

Opportunities to be Involved in the Process



Attend the public meeting

Join us at 5:30-7:30pm on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at the Harrigan Centennial Hall (Silver Meeting Room #6). Open house 5:30-6:00. Presentation at 6:30.



Submit a comment form

Submit your comments at the meeting or email it afterwards to SitkaSPB@dowl.com.



Comment on the Draft EA

You will have an opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EA once available.



Contact the Project Team

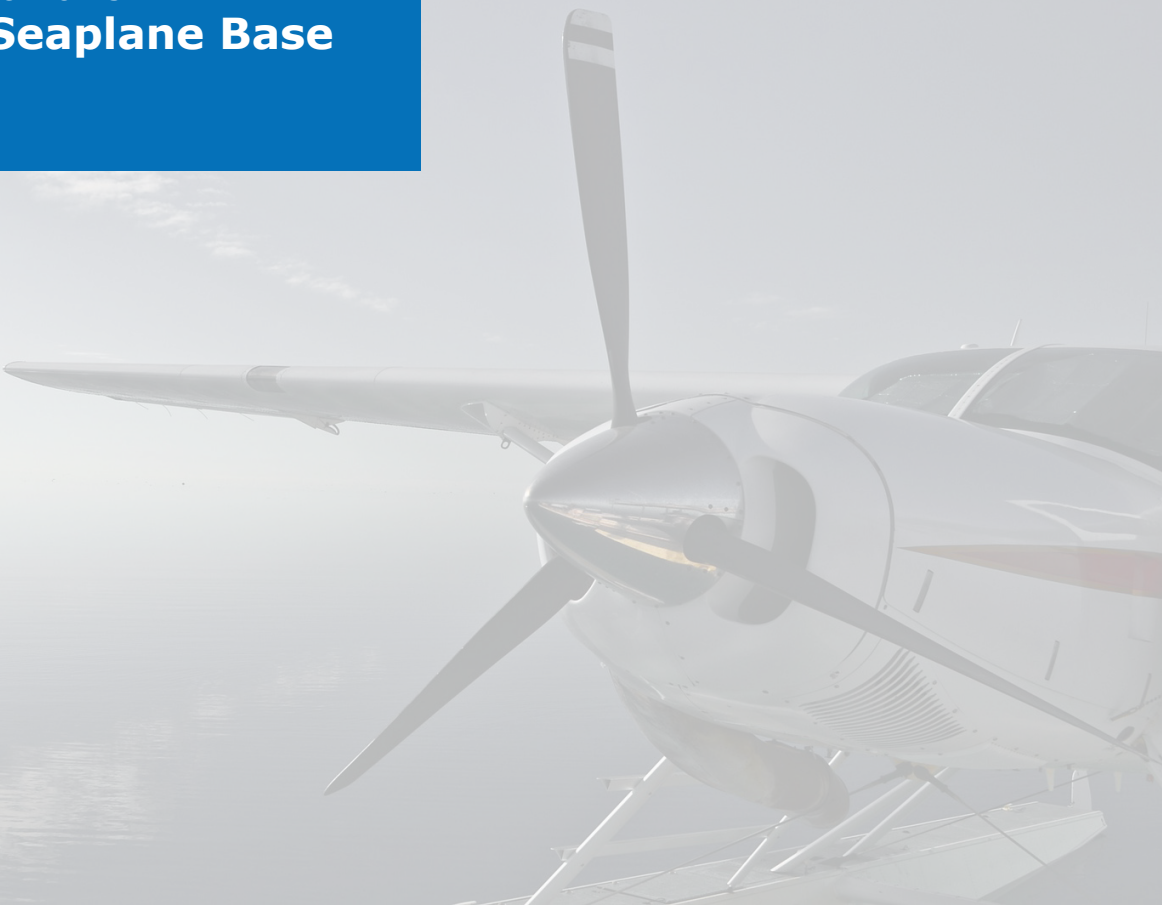
Email

SitkaSPB@dowl.com
-or-
publicworks@cityofsitka.org

Call

Kelli Cropper
CBS Project Manager
907.747.1804

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA
New Sitka Seaplane Base



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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 the channel, has been operating for 65 years and is at the end of its useful life. CBS started evaluating new SPB locations in 2000, completing siting studies and preparing an airport master plan for the Japonski Island site in 2002. In January 2016, the existing SPB facility was temporarily closed because of storm damage to this aging seaplane base. After making temporary repairs it was reopened in Fall 2016. Recognizing the limited lifespan, poor condition, minimal amenities, and site constraints of the existing SPB, CBS updated it's siting analysis and reevaluated the layout and features for the new SPB in 2016. The updated siting and planning studies recommended a preliminary concept for the new SPB on Japonski Island shown in the figure below.

The new SPB would support the regional economy (fishing, tourism, government services, and access to remote communities and areas only accessible by water). Aviation and non-aviation businesses and government agencies have indicated support for a new seaplane base. An economic impact study estimated annual earnings by Sitka businesses from the new SPB would be approximately \$815,000 per year.

If approved, 93.75% of land acquisition, design, and construction costs are eligible for reimbursement from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Existing SPB



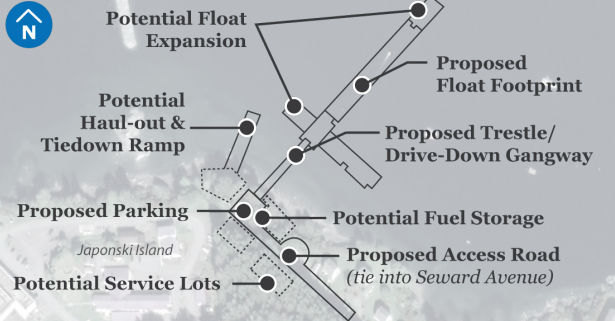
Features:

- Sixty-five year old float with 8 slips.
- Access to the floats from Katlian Street by an elevated gangway and ramp.
- Parking for 2 vehicles on Katlian Street.

Deficiencies:

- At end of useful life. Expensive to maintain.
- Not enough parking for aircraft and vehicles. Four aircraft slips not accessible at low tide.
- No on-site fueling, aircraft maintenance area, aircraft pull out ramp.
- Conflicts with boat traffic in narrow channel.
- Conflicts and bird hazards from adjacent seafood processing facility.

New Sitka SPB - Preliminary Concept



Features:

- New fuel storage and distribution system
- Vehicle parking area
- On-site aircraft maintenance capability
- A drive-down ramp to the SPB floats
- Electricity, water and sewer, and lighting
- Float slips for based seaplanes and positions for transient seaplanes
- Safe access between the parking positions and the water operating area, and
- Options to accommodate future growth



Overall Project Development Process

The process of developing the new SPB began in 2000 with a siting study, site selection, and development of an airport master plan for the Japonski Island site. Siting studies were updated and an economic impact study completed in 2016. In 2019, CBS received FAA approval of funding for an Environmental Assessment (EA) and airport planning tasks. The EA is required so that CBS can then apply for FAA funding for land acquisition, design, and construction of the SPB.

- **Siting Studies/Site Selection:** Previous efforts have recommended the property at the end of Seward Avenue that is subject of the current planning and environmental tasks.
- **Planning/Environmental Overview:** Planning efforts will focus on determining the required size and layout for the new facility including improvements for aircraft and ground vehicle access to/from shore and dock.
- **SPB Layout Plan:** Create a document that describes the facility, existing and future improvements, including the associated waterway for airplane use.

- **Design/Final Permitting:** Create detailed design and construction plans for parking, ramps, floats, pilings with optional phases for future expansion.
- **Construction:** After all permits are obtained, construction of the improvements will take place.

Environmental Review (NEPA) Process

CBS has received grant funding from the FAA for planning and environmental work on the SPB project. All projects that receive federal funding are required to be reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure that the proposed approach complies with the Act. The potential environmental impacts of the proposed new SPB project will be evaluated through an EA process under NEPA.

- **Public and Agency Scoping:** This process solicits public and agency input on the purpose and need for the project, potential alternatives that might have less environmental impact, the environmental issues that should be evaluated in the EA, and possible mitigation measures to address environmental effects. (CBS is proposing to hold a public meeting on this project on

December 11, 2019 at 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Harrigan Centennial Hall. An agency scoping meeting will be held on December 12, 2019.)

- **Alternatives:** NEPA requires the EA to consider a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project, including the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative provides a baseline to compare the effects of the proposed alternative and any other alternatives carried forward for detailed study. The intent of the alternatives analysis is to identify whether there are alternatives that could meet the purpose and need but have less environmental impact than the proposed alternative. The alternatives section of the EA will discuss those alternatives that were evaluated but dismissed from further consideration because they did not meet the purpose and need or did not reduce environmental effects compared to the proposed project.
- **Environmental Consequences:** This section of the EA describes the environmental impacts of the proposal. It will discuss current environmental conditions and what impact the construction and operation of the SPB would have on environmental resources. This section will address air quality, noise, water quality, fish and wildlife, cultural resources, and socioeconomics among other issues. Potential measures that could be implemented to minimize or mitigate environmental effects will also be addressed.
- **Draft Environmental Assessment:** The draft EA will summarize the purpose and need for the project, the alternatives considered, describe the proposed project in detail, and summarize the environmental consequences. The document will compare the alternatives carried forward to the No Action alternative. This document provides information to the FAA and other agencies on the effects of the project for their consideration on determining what alternative should move forward. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft EA and a meeting will be held in Sitka to gather public input on the alternatives and the process.
- **Final Environmental Assessment:** After receiving agency and public input on the draft EA, the EA will be revised as appropriate to address substantive comments. Assuming that the EA documented that there would not be significant impacts to environmental resources, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) would be drafted. Once a FONSI is approved, the FAA can move forward with providing grants for land acquisition, design, and construction.

The City and Borough of Sitka’s Proposed Project



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

The primary reasons for relocating the SPB include insufficient capacity and space at the existing site to accommodate current and future demand; a congested location with conflicting adjacent uses; an unsafe operating area; poor, unsafe dock conditions for fueling and maneuvering on the docks; and a congested sea lane and bird hazard conditions in the immediate vicinity of the seaplane base, which affect the safety in the existing location.

The facility would include:

- a new fuel storage and distribution system;
- vehicle parking area;
- on-site aircraft maintenance capability;
- a drive-down ramp to the SPB floats;
- electricity, water and sewer, and lighting;
- float slips for based seaplanes and positions for transient seaplanes;
- safe access between the parking positions and the water operating area; and
- options to accommodate future growth.

CBS is proposing to construct a new SPB that will serve the community in the coming decades. The final size and layout of the various components are not yet determined and will be refined and finalized as we go through the planning and environmental process. The goal is to identify and address all the facilities needed for ultimate buildout of the facility, even if the improvements are phased over time as demand requires.

Since the EA must evaluate the impacts of all federally-funded actions associated with this project, the EA will also evaluate the CBS’s proposed land acquisition for the SPB and the demolition of the existing SPB.

