

Comprehensive Plan - 2016

CHAPTER 7: RECREATION + TOURISM

Overarching Goal: Support cultural and recreational opportunities and tourism attractions that benefit both residents and visitors.

GOALS + STRATEGIES

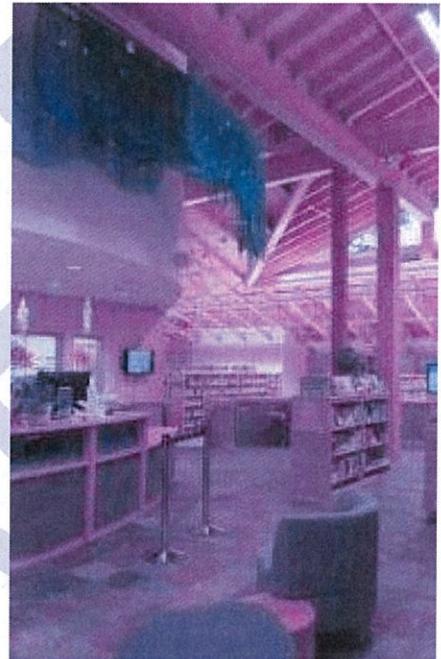
1. Goal: Thriving Community Spaces. Maintain and improve arts and recreational opportunities in the Petersburg core.

a. Maintain and expand the in-town trail and bike path network. Potential actions:

- Create a Safe Routes to School program.
- Create more lighted paths.
- Create more loop trails for pedestrians and visitors to enjoy.
- Improve drainage on Hungry Point Trail.
- Develop more hiking trails near town, including a connection through Hammer Slough, past the Borough maintenance yard, and connecting to existing trail systems.
- Continue pedestrian/bike path from the airport to where it currently ends at Sandy Beach.
- Maintain and enhance trail from Sandy Beach Park to City Creek.
- Build a trail to the beach, northwest of Frederick Point.
- Build a pathway past the ferry terminal, on the water side of the road.
- Along Fredrick Sound Road, keep trail on beach side of road, Sandy Beach to Cabin Creek.
- Connect Twin Creek Road to Fredrick Point Road for a looped bike trail.
- See also *Chapter 5: Transportation* for more strategies related to the use of trails as transportation infrastructure.

b. Work in partnership with neighborhoods to develop and maintain neighborhood parks that serve the needs of adjacent neighborhoods. Focus efforts on higher density, lower income neighborhoods, where such facilities are particularly needed. Potential actions:

- Possible neighborhood projects include: community garden spaces, pocket parks, or dog parks.
- Apportion funds for “neighborhood challenge grants” to match volunteer or matching funds for neighborhood projects.



Petersburg Borough Library

- Offer free classes, such as exercise classes, dance classes, cooking classes.
- Bring back the fitness challenge.

2. Goal: Borough-wide and Regional Recreation Network. Sustain, enhance and create opportunities to enjoy the waterways, trails and other recreational and cultural attractions in and surrounding the Borough.

a. Develop a Borough-wide trails plan – *See also Chapter 5: Transportation, Goal 3.* Potential actions:

- Consider installing a floating dock at Banana Point to improve access and safety. (*see Waterfront Master Plan for more discussion in outlying locations*)

“We need to focus on recreation improvements that are good for residents and for visitors.”
 – Community survey participant

b. Promote, connect and enhance the recreation amenities available on the Mitkof Island Road system. Potential actions:

- Support improvements at the State’s Ernie Haugen Public Use Area.
- Conduct necessary detailed site planning work to use the area of Sandy Beach for a combination of trails, public park and open space and residential development. More on-site work is needed to determine how this important area can best meet this combination of objectives. The specific area to be addressed is the area bordered by Sandy Beach Park, Frederick Sound, City Creek and the Frederick Point Road.

c. Maintain public beach access throughout the Borough. Potential actions:

- *See also Chapter 3: Land Use and Environment, Goal 4*

d. Partner with the Forest Service to provide access to and support for Forest recreation for visitors and residents. Potential actions:

- To the degree the USFS is considering the need to reduce recreation facilities such as cabins, trails, day use or camping facilities, work with the agency to identify priority recreation and tourism facilities.
- Work with the USFS to ensure outfitter/guides continue to have full opportunities to share USFS lands with local residents and visitors
- Identify opportunities for trail continuity as trails cross land ownership.
- Partner with the USFS, the State of Alaska and the City of Kupreanof to plan future uses at Petersburg Creek and its drainages, in particular to take advantage of and protect the area’s public use and ecosystem values.
- *See also Chapter 5: Transportation, Goal 3*

3. Goal: Locally Beneficial Tourism. Grow and capture the economic benefits of tourism, while protecting the qualities that make Petersburg a good place to live and visit.

a. Develop a simple, overall tourism strategy to make Petersburg a more attractive and visitor-friendly community. Potential actions:

- Community goals for tourism. Previous plans have made clear the community supports small scale, small group and independent visitors, and wants to draw visitors who appreciate that Petersburg’s downtown, unlike Juneau or Ketchikan, is still a “real town”, focused on fishing and local life.

- experiences available in Petersburg Borough.
- Marketing partnerships with similarly situated small Alaskan non-cruise destination communities.
- Expand and enhance traditional events that are part of “who and what Petersburg is” (Mayfest, for example), that also draw visitors.
- Market recreational activities to seasonal employees.
- Continue to dedicate tourist occupancy tax for ongoing tourism marketing.

c. *See also Chapter 8: Economic Development.*

4. **Goal: Welcoming and Publicly Accessible Waterfront.** Ensure continued public access to the waterfront, allowing visitors and residents to safely recreate, work, and enjoy waterfront locations throughout the Borough. Recognize this goal must be balanced against other considerations, including respecting private property rights and the needs for commerce and safety in “working waterfront” locations.

In developed waterfront areas

- a. Improve and increase walkability along and within the waterfront and between the waterfront and downtown.
- b. Identify needs and locations for small cruise infrastructure.
- c. Install seasonal signage and/or a comprehensive wayfinding strategy.
- d. Ensure adequate restroom facilities.
- e. Identify, acquire, and develop an area (parking and camping) for recreational vehicles and other visitors separate from harbor parking lots.

In outlying areas

- f. Reserve public access easements when waterfront areas are developed, to allow public access to publically owned tidelands or upland areas adjoining the waterfront.
- g. Provide a range of waterfront access points, from simple pathways, to more developed day use recreation facilities, for example, with parking, restrooms and trash cans.

See also Chapter 3: Land Use and Environment, and the Waterfront Plan.

and residents. Current trends in tourism are presented next, with a focus on the Forest Service and the unique opportunity presented by Petersburg’s proximity to the Tongass National Forest.

DRAFT

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Petersburg Borough Parks and Recreation Department maintains the following recreation facilities:

- Bojer Wikan Fisherman's Memorial Park (maintained by Sons of Norway)
- Buschmann Park
- City Creek Trail
- Community Center
- Eagles Roost Park
- Ferry Terminal Dock Park
- Hungry Point Trail
- Ira II Mini Park
- Mort Fyer Ballfields and Park
- Nature Boardwalk
- Outlook Park
- Petersburg Memorial Cemetery
- Sandy Beach Park
- South Harbor Viewing Area
- Totem Park (maintained by the USFS)
- William Musson Trail
- Yiel Ka Ch'aak (Park)

"We have a vibrant community with good schools, a good pool/gym and a beautiful library. To me the challenge is how to keep these facilities going and encourage growth in our lovely community."

– Community survey participant

The map on the previous page shows recreation facilities like cabins, trails, recreation areas and boat launches across Mitkof Island. Many of these are owned and maintained by the United States Forest Service.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

Since the 2000 Plan, the community of Petersburg has added the following amenities:

- Construction of the new library.
- Improvements at Sandy Beach park.
- Raven's Roost trail extension, accessibility.
- Two new ball fields constructed.
- New trails – coastal bike path, Raven's Roost trail extension, Sandy Beach to City Creek.
- New neighborhood parks.
- Greens Camp culvert and campground.
- Banana Point Ramp Improvements.

What would improve community health and wellness in Petersburg Borough and the region?

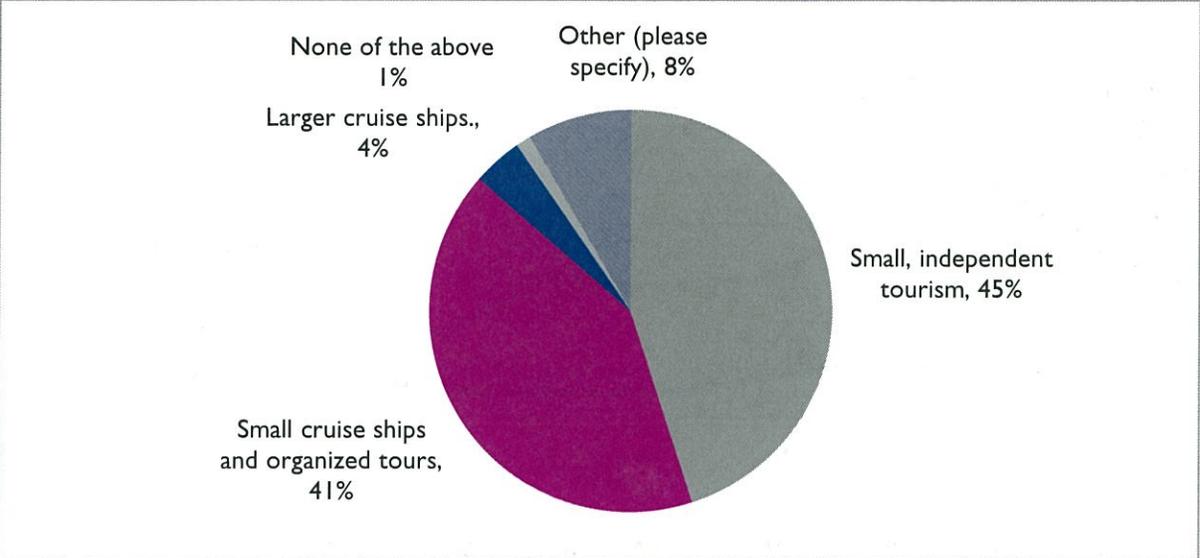
"More close accessible multi-use recreation trails, areas, facilities for unstructured individual health/wellness would go a very long way."

"More cooperation and activities that take place in cooperation with and together with neighboring communities."

– Community survey participants

also support the type of tourism that most seeks out amenities that benefit both residents and the visitor industry. The vast majority of survey respondents (86 percent) supported small cruise ships and small, independent tourism (Figure 7-). This target market values “authentic” experiences such as the opportunity to learn or participate in local activities, which is in line with the same amenities that survey respondents also identified. Additionally, small independent tourism is reliant on ferry and jet service, both of which Petersburg residents need and enjoy.

Figure 7-3: Type of tourism supported by Petersburg survey respondents



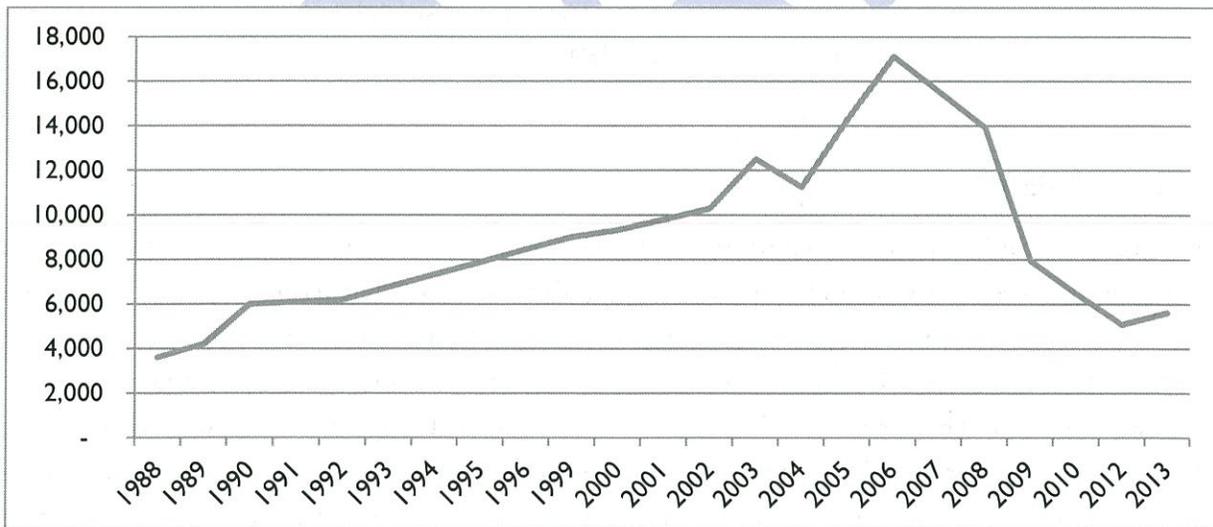
- Nearly half of Petersburg visitors said they were very likely to return to Alaska in the next five years, in contrast to just 27 percent of Southeast visitors as a whole. Similarly, more than half said they had been to the state previously for vacation.
- Only 43 percent of visitors to the City of Petersburg purchased a multi-day package, compared with 47 percent of those to Wrangell and 77 percent of those to Haines. Adventure tours made up just eight percent of the trip packages in Petersburg, compared with 24 percent of Wrangell's package purchases.

THE SMALL CRUISE INDUSTRY

Cruise visitation has declined in recent years from a high of around 17,000 in 2006 to around 5,500 in 2013 (Figure 7-5: Cruise Ship Passengers on Boats that Made a Port of Call in Petersburg).

A change in a port of call for one boat can have drastic effects. The Safari Legacy used to bring 88 passengers, 18 times per year in 2006 and 2008 for a total of 1,584 passengers. The Safari Legacy did not return again until 2013, when it made two port of calls in Petersburg. Similarly the Safari Endeavor stopped coming to Petersburg in 2010, removing 1,500 to 1,700 visitors to the community spread over 18 to 20 port of calls.

Figure 7-5: Cruise Ship Passengers on Boats that Made a Port of Call in Petersburg

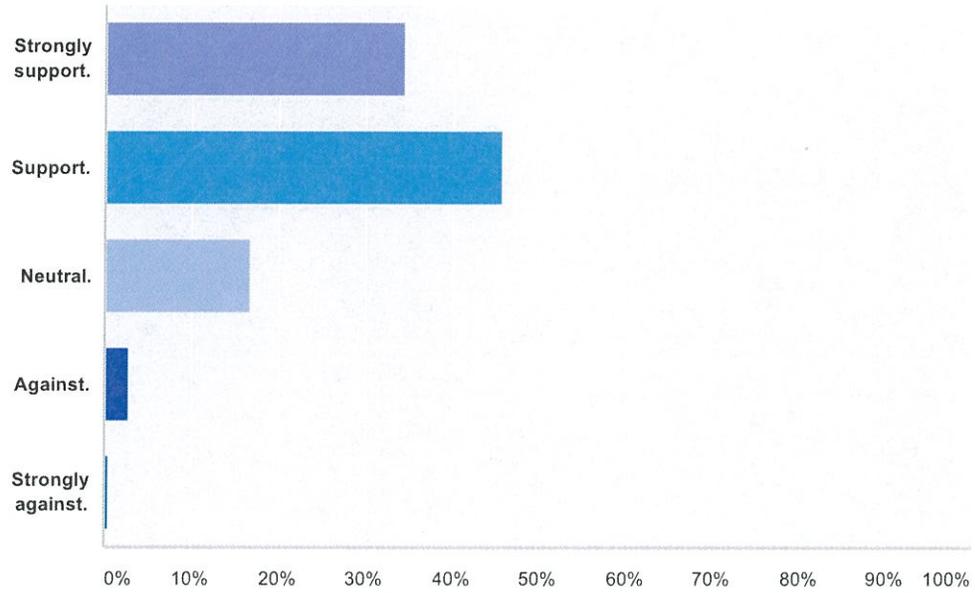


Source: Compiled by David Berg

In general, small cruise passengers spend four to six hours in Petersburg, and participate in the few available tours. Available tours include glacier and wildlife viewing, and visiting the museum and the Norwegian cultural contact for local history and dances. Tours are occasionally pre-sold to passengers. Visitors enjoy the working fishing community feel of Petersburg, but the steep gangway and transportation to downtown can pose a problem to visitors arriving at the harbor. Around 65

Q34 Please describe your level of support for the visitor and tourism industry in Petersburg Borough.

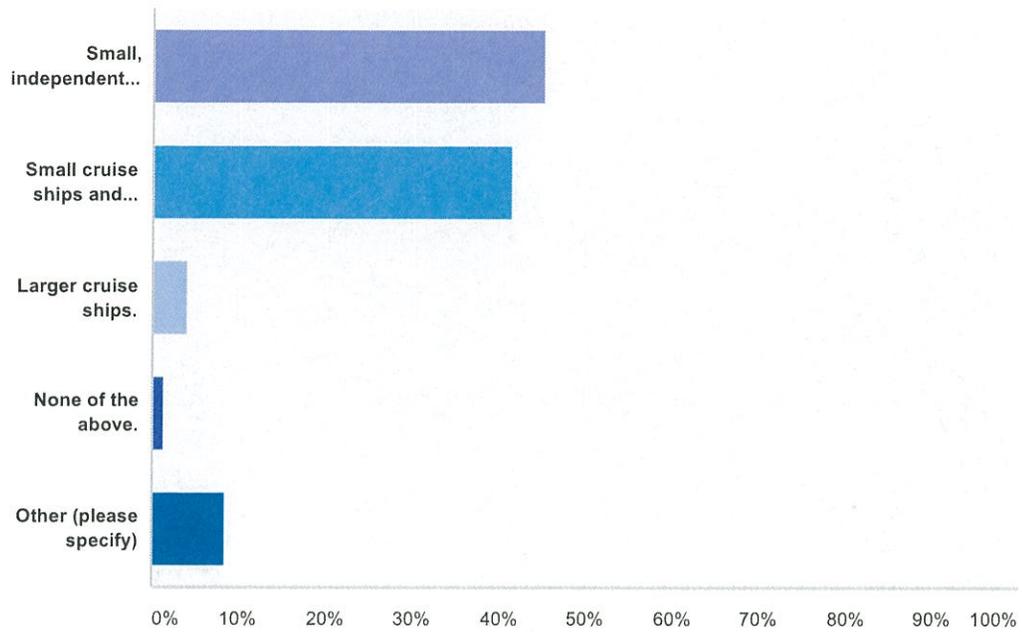
Answered: 252 Skipped: 107



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly support.	34.52%	87
Support.	45.63%	115
Neutral.	16.67%	42
Against.	2.78%	7
Strongly against.	0.40%	1
Total		252

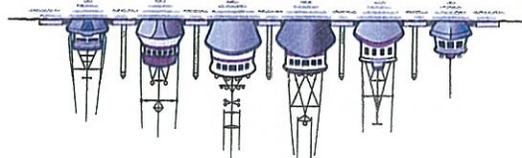
Q35 What type of visitor and tourism do you most support?

Answered: 251 Skipped: 108



Answer Choices	Responses
Small, independent tourism.	45.02% 113
Small cruise ships and organized tours.	41.43% 104
Larger cruise ships.	3.98% 10
None of the above.	1.20% 3
Other (please specify)	8.37% 21
Total	251

PETERSBURG ALASKA



Petersburg Borough Sales Tax Code and Marine Passenger Fee Policy for Cruise & Charters.

- Determination of collecting Petersburg Borough sales tax on cruises and charters:
 - Any Cruise or Charter that begins within the Petersburg Borough is required to collect Petersburg Borough Sales Tax.

Cruise/Charter Policy	Sales Tax	Marine Passenger Fee
Cruise/Charters with under 20 overnight berths, beginning inside the Petersburg Borough	yes	no
Cruise/Charters with under 20 overnight berths, beginning outside the Petersburg Borough	no	no
Cruise/Charters with over 20 overnight berths, beginning inside the Petersburg Borough	yes	yes
Cruise/Charters with over 20 overnight berths, beginning outside the Petersburg Borough	no	yes