

**Sitka Long-Range Visitor Industry Plan Collaborative Process**  
**Steering Committee Meeting**  
**11 January 2007 12:00-1:00 p.m.**  
**Centennial Hall**

**Summary:** The Steering Committee plans the agenda for Saturday's Stakeholder meeting. They also discuss a proposed revision to the "Partnerships" Strategic Direction.

**In attendance:** Cleo Brylinsky, Julia Smith, Lucy Phillips, Brian McNitt, Mim McConnell, Matthew Turner, Kayla Boettcher

A work session has been scheduled with the Assembly on Feb 13 for 50 minutes, starting at 6:00. The idea is to give them the hard copy before then, and hopefully they'll read it.

**Feedback from Stakeholders about attending on Saturday**

All of the SC members have been calling all the Stakeholders that have ever been involved with this process and inviting them to Saturday's meeting. To help with planning, Matthew asks them what kind of feedback they've been getting from folks. It sounds like there are a few people planning to come who haven't been to the meetings in awhile, and a lot of the core group plans to attend. Total size of the group looks to be around 25. Matthew asks the group, rhetorically, what they think it means that they personally reached out to 60 people and invited them to attend, and not quite half say they will.

Matthew continues by telling the SC that Saturday will be his last role as facilitator, and the final meeting of the SH group, and therefore he wants to be sure he's delivering the product the SC/LRPC is expecting. He asks the group to consider, "What are reasonable expectations for this meeting on Saturday?" There are two pieces to that – one is experiential – how do you want people to do the work, and experience the meeting; the other is content – in terms of the end plan, what content do you want to see on Saturday?

SC member: one thing I'd like is for the absentees to experience the difference there is in this group from beginning to now, come away with the feeling that they could speak and be heard, that it was safe. If they spoke to friends after this meeting, that they could say we got a lot done, and they felt like they were listened to and they contributed. Content-wise, I'm hoping that end of Sat that we've spent a lot of time on the Oversight SD, so we have a few definite actions to request of the Assembly at the work session – a proposed structure, some priority things that need to get done.

[others agree – the content needs to be clear for Assembly]

SC member: I would like the regulars to feel a sense of accomplishment, be able to put their hands on what it is, and not feel like we need a lot more work.

SC member: I'm a little reluctant to say since I'm not going to be there on Saturday, but to me, the two things are closely tied – content and experiential. It's not the content I think is most important; this meeting is most critical in experience. I still think this is the very beginning, people involved in this core are the ones that need to carry it on, and we need this meeting to transition them into cheerleaders and people that will keep pushing it. It would

be great if we had all 60 involved, but that's not happening, and that's okay...we have a dedicated core, and we need them to feel like they did get some important stuff accomplished in this process. We should set it up in context – like, don't forget there was no planning before this, people were not communicating and not thinking about the future, and now the community is thinking about the potential here. We also have specific stuff – benchmarks, goals, and some campaign/work plan stuff. We also have the attention of the Assembly and staff focused on this, which we didn't have before. And we need to give a sense that this is the end of this, and let's be happy about that. So, I'd like the last hour on Saturday not have to do with content at all, but to have a celebration. Whatever the goals are of the meeting, we need to accomplish that by 2:00 so we can have some celebration time.

MT: Thanks for all your thoughts – I think they align well with what's reasonable to achieve. Another thing to remember is that when we realized some of our needed Perspectives and Experiences were dropping off, there was concern about how to create a truly collaborative plan. The answer was that the SH group can make a structure, and within that structure the outside voices can still have input. How that structure looks has been evolving but we're way farther than we thought we'd get in the dark days.

MT: I want to set some overall context with you, then talk about a few loose threads in the plan. A couple of observations: I do sense some collaboration fatigue. It's a good thing – that means the process has gone full circle. We've been in meetings where the content on the table was critical...we're at the peak in content, but the excitement level is in the basement. We've dropped some bombs lately that have just moved across so easily. Is that because the group is tired, or because there's a lot of trust, and everyone is feeling safe? I think we're at a point that's a good time for this transition – I think it's ready.

MT: Also, something else I puzzle over – there will be a transition from the collaborative bubble created around this project. At some point it's moving to the LRPC, which still has a collaborative element, but it operates as a commission. Then it moves to the Assembly, where there is an intent to embrace this project, but still a question of how. This may be big transition for folks that are used to dialogue in this process, but they need to be moving into a testimonial phase, a transition from collaborators to activists.

MT: Finally, on Saturday I think there's a need to step back and look at the big picture. Even at the last SH meeting, when we started dealing with specific issues, people stopped looking at the big picture. Visitor numbers is a great example – people came in with their own perspectives on it. Business owners see their success linked to the cruises – more cruises are good for business. But if we could look all the way back, everybody says they don't want us to be Juneau or Skagway. We need this group to look at the bigger picture and figure out how to manage it equitably, within the broader issues at stake. I'm wondering how we'll run some exercises on Saturday to keep the perspective broad enough – especially by 1:00 I hope we're looking at it all together as a whole plan.

MT: There are a few other things we want you to be aware of and think about. It's really Kayla's stuff. One really exciting is that she created an "issue index" – essentially, an alphabetized list of issues/concerns and where they fall in the plan, and you can see where there might be a few missing. Kayla's also been looking at historical plans, like the Gateway Plan – the good news for this committee is that this nestles right in with the directions from

that plan. Finally, the timing is so right for this – I dropped in on the Assembly’s visioning session, and as they reviewed the outcomes of last year’s visioning, they realized that one of the items was to create a visitor industry plan, and they’re excited that they’re about to receive it.

MT: But there are a few loose threads yet.

- The Strategic Direction called “Partnerships” needs quite a bit of refining, and we have a suggestion – I’d like to talk about that one with you today.
- The overarching Principles need to be refined. There is still some questions about setting target visitor numbers.
- There is “unfinished needed information” – presentations that were never officially “closed,” so how can we reference those? For example, the SH group never officially accepted the city budget numbers – mostly because they had more questions they wanted answered.
- What about the changes made to SDs without group consensus? At the last SH meeting, items were added/changed, but there was no process that brought those things into full consensus.
- Also, changes to overall plan – making tweaks and edits outside of SH group. For example, “herd immunity” may need some reframing. There are also some substantial questions – suggestions to rethink the mission statement, and other broad statements.

So, how are these things done in a way that moves process forward, honors this process, and makes the best possible product?

SC: So, are you suggesting we do these now, or on Saturday...when?

MT: I think you should consider naming an “enhanced SC” – to have mix of SH and SC members who are willing to meet for a month, from Jan 13 to Feb 13, to work with Kayla on making some of these decisions. There are editorial decisions to be made, and Kayla doesn’t want to bear that weight alone.

The group agrees to include this list of things on a big poster on Saturday, and ask people to sign up to help resolve these things. They decide on the following schedule for meetings:

Tuesday, Jan 16 at noon;

Tuesday 23rd at noon;

Tuesday 30th in evening, 6-8.

One meeting with the LRPC (Stef has to call that, may be week of 23<sup>rd</sup>, or first week of Feb);

Assembly work session on the 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00

MT: It may be good to pull in some of your other LRPC members into these meetings, give them more background, and save work session time.

SC member: Going back to planning for Saturday – I have a proposed schedule: 1/2 hour overview to bring people up to speed, lay out agenda clearly, and introduce the questions to answer in small groups. From 10:30-12, work in committees, with no breaks, to answer those questions. 12-1, lunch – during lunch could we kick off some of the stuff on that list, the big picture questions – some chatty, non-threatening topic, maybe resolving the unclosed needed info or something. During lunch, hopefully Matthew and Kayla can also put together all the small group work, so that from 1-2 it’s ready to bring it all together, and show how

everything plugs into plan and looks finished, or that there's a clear plan for where it's going to go. Then at 2, we celebrate.

SH: I also hear that we need to be helping people let go of this a little – we've been so focused on this, and we may need help letting our baby go to the Assembly.

SC: One idea is to invite Klaudia Lecesse (who's been the main driver on the Solid Waset Implementation Team) to talk for a few minutes about how they didn't know what was going to happen when they finished their plan, but they kept pushing it – maybe she can help people see that it's not completely turned over to the Assembly, and the trick is to keep the core group working at it after that.

The group thinks this is an interesting idea, and Brian agrees to call Klaudia and let Matthew know if she's available and interested.

MT: My plan, after the small group work, is to somehow have all the Strategic Directions and Benchmarks on one wall together, so all the Benchmarks can be put into context, all on one timeline.

MT: One element, that will be important in the facilitation of the small groups, is to help the groups recognize if they don't have the right Perspectives and Experiences, or all the necessary information to make a good decision. We'll do the same thing as last time, and provide the small group facilitators with specific questions for each group. I'm also wondering if we can't create a filter there where, if we don't have the right P&E or the necessary info, rather than forcing a Benchmark that may not be appropriate, that the facilitators help the groups step back and state the intent and name who needs to be there to write that benchmark. One place that sticks out to me, for example, is in answering how to structure an Oversight board. I'm worried that we don't have all the right people – we need John Stein, and a few others to really answer that one. I learned from John Stein about “specialized governance districts” – there could potentially be a visitor industry district established – something like a school board, where a new board gets the money and autonomy to oversee it. But you'd have to change charter to set up a new type of board...and we need insights from John to really state that well. That's a good example of how, when we get to a place like that on Saturday, we encourage the SH to recognize if we have all the people there and the info we need. If we can do that, it can be written up as a plan to ask these people for this information – that still becomes a benchmark.

[The group speaks briefly about the ideas for the celebration hour – Lucy and Mim suggest there should be a chance for SH to tell each other their stories about being involved with this process, a sort of testimonial time. There is also an idea about having a cake.]

MT: Let's talk for a little bit about the partnerships Strategic Direction. Kayla and I have been struggling over this SD, what to do with it – right now the action area simply says “encouraging collaborative partnerships.” When it was named “partnerships”, people said partnerships should be everywhere in this plan, and why should it be it's own SD? We've looked back at the intent here, and we've also been listening to some people who have been clear in their statements about this. The concerns seem to be whenever we're moving into talking with large corporations, people are nervous about what the deals are about, what's

the direction, and will there be public input. And there's a clear intent about talking with other governmental agencies to be think about how their plans intersect with this one. Finally, we haven't directly addressed the issue that there's a divide in the community about visitor industry issues, and the key thing is that we need to work collaboratively. In considering all of this, it seems we could add an overall principle about reaching out to all groups and partnering to make decisions. And perhaps this Strategic Direction should specifically address these three things – that there is a resolve in this plan, ideally by the city, to address these issues and enter these dialogues. These are the elephants in the room – partnerships may be an overarching principle, they're everywhere, but this is specific about these. We're looking for endorsement from you that the SD is this new one that we've proposed, and the idea of partnerships is too broad to be a SD.

SC: when I read this, in my mind I see that this doesn't make up a SD. But I still see your new action areas as overarching principles – they're well-written, but maybe they should be overriding principles.

SC: I think some of these benchmarks can be moved to other SDs, and this one should just be about resolving divisive community issues. I agree that these need to be in their own spot for awhile, and maybe if they get resolved, this SD can go away.

KB: To me, the overarching principles should really be able to apply to everything within the plan. Do these new action areas really effect all the other elements of the plan? Does having dialogue with other governments resolve some of our pedestrian density issues?

SC: Maybe all these things go under purview of the Oversight committee. I agree that I don't see resolving conflicts anywhere else in the plan. But talking with the cruise industry isn't about resolving conflict, so do those things really go together?

[Eventually, the SC decided to put this before the Stakeholders on Saturday to resolve. The SC members seemed to agree that this SD could be a good place for conflict resolution issues, and they believe it's important that including a benchmark about resolving the divide between charter and commercial is of high priority. They were of different opinions about including the action areas of working with corporations and other governments, however.]