activities.
- Recognize it is in all our best interests to serve the needs and desires of the customer; and if our product is not appropriate, direct them to the service that best meets their needs.
- Strive to be good ambassadors of the community with accurate knowledge of the locations of public amenities nearby such as post office, bus stops, museums, restrooms, and government buildings.

**Training:** Partners agree to train all employees on the program objectives and practices and to conduct periodic training sessions for employees hired mid-season. Partners will strive to conduct business in a manner which exhibits common courtesy throughout the season. Employees of participating partners will be required to sign a “**TBMP Employee Partnership Agreement**” certifying that the employee has read, understands and agrees to abide by the Tourism Best Management Practices guidelines applicable to his/her job description.

**Cultural Protocols:** All partners agree to take steps to ensure accuracy and respect regarding interpretation of Alaska Native culture and other cultural groups, such as our Filipino community by participating in a scheduled training class. This includes fact-based research from recognized sources for tour interpretation and disclosure of the origin of items in the sale of retail products.

**Contact Name:** Partners agree to provide the TBMP hotline administrator with a contact name, telephone number, fax number and email address.

**Work Sessions:** Partners agree to participate in periodic work sessions to discuss progress made in attaining program goals.

**Community Meetings:** All TBMP partners agree to send a representative to an annual preseason community meeting to:

- Identify problem areas where traffic and pedestrian congestion creates conflicts.
- Identify areas of concern to residents.
- Formulate strategies to mitigate or avoid conflicts in these areas and measure the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies.

Partners also agree to attend a postseason community meeting to review the summer and note opportunities for improvement.



**Response to TBMP Hotline:** Partners agree to respond within 3 business days to calls and emails received via the Tourism Best Management Practices Hotline. Partners will provide the TBMP Hotline Administrator with a summary of their response. Callers will be asked to communicate as much information as possible, including name of participant business and/or staff member, description of the aircraft, watercraft, or vehicle, vehicle number if applicable, and date and approximate time of observation. Callers will also be asked to leave a name, phone number, and/or email address so the partners may respond. Callers are also encouraged to provide positive feedback via the hotline to recognize partners who are making a difference by following the guidelines and operating their business in a courteous and neighborhood-friendly manner.

**Self-monitoring:** All partners agree to improve their self-monitoring efforts through collaboration and encourage other partners who may not be observing the TBMP guidelines to improve their own compliance. These actions honor the spirit of TBMP and ultimately help all companies reduce tourism impacts in the community.

**Ongoing Training of Employees;** Partners agree to provide periodic training and coaching for their employees, to reinforce compliance with the guidelines that pertain to their operations.

**Litter and Recycling:** All TBMP partners are expected to be familiar with and comply with the anti-litter ordinance detailed in Sitka's General Code, Chapter 9.12. Partners are strongly encouraged to commit to a recycling program which is effective for their individual size and type of business. The City and Borough of Sitka and commercial property owners are asked to ensure there are adequate receptacles throughout the community for proper disposal of smoking material and trash.

**Cleaning and Sanitation Protocols:** All TBMP partners agree to maintain and update as needed, procedures for staff and guests to maintain infection control and mitigate the potential transmission of highly contagious viral diseases such as Norovirus Gastroenteritis and COVID-19 coronavirus. Partners will train staff and monitor policy implementation and agree to comply with all applicable local, state and federal regulations.

**Wildlife Protocols:** All partners agree to:

- Dispose of and secure trash in a manner which does not attract wildlife.
- Report bear sightings to the police department.
- Not to feed or bait\* wildlife of any form and comply with the Sitka General Code Chapter 8.08.050 Fighting or Baiting of Animals.
- To be observant and watch for signs of distress as recommended by Alaska Department of Fish and Game guidelines on wildlife harassment.

**Alaska's Smoke Free Workplace Laws:** All partners comply with state laws pertaining to smoking in and around the workplace.

**Accessibility:** To better serve the number of visitors arriving in Sitka each year with limited mobility and/or visual or hearing impairments, TBMP partners agree to establish "best

practice” objectives to provide these visitors with a quality experience. SAIL (SE Alaska Independent Living) provides the following suggestions:

- Consider how best to make accommodation for customers with limited mobility and/or a visual or hearing impairment, as appropriate to their operation.
- Include accessibility information in tour/activity descriptions and have it readily available for those seeking details (i.e. how many steps? How long a walk? Are necessary service companions given complimentary space?).
- Train all employees in accessibility awareness, with focus on how best to accommodate requests for various types of assistance (mobility, hearing, visual, etc.), how to provide good customer service to those with disabilities or impairments, and when to seek additional help in doing so.
- Ensure clearances for wheelchairs or walkers.

**Privacy and Security:** Partners will train staff to ensure that customer data including but not limited to personal identification, credit/debit card numbers and security codes and other sensitive materials are handled with care to minimize potential identity theft and to safeguard privacy.

**Emergency Procedures:** Partners will ensure staff are trained to aid customers in the event of an emergency and understand policies and procedures.

**TBMP Program Contacts-** TBD— Add contacts

## Transportation and Vehicles

Commercial passenger vehicles are required to comply with Sitka Municipal Code ordinances, Alaska State Administrative Statutes and US DOT regulations that pertain to the operation of commercial vehicles on public roadways. For purposes of this program, vehicles include motor coaches, buses, mini-buses, limos, vans, trolleys, taxis, motorcycles, airporters. (Residents should remember that tour vehicles are sometimes used for non-tour activities, including charters, government service contracts, school field trips and charity work. While this program focuses on tour activities, operators agree to conduct all activities in a courteous manner and to emphasize these guidelines during pre-season training.

**School Zone Safety Protocols:** All companies agree to pay special attention to watching for children, when approaching crosswalks, encountering stopped school buses and observing school zone speed limits.

**Downtown Traffic/Staging:** All companies utilizing staging areas should be aware of times when congestion into and out of these lots will be at peak level. Dispatchers and drivers will assist in promoting efficient traffic flow in the area by managing vehicle movements in a courteous manner and by yielding to other vehicles and users as necessary.

**Traffic Flow:** Drivers agree not to impede normal traffic flow by slowing down or stopping for sightseeing opportunities except in designated turnouts and will not pull over on bike lanes or walking paths or on the shoulder of roads. Drivers will be especially attentive to not slow down or stop when transiting intersections.

**Empty Tour Vehicles:** Drivers agree to not park in designated loading zones unless they are loading or unloading guests on tour.

**Vehicle fluids and Emissions:** Drivers of ALL VEHICLES agree to monitor any engine oil and/or fluid leaks and excess emissions/ black smoke when operating throughout the road system. This includes monitoring at all staging/loading zones, docks and attractions, as well as venues. Should any vehicle exhibit a leak of a substantial nature or visible emissions in excess, the operator should be prepared to immediately pull the vehicle from service until repaired. Any vehicle exhibiting signs of a mechanical failure should pull over immediately at the next safe location for repairs. This is to ensure vehicle failures do not block public rights-of-way.

**Engine Idling:** Drivers of ALL VEHICLES agree to turn engines off at every reasonable opportunity when loading and unloading passengers and/or when staging in the various loading zones, staging areas and tour venues throughout Sitka. Vehicles should not sit with engines idling while actively loading, unloading, or waiting for passengers to arrive. Engines should be started only when the vehicle is ready to move, and thereafter, only when the vehicle is in motion or in traffic. Exceptions include safety related issues, including vehicles that may need to idle in order to defog windshields and windows, situations where vehicles

with air brakes may need to idle to build air pressure or when weather requires engines to remain on for guest comfort.

**Noise Abatement:** Drivers of ALL VEHICLES agree to NOT use Compression Braking (commonly known as Jake Braking, Engine Braking, etc.) in the City and Borough of Sitka, except in emergency situations.

Bells and Public Address (PA) systems should not be utilized in any tours unless the noise is restricted to the cabin of the vehicle.

**Transiting Residential Neighborhoods:** Drivers agree to avoid transiting residential neighborhoods within the City and Borough of Sitka unless conducting a specific pick-up or drop-off in the immediate vicinity, including Katlian and Jeff Davis Streets.

**ADA Zones Not for Staging:** Drivers utilizing equipment with a wheelchair lift will use the designated ADA zones only for active loading and unloading and not for staging of vehicles.

**Safety Backing:** All motor coaches, buses, mini-buses and vans will take special care when backing out of loading/unloading zones. When preparing to back, drivers should be aware of the backup beepers and the sound they make and should strive to spend as little time as possible in reverse. Drivers should only shift into reverse when they are ready to commence backing to minimize beeper sounds.

**Safety on Roadways:** Drivers will take caution when encountering pedestrians, cyclists, and animals on narrow roadways, bike lanes and school zones throughout the city and companies will take this into consideration during their driver training programs. Drivers should strive to operate in a manner which exhibits common courtesy throughout their daily travels. Extra caution when approaching crosswalks. All drivers should be trained on the changing/reduced speed limits throughout the downtown and highway areas. Operators are required to use headsets or Boom mics and NOT hand held microphones. By law and in the interest of safety, all operators agree to abide by Sitka's **no cell phone** policy when their drivers are operating a vehicle except in the case of an emergency.

**Resource Scheduling:** Operators agree to assign vehicles to scheduled tours and transfers in a manner which efficiently maximizes the use of all vehicles on duty. The number of vehicles and type of equipment will be assigned to a tour or transfer based on capacity needs on a given day. Operators will collaborate with partners/vendors to find opportunities to minimize the number of vehicles on the road whenever possible.

**Training of Schedulers:** Operators will train all schedulers to take advantage of synergies that are present in the Sitka tourism transportation industry. Schedulers should strive to better serve their constituents and community stakeholders by minimizing vehicles on the road whenever possible.

**Crossing Guards:** Crossing Guards may be positioned in strategic locations in order to promote safety and facilitate vehicle and pedestrian movement throughout the downtown corridor. TBMP members should be mindful of their presence and obey their instructions.

**Identifiers for All Shuttle and Tour Vehicles:** Operators agree to ensure all vehicles are easily identifiable with the company name clearly visible on both sides, from a reasonable distance and even while the vehicle is moving.

**Local Recreation Areas:** Drivers agree not to use **Sandy Beach, \_\_\_?\_\_\_ and \_\_\_?\_\_\_** as tour destinations. **Define potential local use only areas. See Recommendations.**

As always, Operators are responsible for abiding by Alaska State Statutes governing operation of vehicles on state roadways including but not limited to stopping, standing or parking on highways, unlawful obstruction or blocking traffic, and pedestrians on highways.

### **Flightseeing (Fixed Wing, Floatplanes & Helicopter):**

Flightseeing operations are subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and operational requirements. Mt. Edgecumbe landing trips are also subject to US Forest Service permit requirements. Although the following guidelines are designed to minimize noise, safety and flight operations take precedence over noise abatement procedures. Operators will conduct pre-season training in a manner which emphasizes these guidelines.

**Routes and Aircraft Identifiers:** Operators agree to provide the following to TBMP administrator who will make the information available to interested partners of the public:

- Established flight routes
- Common factors influencing route choice, such as weather, turbulence and traffic.
- Aircraft colors or other distinguishing characteristics useful in identifying individual operators.

**Seaplane Floats:** Commercial use is permitted from the seaplane float. Operations for commercial use of seaplane float is managed and regulated by the Sitka Harbor Department

**Altitude:** Operators follow voluntarily agreed upon routes for tour flights and maintain minimum altitudes of 1,500 feet for helicopters operating above residential areas, except during takeoff, landing or when deviations are required by weather or traffic.

**Fly Neighborly:** Helicopter operators agree to conduct flightseeing tours in accordance with the Helicopter Association International (HAI) Fly Neighborly Program. The Fly Neighborly Program is a voluntary noise reduction program designed to be implemented worldwide by local helicopter operators, large and small. Additional information on this program can be viewed on the HAI website— [www.rotor.com](http://www.rotor.com)

**Operating Times:** Operators agree not to schedule flightseeing tour departures before 7:30 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m. and to complete all tour flights by 8:00 p.m. Operators agree to

minimize tour support operations out-side of these hours. Operators agree to take the same care to minimize their impacts during non-tour flight operations.

**Wildlife Viewing:** Operators conducting air tours within the Sitka area agree to minimize impacts to backcountry users and wildlife. Operators will not circle, hover, harass or decrease altitude for wildlife viewing. Flightseeing operators also agree to avoid key mountain goat kidding areas.

## Walking, Hiking, Bicycling Tours

Commercial use of public trails may be permitted on some municipal, State Parks, National Forest, and National Park lands. All commercial use of public land requires permitting.

**Permitted use:** Commercial operators are responsible for understanding public land ownership and obtaining permits from each agency. Operators agree to follow group size regulations and avoid crowding on trails.

**Identifiers for Tour Guides:** All operators agree to ensure tour guides are easily identifiable and that company names are visible on guides' attire and company vehicles.

**Peer enforcement:** All operators agree to report unpermitted commercial use to the appropriate public land manager. A list of permitted operators is available from each agency.

**Trail Conditions & Maintenance:** Operators agree to report trail conditions and trail abuse to appropriate regulatory agencies. Operators agree to educate guides on basics of trail maintenance standards to adequately detect emerging issues of erosion and damage. Operators using public trails agree to annually dedicate at least one paid day for at least one guide to support a trail maintenance project, led by the agency or Sitka Trail Works.

**Noise Abatement:** All tour operators agree to monitor the volume and use of their microphones and outside speakers in a manner which reduces their impact on others.

**Resource Protection:** Operators agree to protect the environment by encouraging clients do not litter, walk off trail, cut switchbacks, or otherwise damage vegetation and soils adjacent to trails. Operators agree to train guides in Leave No Trace principles and encourage an ethic of care for the land.

**State Highways (Halibut Point Rd and Sawmill Creek Rd):** Cycling guides agree to instruct clients to use bike lanes and ride single file to the right side of the right lane. A guide will always be in the lead to make sure that clients descend hills at a safe speed. Efforts will be made to keep groups as close together as safely possible.

**Bikes and E-bikes:** Operators agree to provide each bike rider with a card listing safety precautions and biking rules of the road, including hand signals for bikers. Operators agree to

install bells on ebikes to alert pedestrians and pets of their approach. Operators will encourage riders to use the bike lanes and travel on the right-hand side of the road. Operators will encourage bikers to wear helmets and other safety gear, such as bright colors or reflective clothing.

**Safety on Roadways:** Drivers will take caution when encountering pedestrians, cyclists, and animals on narrow roadways, bike lanes and school zones throughout the city and companies will take this into consideration during their driver training programs. Drivers should strive to operate in a manner which exhibits common courtesy throughout their daily travels, such as paying attention to biker hand signals, slowing down and giving at least three feet of space.

**Trailhead Parking:** Operators agree to use all trailhead parking in a courteous and responsible manner and to pay special attention to independent users.

**Yield to Other Users:** Guides agree to instruct clients to yield to all other users on commercially used trails.

**Sitka National Historic Park:** In order to keep the Park safe for all users, riding bikes or e-bikes on trails within Sitka National Park is expressly prohibited by Park rules.

## Cruise Ships

**Emission Standards:** All cruise vessels agree to comply with the Marine Vessel Visible Emissions Standards (18 AAC 50-.070) and take all available and reasonable steps to minimize stack effluents on approach to, departure from and while in port in Sitka.

**Southeast Alaska Voluntary Waterway Guide:** All Cruise ships agree to follow the guidelines included in the Marine Safety Task Force's [Southeast Alaska Voluntary Waterway Guide](#).

**P.A. Announcements, Signals and Outdoor Entertainment:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA), Cruise Line Industry Association-Alaska (CLIA Alaska) and individual cruise lines will work to minimize vessel announcements, whistle signals, and outdoor entertainment (movies and use of music, bands or DJ) while docked or anchored within the City of Sitka. Cruise ships are also asked to monitor their outside speakers, announcements and entertainment on approach to and departure from Sitka. Cruise Line Agencies and cruise lines will ensure that shipboard staff understand the importance of this specific guideline. Certain signals and announcements are necessary and required by the US Coast Guard or are necessary for safety reasons.

**Courteous use of vessel floats:** Cruise ship tender operators agree to use the designated floats at Crescent Harbor or at the bridge dock in a safe and responsible manner. Tender



operators also agree to minimize their wake on approach to and in the harbors, and to operate in a manner which exhibits common courtesy to all others.

**Port No Wake Zone:** Cruise ships and their lightering tenders over 23 feet in length are required to comply with No Wake requirements in 33 CFR Alaska; navigation. Operators are responsible for their wakes.

## Marine Tour Operators, Fishing Charters, Water Taxis and Kayak Tours

Marine tour operators and charter/sportfishing operators will take all available and reasonable steps to minimize impacts to coastal residents and other vessel operators. Vessel operators will strive to minimize the impacts of their wake on other watercraft, docks and beaches throughout Sitka area coastal waterways, including popular crabbing and recreational boating grounds.

**Rules of the Road:** Marine tour operators agree to adhere to all applicable USCG rules of the road during operation.

**Noise Abatement:** Marine tour operators agree to monitor the volume and use of their onboard PA systems and outside speakers in a manner which reduces the impact on residents and recreational boaters.

**Marine Mammal Viewing:** Marine Operators will follow all applicable federal regulations regarding marine mammal viewing and actively participate in Whale Sense, whom establishes guidelines surrounding the viewing of marine mammals. To that regard, each operator will ensure the following:

- Become a member of the Whale Sense organization
- Ensure all licensed operators have conducted the required annual training as part of the whale sense program.
- Ensure all standard operating procedures are in line with the guidelines and regulations established by whale sense.

The link to whale sense is: <https://whalesense.org/>

Whale Sense's regulations are here: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-09-08/pdf/2016-21278.pdf>

**Port No Wake Zone:** Marine sightseeing/tour vessels and charter fishing boats over 23 feet in length are required to comply with 33 CFR Alaska; navigation. Operators are responsible for their wakes.

**Vessel Engine Idling:** All marine vessel operators (including charter fishing captains) agree to minimize engine idling at every reasonable opportunity. This includes loading and unloading of passengers and/or when standing-by in vessel loading zones. In the interest of reducing emissions, whenever it is deemed safe and prudent by vessel captains, engines should be turned off. Engines should not be started until the vessel is ready to get underway.



## Downtown & Retail Partners

All partners agree to comply with City of Sika Municipal Code Chapter 14.12 and 14.16 regarding commercial sign and advertising devices and obstruction of sidewalks, as applicable.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Merchants will be responsible for keeping their locations neat and welcoming, to include monitoring sidewalks immediately in front of their establishment, sweeping as needed and picking up and properly disposing of litter. Merchants will not place their business' accumulated daily refuse into street-side, public refuse containers.

**Seasonal merchants:** In order to promote safety and a welcoming feel to downtown during the winter months are asked to utilize ways to brighten up their storefronts in the off season when the business is shut down and refrain from covering windows with brown paper. Consider keeping display windows lit (LED lighting).

**Sales Tactics:** Merchants and their employees agree to:

- Cooperate with municipal employees including but not limited to police, downtown ambassadors, crossing guards, public works, planning department and revenue staff.
- Refrain from handing out flyers or leaflets outside of their place of business and not engaging in sidewalk hawking or any other disruptive or aggressive physical behavior in order to lure potential customers.
- Refrain from displaying misleading signage or advertising and agree not to post stickers or signage in their windows indicating “cruise ship preferred or guaranteed shopping venue.”
- Refrain from reproducing and displaying logos for any cruise line without the line's express written permission.
- Refrain from using false advertising (going out of business, closing soon, etc.) as a sales tactic.

**Appendices- Resources TBD**—add relevant resources, contacts and toolkits.

## DRAFT - Vacancy Tax - DRAFT

Vacancy tax is assessed on street level commercial real estate in the Central Business District (CBD) only.

The Central Business district for the purpose of this tax is defined as: \_\_\_\_\_

The goal of a vacancy tax is two-fold, encourage year-round storefronts and have the central business district collect sales tax for the city of Sitka in winter months. A successful implementation of this tax would ideally generate \$0 in revenue.

### Outline

-Businesses must be open a minimum of 4hrs/day 4 days/week for 10 months of the year **or**, be subject to a vacancy tax.

-Central business district property owners will have 180 days to occupy the space and open doors for business after the ordinance is enacted without taxation.

-Central business district property owners with street level real estate that has been fallow for more than 365 days prior to the enactment of the ordinance shall receive a property tax abatement of \_\_\_\_\_ if the space has begun collecting sales tax within 180 days of the enactment of the ordinance.

-Tax will be collected at two tiers:

-Central Business District real estate that is closed for business for 2-4 months per year will be taxed at:

Square footage of space X average central business district sales tax collected daily per square foot.

EG: If the average square foot of CBD generates \$10/yr in sales tax the vacancy tax would be:

$\$10/250 \text{ days (M-F X 50 weeks)} = \$0.04/\text{square foot per day}$   
 $\$0.04 \times \text{Sq foot} \times \text{number of days closed (at 5 days per week)}$

-Central Business District real estate that is closed for business for 4 or more months per year will be taxed at the greater of:

Square footage of space X average central business district sales tax collected daily per square foot.

or

Average daily sales tax collected by that unique business during open months.

## **Draft - zoning recommendations to CBS Assembly - Draft**

- Change zoning in C2, Waterfront, Recreational and Industrial zoned properties within the CBS with access to ocean waterfront through property lines or easements to require a conditional use permit to access, use or build a commercial dock. The purpose of this amendment to current zoning is not to hamper the needs of waterfront commercial use but to allow the public to have a voice in the potential creation of a second large scale port for cruise ships in Sitka. We do not recommend creating a (NP) - not permitted designation.

## E-bike geofencing

Geofencing is the addition of a GPS receiver to a vehicle or person that alerts the user that they are entering a restricted area. With motorized vehicles, geofenced GPS receivers can either send a message to the vehicle owner that the vehicle is entering a restricted area, offer the owner to shut off power to the vehicle or automatically shut off the motor. Geofencing has been embraced and used by municipalities, golf courses, E-bike rental companies, scooter rental companies and many others. If a geofencing ordinance were enacted it would be crucial to do an actual test of geofenced areas in Sitka to assure which intended areas received accurate GPS signals.

Areas of discussion:

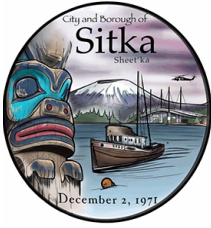
-Cross Trail

-Thimbelberry/Heart Lake trail

-Indian River trail

-Multi-use paths. If E-bike motorized vehicle ordinance is passed these would be automatically included as "off limits" for E-bike use but may have geofencing problems due to proximity to state highways/city roads.

-Other areas?



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

## Bylaws of the Tourism Commission

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Proposed August 1, 2023

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### I. PURPOSE, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### A INTRODUCTION

The Tourism Commission of the City and Borough of Sitka (respectively “Commission” and “City”) is an advisory body established by [REDACTED]. This document summarizes the scope of the responsibilities of the Commission and specifies the way those responsibilities shall be performed, including its structure, processes, and reporting requirements, as mandated in its establishing ordinance and within Sitka’s General Code (SGC).

#### B PURPOSE

It is the intent of the Tourism Commission to work towards establishing a long-term tourism management plan, focused both on the visitors’ experience and local community quality of life . The commission will propose solutions to related to the proper levels of tourism, reviewing CBS operations an funding, involvement in TBMP, Land use regulations and waterfront development policies as it relates to tourism, and regional strategies to advance Sitka’s interest regarding cruise tourism.

#### C DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission will act as an advisory body to the Assembly with the purpose of catalyzing and developing municipal and community-focused approaches that support tourism management.

- i. Review of annual tourism related funding. Developing recommendations for use of funding to enhance the overall tourism experience within the community.
- ii. Review land use regulations and development policies and make recommendations for changes to enhance the overall tourism experience within the community.
- iii. Monitor and review reporting from the Sitka TBMP program
- iv. Review community proposals and make recommendations to address community concerns and issues
- v. Other matters as the Assembly or Commission may deem beneficial for the City.

### II. ORGANIZATION

#### A MEMBERS

The Commission is composed of nine (9) members appointed by the Assembly and, to the extent deemed advisable by the Assembly and possible from the applicants, include at least one (1) individual from the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, one (1) from the Ports and Harbors Commission, one (1) from the Sustainability Commission, one (1) from Tours and Attractions, one (1) from the Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal, one (1) from the General Business Community, one (1) from the Downtown Business Corridor, and two (2) from the Community at Large. All voting members of the commission shall be at-large members and representative of a diverse cross-section of the community (SGC 2.15.010).

The Planning and Community Development Director or her designee and a representative from Visit Sitka shall be ex-officio members without a vote (SGC 2.15.010). The Deputy Clerk will also serve as the point of contact between Commissioners and City staff through which requests for information can be made.

**B TERM**

The term of a voting member shall be three (3) years or until a successor is appointed. Terms will have staggered expiration dates (SGC 2.15.020).

**C OFFICERS**

The Commission will designate a Chair, a Vice Chair and a Secretary, each of whom shall be elected by the voting members of the Commission and shall serve a term to expire upon election of officers at the first meeting of the following year. The Secretary shall provide minutes of all meetings to the Municipal Clerk (SGC 2.14.040).

In addition to the above officers, the Commission, by a majority vote of its voting members, may designate and elect or appoint such other officers, assistant officers, and agents as it deems necessary at such time, in such manner, and upon and for such terms as it shall prescribe. All officers and agents shall serve at the pleasure of the Commission, whenever in its judgment the best interest of the commission will be served (SGC 2.15.050).

**D RESIGNATION**

Should a member resign from their position prior to expiration of their term, the vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by appointment by the Assembly for any remainder of an unexpired term (SGC 2.15.020).

Should an officer resign from their position prior to expiration of their term, or otherwise is unable or unwilling to perform duties as required of the office, the Commission may elect an officer to serve out the remainder of that term (SGC 2.15.050).

**III. CONDUCT AND PARTICIPATION****A PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The conduct of the meetings shall be generally guided by the rules contained in the modern (11<sup>th</sup>) edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

**B TELECONFERENCE PARTICIPATION**

While physical presence of the members and the public is the preferred method of participation at the meetings, teleconference participation is allowed (SGC 2.060.050). Any member may participate in any meeting by teleconference. Teleconference participation is solely at the discretion of the member who requests this method of participation if the member is out of town or incapacitated.

The member shall notify the Sustainability Coordinator to arrange for teleconference participation at least twenty-four (24) hours before any regular meeting, and at least twelve (12) hours before any special meeting. If the member is a presiding officer, they shall not preside over the meeting when participating by teleconference.

Teleconference participation at any meeting is limited to four (4) times a year by each member (SGC 2.60.050(f)).

**C VOTING**

Abstention from voting is not allowed (Sitka Charter 2.10, Alaska Statutes 29.29.169(d)) except in cases where a commissioner may have a conflict of interest as defined in the City Charter 1.04.080.

Four (4) affirmative votes shall be necessary to carry any questions (SGC 2.60.020). Vacant memberships shall be counted in determining whether or not this majority requirement is met. (Ord. 74-114 § 3(c), 1974.).

All voting will be done by voice vote unless done by roll call when requested by the Chair. The roll call will be done alphabetically. Roll call votes of every member will be recorded.

All voting at meetings with teleconferencing participants shall be by roll call vote (SGC 2.60.050 (e)).

**D ABSENCES**

The minutes shall show those in attendance at each meeting, and whether an absent member is excused or not. The members shall notify the Sustainability Coordinator of their absence at least twenty-four (24) hours before any regular meeting, and at least twelve (12) hours before any special meeting.

Three (3) unexcused absences, as determined by the appointed board or commission, in one (1) year by a member shall automatically be cause for forfeiture of membership (SGC 2.60.040).

**IV. MEETINGS****A REGULAR MEETINGS**

Meetings will be held once per month at such time as the chair or, in their absence, the vice chair shall determine (SGC 2.15.030). Meetings will normally take place at 6:00 PM on the first Wednesday of each month at Harrigan Centennial Hall. The Commission will give reasonable public notice by advertising its meetings at least one (1) business day in advance and comply in all respects with the Alaska Open Meetings Act.

**B QUORUM**

A quorum of five (5) members is required to hold a meeting. Vacancies in memberships shall be counted in determining whether or not there is a quorum (SGC 2.60.010).

**C SPECIAL MEETINGS**

Special meetings may be called with seven (7) days advance notice. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by request to the Chair. Reasonable public notice will be given by advertising its meetings at least one (1) business day in advance.

**D INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS**

The Commission may form informal working groups to address key areas that may evolve if needed. To remain in compliance with the Alaska Open Meetings Act, the number of members in an informal working group is limited to three (3) Commissioners. The purpose is to develop operational and engagement plans as well as implementation strategies for review of the entire Commission. Example areas may include but are not limited to electric vehicles and city infrastructure, sustainable tourism, greenhouse gas emissions inventories, and solid waste management.

**E ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The order of business shall normally be:

- i. Call to Order and Roll Call
- ii. Consideration of the Agenda
- iii. Consideration of the Minutes
- iv. Persons to be Heard (*not to exceed 3 minutes on topics off the agenda*)
- v. Reports
- vi. Unfinished Business
- vii. New Business
- viii. Persons to be Heard (*not to exceed 3 minutes on topics on or off the agenda*)
- ix. Set Next Meeting Date and Agenda
- x. Adjournment

## V. SETTING THE AGENDA

### A ADDING ITEMS TO THE NEXT AGENDA

The agenda shall normally be set seven (7) days in advance of the regular meeting. To remain in compliance with the Alaska Open Meetings Act, items may not be added after the agenda has been publicly advertised or during a regular or special meeting. Items may be added to the next agenda:

- i. By Commissioner request during a meeting or by contacting and requesting to the Chair.
- ii. As requested by the Assembly, Administrator, and other Department Heads within the City.
- iii. Or the public may request items to be added through public testimony, written correspondence, or verbal request to a member of the Commission. Items requested by the public will be added to agendas at the discretion of the Chair.

### B ITEMS NOT ADDED TO THE AGENDA

Item requests made outside of meetings by Commissioners that are not added to the agenda will be published in the monthly meeting packet and accompanied by a rationale for submittal statement and a response from either the Chair or Staff Liaison for Commissioner review. A motion to add denied items to a future agenda may be made under Order of Business IX: Set Next Meeting Date and Agenda.

## VI. WORKING PROCEDURES

### A ANNUAL WORK CYCLE

To best utilize Commissioner's time, City resources, align the workflow of the Commission with that of the City's, and meet annual reporting as deemed by the Assembly, the Commission will operate on the Annual Work Cycle outlined below. It should be noted that the City operates on a fiscal year (FY), which begins July 1, and ends on June 30. As such, the adopted timeframes align with City's budgeting process deadlines to minimize time spent waiting for the allocation of resources from the City.

The following dates are to serve as a guide and do not require strict adherence. It is subject to the discretion of the Commission to adjust timelines as needed to meet Assembly goals while remaining in sync with City operations.

### TOURISM COMMISSION ANNUAL WORK CYCLE OUTLINE (APPENDIX A)



**July-August:** Seek community input and proposals consistent with the use of CPV excise tax funds per Section 4.05.020.

**September:** Present to the assembly proposals consistent with the use of CPV excise tax funds per Section 4.05.020.

**October:** Solicit community feedback on the most recent tourism season and review TBMP data

**November-December:** Prepare annual report for Assembly, along with community issues, recommendations for funding, land use changes, and current initiatives, both immediate (before next tourism season) and short-term (within the next 12 months).

**January:** Present annual report to the assembly

**February-April:** Execute immediate initiatives prior to the upcoming tourism season.

**May-June:** Conclude work for current FY. Begin preparing for goals of the upcoming FY.

## **B REPORTING TO THE ASSEMBLY**

Annually, the Commission will develop, identify, and present goals to the Assembly for approval. The approved goals shall be the Commission's primary focus for the following year. Concurrently with presenting goals to the Assembly, the Commission will submit a report to the Assembly on progress towards the previous year's goals and other activities which were approved and directed by the Assembly (SGC 2.15.060).

## **C EXTERNAL RESOURCES**

With the approval and direction of the Assembly, the Commission will work with designated staff to provide information and outreach to the public, in order to understand community priorities and develop community consensus on matters concerning sustainability. This effort may require the commission to invite participation and technical expertise from community partners and professionals (e.g., engineers, public administration experts, earth system scientists, business leaders, educators, community group leaders, etc.). If City and Borough funds are needed to facilitate participation and technical expertise from community partners and professionals, the commission shall obtain prior approval and the necessary appropriation from the Assembly (SGC 2.15.060).

## **VII. AMENDMENTS**

### **A COMPLIANCE**

The Commission recognizes that these bylaws repeat provisions in the City Charter and SGC and that those provisions take precedence and cannot be altered, amended, or repealed.

### **B AMENDMENTS**

Sections of these bylaws not established by City Charter or SGC may be altered, amended, or repealed by the affirmative vote of a majority of members at any regular or special meeting. Any amendments will be consistent with the Charter and SGC.

### **C REVIEW OF BYLAWS**

The Commission shall annually review the bylaws at the first regular meeting in January.

## **VIII. ADOPTION**

These foregoing bylaws have been **ADOPTED AND APPROVED** by the Sustainability Commission by 6-0 voice vote on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of November 2022.



ATTEST:

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Katie Riley, Chair

Carol Voisin, Secretary

## **IX. AMENDMENT HISTORY**

### **I. ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS, SECTION A: REGULAR MEETINGS**

Date and time change from 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at 6:30 P.M.

Amended: January 9, 2023

### **II. ARTICLE V: SETTING THE AGENDA**

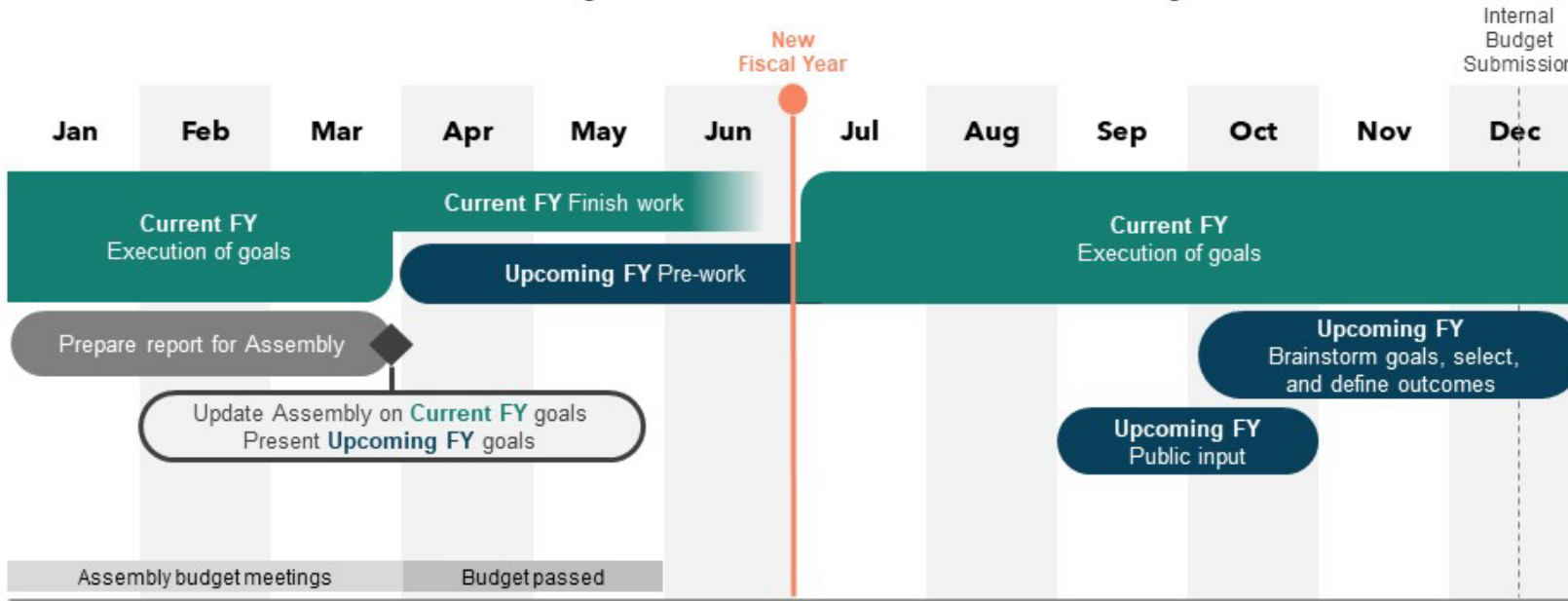
Added clarification to Section A: Adding Items to the Next Agenda and addition of Section B: Items Not Added to the Agenda.

Amended: February 7, 2023

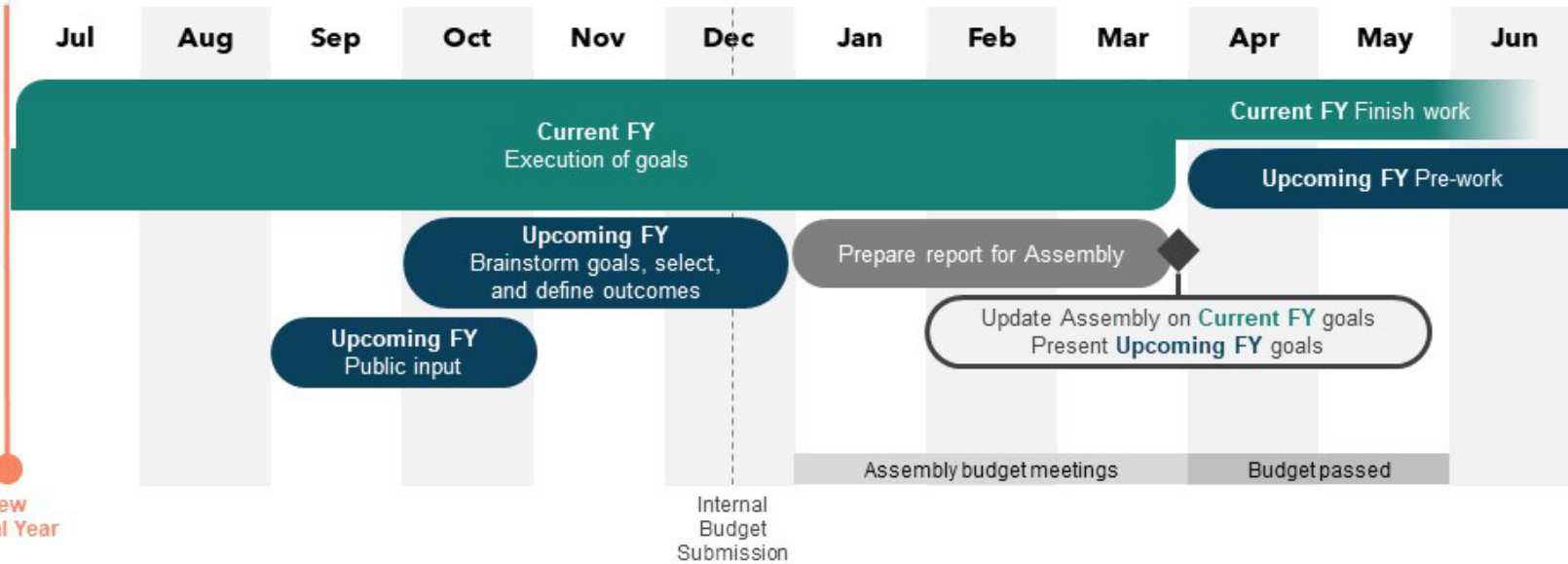
# Sustainability Commission Annual Work Cycle

APPENDIX A

Standard View (January Start)



Fiscal View (July Start)



# Sustainability Commission Startup Cycle

