# KETCHIKAN TOURISM STRATEGY
## 2023

SUBMITTED BY:

International Institute
of Tourism Studies
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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# Foreword

Our team at the Department of Planning and Community Development, Ketchikan Gateway Borough is pleased to present the Ketchikan Tourism Strategy (KTS)–an islandwide community plan for the future of tourism.  Tourism is a vital contributor to the economic and social development of all communities in Ketchikan, but it can also have negative impacts on the environment, culture, and communities if not managed responsibly. Therefore, it is essential to plan and manage tourism carefully and collaboratively.

The KTS is based on extensive research, consultations, and engagement with the local community and other stakeholders. We are very grateful to the more than one thousand residents, community leaders, and tourism leaders in local jurisdictions that completed the resident survey, gave time to the one-on-one meetings and attended the focus groups, workshops and work sessions that have shaped the entire strategy, from the shared vision and values that the KTS supports to the 25 main strategies and priority actions needed to achieve the community vision. We hope that you can see your signature in this strategy.

The strategy provides a framework for tourism development and management, focusing on five key areas: quality of life, quality of economy and work, quality of the visitor experience, quality of our natural environment and creating a robust enabling environment for tourism. It includes specific strategies and actions to promote responsible tourism practices, enhance visitor experiences, and protect the natural and cultural heritage of this destination.

The process of developing the KTS involved openness of the many parties who came to the table, thoughtful discussion, patience, building trust and sharing responsibility for the development of the strategy. Its successful implementation requires that we accept shared responsibility for the management of tourism across all local jurisdictions and all communities.

We encourage all stakeholders to work together to implement the strategies and actions outlined in the KTS to create a prosperous and resilient future for tourism; a future that we can all be proud of. We ask  you to please stay engaged.  Ketchikan, one community working together, is unstoppable.

**Richard Harney**
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*Ketchikan Gateway Borough*

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# Executive Summary

The Ketchikan Tourism Strategy (KTS) is a five-year blueprint that guides the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, other local jurisdictions and local communities toward a future for tourism that enhances its long-term competitiveness, prosperity and resilience. The purpose of the KTS is to align tourism development with the long-term interests of the community, and to maximize tourism benefits while minimizing negative impacts.

The KTS includes a range of measures to manage tourism impacts, support local communities, protect nature and promote responsible tourism behaviors among visitors. The stewardship goals and strategies in the KTS reflect what all stakeholder groups, including residents, believe are most important to address for the future of tourism in Ketchikan.

More than one thousand local stakeholders representing the wider community, public sector (all local jurisdictions), private sector, and civic sector helped to shape the KTS. The year-long participatory planning process was spearheaded by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough (KGB) and guided by a 23-member Community Advisory Committee and eight-member Steering Committee. The robust community engagement process has ensured that the vision and values are representative of all communities and all local jurisdictions.

## COMMUNITY VISION

Ketchikan is a vibrant tourism destination balancing residents' quality of life and quality of the visitor economy by coordinating and collaborating across all local jurisdictions to prioritize diversity of visitor experiences and support protection of Ketchikan's unique environmental, cultural, and natural resources.

The KTS supports the following community values:

### Respect and Protection of Local Community

The key to the longevity of our tourism industry is to balance visitor impacts (positive and negative) and the resident quality of life.

### Stewardship of the Natural Environment

Our economic future depends on the protection of our natural environment, and we believe that environmental and economic sustainability go hand-in-hand.

### Education of Residents and Visitors

Education on our values, challenges, and goals offers visitors a deeper understanding of our community while empowering residents to shape and influence visitor interactions.

### Shared Responsibility and Collaboration

Our governance is guided by principles of inclusion of all communities and shared management of tourism across all local jurisdictions to enhance the long-term prosperity of tourism and other industries, benefitting the local community and its visitors.

The KTS Situation Analysis Report (separate document) presents a thorough assessment of the destination's current tourism impacts and future potential and indicates that Ketchikan's growing popularity, especially as a cruise destination, is bringing a steadily growing number of visitors to its shore every year. This growth is creating a strain on local residents, infrastructure and the services, local jurisdictions, businesses, cultural and natural resources on which tourism is built. The destination is now facing a range of interrelated challenges: over-reliance on cruise tourism (95% of total arrivals are cruise ship visitors), traffic congestion and aging infrastructure, persistent workforce shortages and limited workforce housing, among others.

Moving forward, Ketchikan needs community-centered development and coordinated management of tourism across all jurisdictions focused on building industry strength, addressing challenges, and seizing opportunities as they arise. The KTS provides a framework for this by focusing collaborative efforts around eight stewardship goals and 25 strategies to fulfill each goal. The stewardship goals and strategies were developed over several months through a series of focus groups, workshops and work sessions. The stewardship goals are outlined below.

This strategy document is structured as a practical framework to guide collaborative action. It identifies priority actions for all main strategies. It includes a five-year implementation schedule and establishes the need for an interim and permanent governance structure for tourism management.

A new tourism governance structure will support the coordination and shared responsibilities of effective collaborative management. Recommendations for year one include establishing a destination stewardship council that will serve as an interim structure for KTS implementation. The destination stewardship council will sustain momentum and serve as a bridge to the creation of a permanent tourism backbone organization/coordinating body. The destination stewardship council will tackle a few quick win priority actions during year one guided by the specific recommendations outlined in this framework. The establishment of an islandwide tourism governance structure that supports collaborative management underpins successful implementation of the community vision, stewardship goals and strategies outlined in the KTS.

The key performance indicators included for each main strategy help to define what success looks like and should be used to track progress over time. Public reporting of progress will be critical to cultivating trust and support by local residents, leaders and tourism decision makers.

**GOAL 1 | VISITOR MANAGEMENT**
Manage visitor flows and operator impacts during tourism peak season

**GOAL 2 | YEAR ROUND VISITATION**
Position Ketchikan as a year-round destination

**GOAL 3 | COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT**
Strengthen community engagement and communications around tourism

**GOAL 4 | WORKFORCE SHORTAGES**
Increase tourism workforce stability

**GOAL 5 | TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC CONGESTION**
Improve mobility and reduce tourism related traffic congestion

**GOAL 6 | WORKFORCE HOUSING**
Support seasonal and year-round solutions for workforce housing

**GOAL 7 | MONITORING AND REPORTING**
Monitor holistic impacts of tourism

**GOAL 8 | GOVERNANCE**
Establish and implement collaborative tourism governance

Priority actions for year one are noted below.

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **8.1.1** Design network structure and scope of work for the destination stewardship council | ■ | | | |
| | **8.1.2** Form a destination stewardship council that builds on the existing Project Community Advisory Committee | ■ | ■ | | |
| | **8.1.3** Define year one KTS quick wins and guide implementation of priority actions | | | ■ | |
| | **3.1.1** Develop and implement a six-month marketing-communications and engagement action agenda for the new KTS | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| | **3.1.2** Develop communication toolkits that clearly articulate the KTS development process and the benefits of adopting the final document | ■ | | | |
| | **1.1.1** Create an inventory of current experiences for visitors outside of the downtown area to be an easy reference for cruise visitors, tour operators, and develop a map that highlights key themed itineraries; an action team can be established as part of the destination stewardship council to develop the inventory and map  (see 8.1.2) | | | | ■ |
| | **1.3.4** Build awareness of Tourism Best Management Practices within the community and communicate the important role residents play in the success of the program; an action team can be established as part of the destination stewardship Council to lead this work  (see 8.1.2) | | | | ■ |
| | **1.5.1** Convene a visitor use management action team as part of the destination stewardship council  (see 8.1.2) | | | | ■ |
| | **1.5.2** Develop official inventory of priority tourism attractions and sites and assess impacts occurring | | | | ■ |
| | **5.1.1** Convene a transportation action team as part of the destination stewardship council (see 8.1.2) comprised of public, private, and citizen-at-large representation to support development of the updated KGB Transit Development Plan (commencing in 2023) and associated collaborative efforts to mitigate traffic congestion | | | | ■ |
| | **5.1.2** Support the creation of the  KGB Transit Development Plan and implementation strategy | | | | ■ |

*The KTS uncovered many strengths in Ketchikan area tourism and one primary weakness–lack of coordination and collaboration.* By coordinating the management of tourism across all local jurisdictions with the goal of balancing the needs and aspirations of key stakeholder groups, including residents, Ketchikan can reduce or eliminate the main concerns covered in the KTS.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This section of the KTS describes the purpose of the strategy, the over-arching tourism strategy development process, and the main elements of the strategy framework.

## Purpose of the Tourism Strategy

Ketchikan is known for its dramatic natural beauty, distinction as the salmon capital of the world and rich Alaska Native culture and heritage. Considered the "Gateway to Alaska," Ketchikan is the southernmost city on the Inside Passage and it's often a visitor's first glimpse of the majesty and wonder of the last frontier. With a stunning dense forested hillside as the backdrop, visitors find a warm and eclectic city with a small-town feel, world-class recreational activities, cultural diversity and a thriving arts community; all contributing to a unique and captivating sense of place. It is this sense of place that makes Ketchikan such a compelling destination, collectively created by unique and diverse communities.

Ketchikan's growing popularity, especially as a cruise port, is bringing a steadily growing number of visitors to its shore every year. While this growth has brought many economic benefits, it is putting a strain on the community, its infrastructure and natural resources. The destination is now facing a range of interrelated challenges: over-reliance on cruise tourism, traffic congestion and aging infrastructure, persistent workforce shortages and limited workforce housing, among others.

To address these challenges and avoid consequent impacts from unmanaged tourism, the KGB led a participatory planning process designed to develop a community vision and strategies for staying ahead of uncontrolled tourism. The KTS is the result of this yearlong participatory planning process. It looks at all of the ways tourism is affecting Ketchikan–both positive and negative–and identifies ways to support the positive effects and reduce or eliminate the negative impacts.

This process engaged about 1,600 residents, businesses, non-governmental organizations, public sector and community leaders across all local jurisdictions. The strategies outlined in the KTS represent a good balance between protecting the local environment and culture that visitors have traveled to enjoy and making tourism more valuable for the local community, its residents and in turn visitors. It is a framework that is intended to evolve over time to guide the community in their shared stewardship of tourism.

## Sustainable Destination Stewardship Approach

The community sentiment about tourism in Ketchikan is mixed. Respondents to the resident survey conducted in 2022 as part of the KTS development process overwhelmingly agreed that tourism is important to the local economy (84%). However, when asked for their overall sentiment about tourism in Ketchikan, 45% reported that they are not satisfied while 36% were satisfied. Furthermore, 54% of respondents stated that the number of people visiting has a negative impact on their quality of life; 69% of respondents feel that residents do not have sufficient input and influence over tourism development, and 64% feel unheard. The vast majority of respondents (88%) indicate that Ketchikan needs planned and controlled tourism development.

It is evident that Ketchikan needs a new community-centered, planned approach to tourism. The KTS provides the framework for achieving this. The KTS is built on the principles of destination management. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) states that destination management "consists of the coordinated management of all the elements that make up a tourism destination. Destination management takes a strategic approach to link-up these sometimes very separate elements for the better management of the destination."[1]

Destination management focuses on the place shaped by the people that live there and evolves over time. This approach recognizes that great destinations are great places to live, work, and visit, and strives to balance the needs and expectations of visitors with those of local residents, businesses, and the environment. Destination management includes the planning, development, marketing, and monitoring of a destination as well as how it is managed physically, operationally, and financially. It requires cooperation and coordination among tourism and community organizations working toward a shared vision and goals. Destination management ensures the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of a destination.

The complexity of tourism-related challenges requires a collaborative approach to planning and management. The KTS embraces an all-local jurisdictions, all-stakeholders approach.

## Process and Methodology

The KTS project began in early 2022 with the establishment of an 26-member Community Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from all key stakeholder groups tasked with supporting and guiding the strategy development process. The eight-member Steering Committee joined together key members of the KGB and the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau (KVB) to help oversee the project's progress.

The first step taken was a comprehensive review of the current situation to capture the whole picture of how tourism impacts Ketchikan and the people who live there. The areas of assessment are described below.

▶ **Quality of economy and work:** tourism demand trends, economic contributions of tourism, implications of sustained tourism demand

▶ **Quality of life:** resident sentiment toward tourism

▶ **Quality of visitor experience:** inventory of tourism products and providers, visitor satisfaction

▶ **Natural environment:** impacts of tourism on public lands, and destination and natural resource protection and conservation

▶ **Enabling environment for sustainable tourism:** tourism governance, existing sustainability efforts, institutional capacity of tourism stakeholders for collaborative stewardship of the destination

The Situation Analysis Report (SAR) consolidates data[2], information, and insights from a wide range of sources and key stakeholder groups—local and state government, public land managers, elected officials, business community, residents, and the civic sector. It serves as a comprehensive baseline assessment of tourism in Ketchikan. It's also a useful reference document for research and can be used to inform decision-making. Visit Ketchikan Tourism Strategy to access this report.

A total of 69 tourism stakeholders, residents, and elected officials helped to validate the main findings of the Situation Analysis in July 2022. The KTS Steering Committee also reviewed the draft SAR and provided feedback.

A survey designed to gauge resident sentiment toward tourism was deployed May through July, 2022. A total of 1,343 residents completed the survey. Of all respondents, 13% own a local business and of respondents employed in Ketchikan, 30% indicated that they work in the tourism industry. Of all respondents, 64% have lived in Ketchikan more than 20 years. The resident survey findings report is available at Ketchikan Tourism Strategy

To understand visitor feedback and sentiment about tourism attractions, 2,862 Tripadvisor online reviews were analyzed for 18 popular attractions located at least partially within Ketchikan. Destination managers use analyses of online travel reviews to inform decision-making about improvements of attractions, amenities, and experiences to meet visitor needs and expectations. The full report is available at Ketchikan Tourism Strategy.

This additional research helped to fill gaps in available information and present a snapshot of Ketchikan's current situation. Taken together, the SAR, the analysis of resident sentiment, and the analysis of visitor feedback create a holistic perspective that is essential for planning.

The KTS aims to build a resilient destination that balances all stakeholder concerns. The insights distilled in the SAR and research projects were then used to map the issue areas that are most important to each stakeholder group—tourism stakeholders, residents, and visitors. The aim of this effort was to find common ground among stakeholders and to ensure that every stakeholder group had an equal opportunity to shape the scope of the KTS.

Eight main focus areas were identified as most important to address in the KTS. These focus areas were discussed with 49 tourism stakeholders and residents during vision and planning workshops held in October 2022. At these meetings, the community validated the main issue areas and brainstormed initial solutions for addressing them. Approximately 50 additional residents were engaged in discussions at the October 2022 Art Walk.

The SAR, resident survey, analysis of online travel reviews, and outcomes of stakeholder consultations serve as the foundation of the KTS.

This plan was created for and with the community. Thousands of people gave generously of their time and insight:

▶ 1,343 residents took the Resident Sentiment toward Tourism Survey

▶ 2,862 TripAdvisor online reviews were analyzed for 18 popular attractions

▶ 9 meetings were held with the 8 member Steering Committee

▶ 8 meetings were held with the 26 member Community Advisory Committee

▶ 5 focus groups and 10 interviews were conducted with more than 75 tourism leaders, elected officials, public land managers, and community members, including the Alaska Native community

▶ 2 full-day in-person visioning and planning workshops were conducted and engaged 49 stakeholders

▶ 3 community meetings were held, involving approximately 70 attendees in-person in Ketchikan and 300 via Facebook Live

▶ 15 work sessions were held with approximately 50 stakeholders to develop KTS goals and priority initiatives for 8 priority focus areas

▶ 332 individuals have interacted on the KTN Talk platform

# 2. CURRENT SITUATION

## *Where are we now?*

This section of the plan provides an overview of tourism in Ketchikan and a high-level analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The full Situation Analysis Report is presented separately and serves as the foundational component of the KTS.

## Background

Located near the southernmost boundary of Alaska in its Southeast Panhandle, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough (KGB) is known for its stunning forests, waterfalls, lakes, creeks and coastlines. Ketchikan's natural beauty, diverse wildlife and rich cultural heritage are some of the elements that make it a magnet for tourism. While the KGB encompasses multiple islands such as Pennock and Gravina, its nearly 14,000 year-round residents reside on the island of Revillagigedo[3]. The Tongass and Cape Fox Tlingits are the original stewards of these lands.

Tourism is a key driver of the local economy. Direct visitor industry spending totaled $223 million in 2017. Employment related to visitor spending accounted for 17% of Ketchikan-wide jobs in 2017 and 14% of total labor income in 2016[4]. The tourism industry also provides revenue to the KGB and City of Ketchikan in the form of taxes and fees. In 2018, Ketchikan received $2.4 million in State Marine's passenger fees from the Commercial Passenger Vessel (CPV) tax; in 2019, it received $2.7 million[5]. CPV funding is forecasted to increase to $2.97 million in 2023. In addition to CPV revenue, Ketchikan has received nearly $23 million in CPV-related legislative grants between fiscal year 2009 and fiscal year 2014 from the CPV Tax Account. Dockage and moorage fees contribute greatly, with $9 million brought in by the City of Ketchikan in 2017[6]. Ketchikan's visitor industry (including cruise lines, crew members, and out-of-state visitors) contributed an estimated $5.1 million in sales taxes in summer 2017, representing one-quarter of total tax revenues[7]. In 2021, hotel/short-term rental taxes collected increased 17% over 2019 revenues and were up 51% from 2020[8].

The pandemic showed that the Ketchikan economy is highly dependent on the tourism industry and significantly on the cruise market. While Alaska is a smaller cruise destination compared to more established regions such as the Mediterranean and Caribbean, it has consistently outpaced established cruise regions in year-over-year growth from 2017 through 2019. In 2017, Alaska experienced double-digit growth, with a year-over-year 17% increase in cruise passengers compared to 8% and 6% for the Mediterranean and Caribbean regions respectively[9]. While the pandemic brought cruise tourism in Ketchikan to a temporary standstill in 2020, with a small recovery in 2021 and rebound of cruise visitation just under a million in 2022, this year (2023) is expected to be a record year for cruise traffic, with over 1.4 million passengers (an increase of 56% from 2012 and 18% from 2019). [10] These statistics illustrate Alaska's importance to the cruise industry.

Almost all Alaska itineraries include visits to Southeast Alaska, and 90% of cruise ships to Alaska make a port call in Ketchikan.[11] During summer months, cruise tourism transforms Ketchikan into a bustling tourism hub. On certain days in peak season Ketchikan receives over 16,000 cruise passengers per day.[12] In 2010, the ratio of cruise passengers to residents was 61:1. By 2019, the ratio increased to about 88:1.[13]

Overnight visitation has been growing steadily, albeit at a much lower pace compared to cruise tourism. The number of room nights sold increased from 65,542 in 2015 to 77,211 in 2017, an increase of 19%.[14] This includes independent leisure travelers as well as business travelers and other types of visitors such as tour groups. It is important to note that overnight visitation is less seasonal than cruise visitors with 66% of room nights in 2017 sold outside the summer months.[15]

Summer season air travel has grown in recent years. In 2021 passengers increased by approximately 18% over 2019, and grew another 14% in 2022.[16]

The continuous daily influx of visitors during the summer months puts strains on local residents  and the natural environment. The high daily ratio of visitors to locals impacts  residents' quality of life and visitors' quality of experience. It contributes  to traffic and site congestion, limits access to critical resources such as groceries and other staples, and creates noise and air pollution.

The Ketchikan Situation Analysis Report (SAR) identified tourism industry strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Here are the main takeaways:

## Strengths, Weaknesses and Threats

A thorough review of the current situation reveals key strengths that position Ketchikan well to tackle a range of weaknesses and threats that can undermine long-term sustainability of the visitor economy. Here's a closer look at what these strengths are.

# Strengths

## Quality of Economy & Work

▶ Tourism is an important creator of jobs and generates visitor expenditures and government revenue–tourism accounted for 17% of Ketchikan employment and 14% of total labor income in 2016 and direct visitor industry spending of $223 million in 2017.

▶ There is overwhelming community recognition of the importance of tourism: 84% of respondents to the resident survey agreed that tourism is important to the local economy.

▶ The Southeast Coast of Alaska remains a dominant region for cruise tourism; it consistently outpaced established cruise regions in year-over-year growth from 2017 through 2019.

▶ Tourism demand remains strong. Cruise and overnight tourism trends showed sustained year-over-year growth prior to the global pandemic.

▶ Overnight visitation is less seasonal than cruise visitation with 66% of room nights in 2017 sold outside the summer months.

## Quality of Visitor Experience

▶ Ketchikan, located within the Tongass National Forest, offers a unique setting for visitors, with natural attractions, wildlife viewing, and outdoor recreation available within and around nearby protected areas. Ketchikan is also the home of Alaska Native communities that are integral to Ketchikan's tourism experience.

▶ Ketchikan has high visitor satisfaction across all categories of tourist attractions––77% of attractions assessed received a 4.5 to 5.0 out of a 5.0 star rating and key findings from content analysis of 2,862 online travel reviews for 18 popular attractions indicate positive sentiment above 93% for 8 out of 9 assessment categories such as guide knowledge, scenery, interpretation, shopping and wildlife.

▶ Lodging properties receive positive reviews–the average online rating for all accommodation options analyzed is 4.5 out of a 5.0 star rating system.

▶ Downtown Ketchikan scores high in walkability: 72 out of 100 people rated Ketchikan "very walkable" between attractions, shops, restaurants and bars.

## Quality of Life & Natural Environment

▶ Ketchikan's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program, created by private and public sector organizations, promotes actions such as guide standards, environmental conservation, wildlife protection, reducing emissions, and protecting recreational assets.

▶ Alaska enforces high environmental standards for cruise ships, especially air and wastewater emissions standards, in addition to international regulations.

# Weaknesses and Threats

## Enabling Environment for Tourism

▶ Lack of a coordinating organization for tourism that aligns efforts across all local jurisdictions.

▶ Lack of participatory planning and community engagement in tourism: 88% of respondents to the resident survey indicated that Ketchikan needs planned and controlled tourism development; 69% feel that residents do not have sufficient input and influence over tourism development; 64% feel unheard in their concerns.

▶ Lack of a basic, holistic system of data collection for tourism, resulting in inadequate data to inform decision-making for tourism development and management.

▶ Absence of periodic tourism industry updates and performance indicators shared with the wider community to inform and educate.

▶ Tourism marketing and communication efforts focused on destination promotion and visitor engagement but no communication and engagement directed at residents and tourism stakeholders.

## Quality of Economy & Work

▶ High dependency on the tourism industry, in particular cruise tourism, puts the community at high risk for future lapses in tourism demand.

▶ Ketchikan is a highly seasonal destination, impacting opportunities for full-time employment.

▶ Short cruise port call times limit visitor spending and enjoying multiple activities in the community.

▶ Limited airlift capacity into Ketchikan, particularly during the winter months, restricts overnight visitor arrivals.

▶ Persistent workforce shortages, which are a long-term threat to Ketchikan's tourism industry; this trend is exacerbated by the cost of living in Ketchikan and other Alaskan cities, which is 24%-27% greater than the national average, as well as rising rental and housing costs.

▶ A housing crisis in Ketchikan impacts the seasonal and year-round workforce. Challenges include the need for management of short term rentals (STRs) and the ability to secure land and materials to expedite the construction of affordable housing developments.

▶ Alaska trails 23 out of 50 states in workforce development.

▶ The business environment is difficult at the state level; according to CNBC's Top States for Business in 2021, Alaska has the least competitive business environment in the United States.

## Quality of Visitor Experience

▶ Content analysis of online visitor reviews indicates that there are perceived issues with value and price. This category had low positive sentiment (67.3%).

▶ Lack of strategic marketing effort targeting independent travelers, especially within niches of adventure tourism and outdoor recreation.

▶ Visitor management activities are focused on individual attractions and arrival points, with no holistic strategy that could minimize and disperse visitor impacts.

▶ Limited capacity-building opportunities and visitor education and management incentives for tour operators and tour guides and managers of attractions.

▶ No current comprehensive emergency management and response plan that considers residents and visitors (~2009 most recent plan).

▶ The destination produced a set of operational best practices for tourism, but a formal implementation plan has not been published and no enrollment or incentive program has been developed.

▶ The Ketchikan transportation plan flagged a service gap in airport accessibility.

*There are way too many cruise ship passengers for our town to deal with. The services are overcome, the streets are insane to drive on, and the downtown area is so crowded that locals cannot enjoy any of the events and services going on in the downtown area. At the end of the season, literally before the last cruise ship is away from the dock, the shops on the Main Streets start packing up. They leave the town looking like a ghost town with all their boarded up windows.*

*-Resident Survey Respondent*

## Quality of Life

▶ The KGB hasn't updated its transit plan for 20 years.

▶ Signage and wayfinding, especially in the downtown area, contribute to congestion, safety concerns and vehicle and pedestrian conflicts.

▶ The number of daily cruise passengers disembarking can be almost twice the number of residents, negatively impacting residents' quality of life––54% of respondents to the resident survey stated that the number of people visiting has a negative impact on the quality of life; 90% feel that tourism contributes to traffic problems and 62% feel that recreational opportunities available to residents are affected by the number of visitors; 97% percent of respondents to the resident survey want fewer cruise passengers.

## Quality of Natural Environment

▶ Limited standards exist that govern the emission and quality standards of commercial vehicles used for tour operations and cruise transit.

▶ Many of Ketchikan's beaches face water quality issues. In 2019, 11 out of 13 tested sites did not meet the Alaska water quality standards.

▶ Noise impacts from cruise ships, float planes, land vehicles, and other vessels that can affect the safety of marine mammals and the community.

▶ The changing climate exposes Ketchikan to unforeseen risks. Climate impacts, wildfires, and irreversible glacier melt will threaten plants, animals, landscapes, cultures and the visitor economy.

*Tourism was out of control before Covid hit. The impacts are everywhere: empty shelves at the stores, heavy traffic from 9am until late afternoon, heavy buses that tear up our roads and pollute our air, the constant buzz of floatplanes, which often start taking off before 7am., not to mention the bellowing of the cruise ships's horns early on foggy mornings. Our wildlife is being driven away–I have not seen a whale since cruises resumed, where they were all over the narrows in the summer without ships.... Charter fishermen are stealing food from our tables. Airbnb's are pricing us out of rentals and pricing potential first-time homebuyers (like my family) out of the market. Our "real" history is being sanitized, dumbed down, and commercialized, to the point that it's become seriously revisionist....*

*—Resident Survey Respondent*
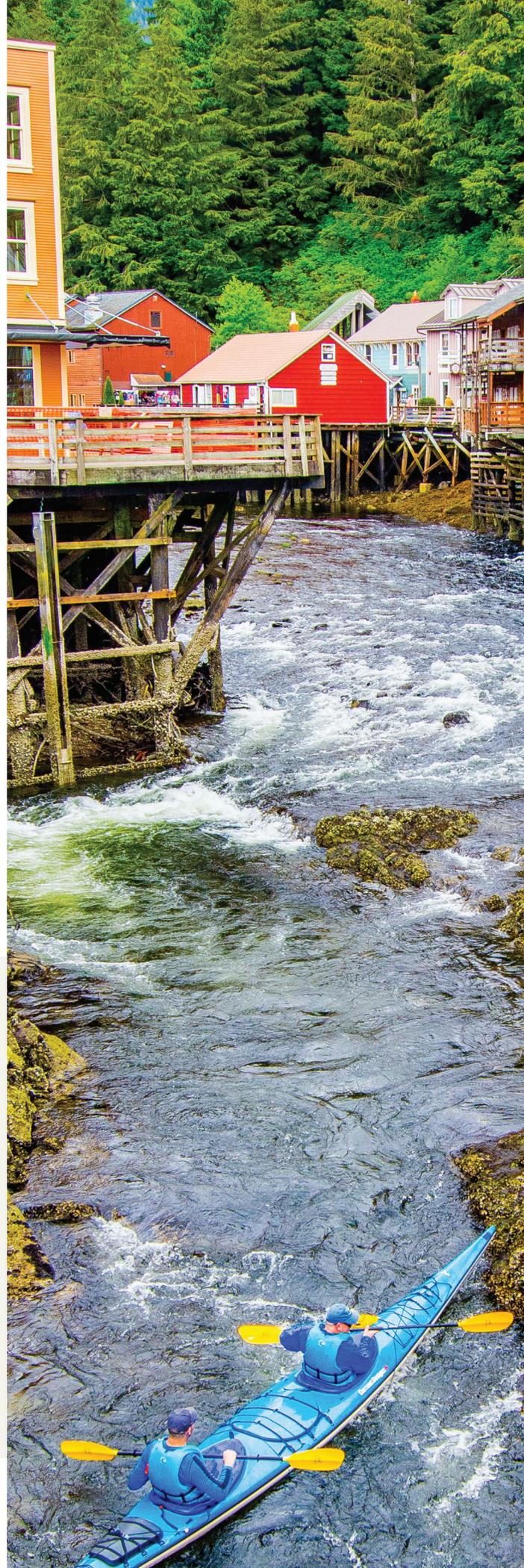
## Opportunities - A Way Forward

Together, the SAR and the findings from the resident survey, analysis of online travel reviews and stakeholder consultations serve as the foundation of the KTS. The SAR serves as a comprehensive baseline assessment to date of tourism in Ketchikan. It serves as a valuable reference document for research and to inform decision-making. To access the SAR, visit Ketchikan Tourism Strategy.

To move forward, Ketchikan needs community-centered development and coordinated management of tourism across all jurisdictions that builds on industry strengths, addresses weaknesses, and seizes opportunities. Respondents of the resident survey put the highest priority on increasing air travelers and small cruise ship passengers. Growth of large cruise ship tourism has minimal community support. Maintaining at the current level or reducing the number of cruise passengers and attracting more independent, year-round tourists to replace them are key elements of residents' vision for tourism in Ketchikan. Residents identify eco-, cultural, scientific & educational tourism as the most important types of tourism to develop.

Ketchikan can reduce or eliminate the main concerns covered in the KTS by coordinating the management of tourism across all local jurisdictions with the goal of balancing the needs and aspirations of key stakeholder groups, including residents.

Ketchikan, one community working together, is unstoppable.

# 3. STRATEGY

## *Where do we want to go from here?*

This section of the strategy presents the five-year strategic framework for tourism in Ketchikan. It outlines the vision, expected outcomes, values, guiding principles, goals, strategic initiatives, and metrics that will be used to measure expected outcomes.
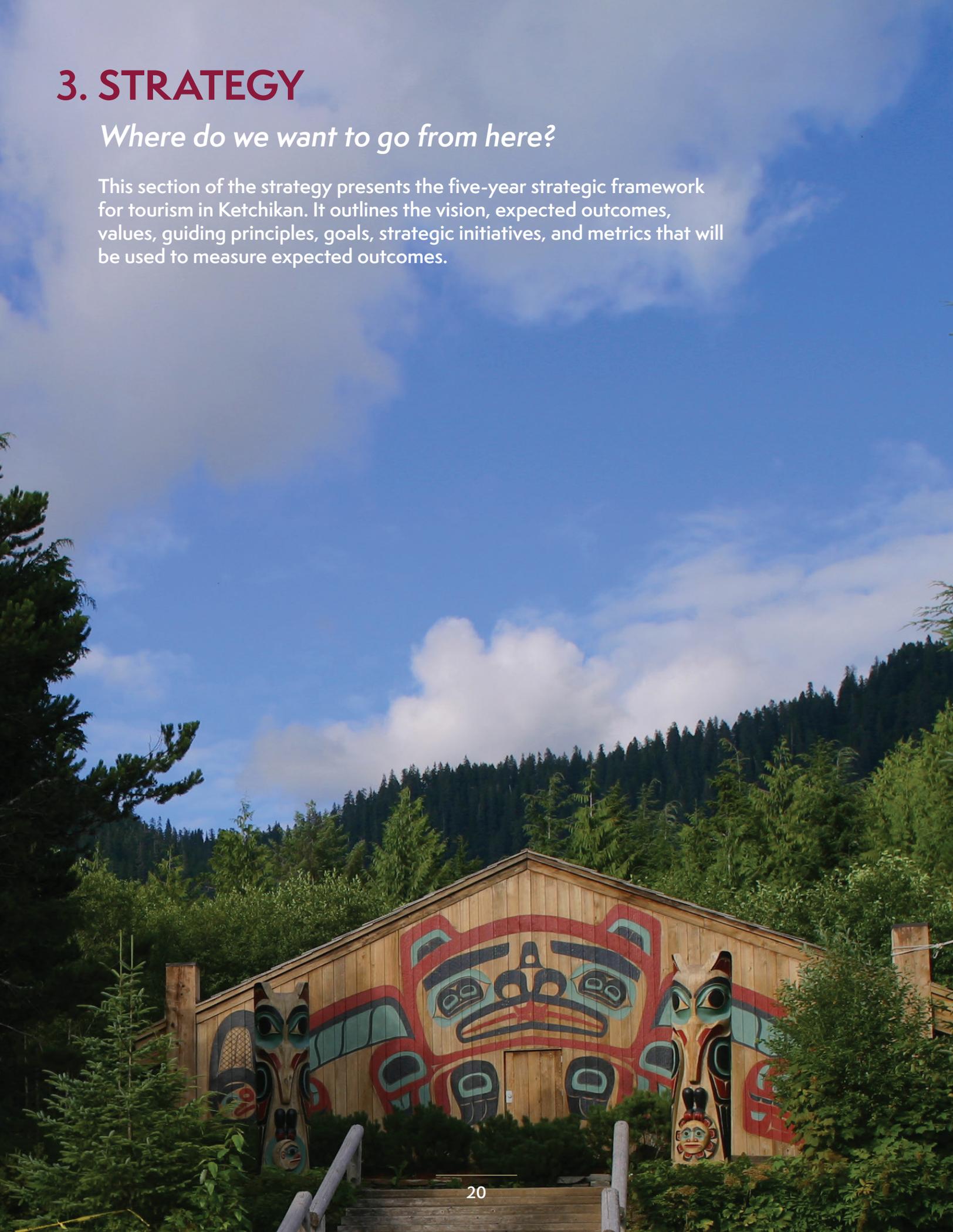
The KTS begins with the community's vision for the future determined by the stakeholders' core values and guiding principles. These in turn determine the KTS' goals, strategies, and expected outcomes.

# VISION

*Ketchikan is a vibrant tourism destination balancing residents' quality of life and the visitor economy by coordinating and collaborating across all local jurisdictions to prioritize diversity of visitor experiences and support protection of Ketchikan's unique cultural and natural resources.*

This tourism strategy responds to the most significant tourism-related challenges with holistic stewardship goals and priority initiatives. The changes we expect to see over five years are organized around five main pillars.

| PILLAR 1 Quality of Life | PILLAR 2 Quality of our Natural Environment | PILLAR 3 Quality of the Economy and Work | PILLAR 4 Quality of the Visitor Experience | PILLAR 5 Foundations for Success |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Visitor pressure on local community resources—road infrastructure, piers, amenities, outdoor recreation and housing – is reduced and ongoing communication and engagement of all communities is sustained. | Environmental impacts are mitigated through coordinated monitoring and management of tourism across all local jurisdictions and widespread adoption of best management practices by tourism businesses. | Over-reliance on cruise tourism is reduced through tourism product and visitor market diversification. Wider distribution of economic benefits occurs across all socio-economic and geographic areas. The tourism business workforce is more dependably stable. | Community and visitor best practices result in respect and appreciation of Ketchikan's unique character. Education campaigns encourage residents to lead by example and prompt visitors to be more responsible and respectful. Improvements to infrastructure and wayfinding increase visitor safety and accessibility. | A permanent tourism governance structure facilitates collaboration among all stakeholders including residents. Collaborative management of tourism across all local jurisdictions is transparent, accountable, proactive, and responsive. |

## Values and Guiding Principles

Core values and guiding principles are a set of agreed-upon practices integral to the KTS and its implementation. These values and principles are shaped by all key stakeholder groups in Ketchikan and are reflected throughout the strategy document.

| Core Values | Guiding Principles |
|---|---|
| *Respect and Protection of Local Community*<br><br>The key to the longevity of our tourism industry is to balance visitor impacts (positive and negative) and resident quality of life. | We support residents' quality of life by addressing issues such as overcrowding, access to recreation, mobility, housing, and community infrastructure<br><br>We foster respect for local residents of all cultures. |
| *Stewardship of the Natural Environment*<br><br>Our economic future depends on the protection of our natural environment, and we believe that environmental and economic sustainability go hand-in-hand. | We support initiatives that protect and support stewardship of the land and wildlife.<br><br>We support the regeneration of the natural environment as essential in maintaining a resilient visitor economy. |
| *Education of Residents and Visitors*<br><br>Education on our values, challenges, and goals offers visitors a deeper understanding of our community while empowering residents to shape and influence visitor interactions. | We effectively communicate our high community standards and expectations in order to influence visitor and resident behavior and impacts.<br><br>We encourage communications that are culturally accurate and representative of our unique sense of community and place. |
| *Shared Responsibility and Collaboration*<br><br>Our governance is guided by principles of inclusion of all communities and shared management of tourism across all local jurisdictions to enhance the long-term prosperity of tourism and other industries, benefitting the local community and its visitors. | We collaborate with all stakeholders and local community members to build understanding and a livable future for all of us.<br><br>We provide consistent and ongoing opportunities for residents and stakeholders to have their voices heard in the governance and management process. |

## Focus Areas & Stewardship Goals

**GOAL 1 | VISITOR MANAGEMENT**
Manage visitor flows and operator impacts during tourism peak season

**GOAL 2 | YEAR ROUND VISITATION**
Position Ketchikan as a year-round destination

**GOAL 3 | COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT**
Strengthen community engagement and communications around tourism

**GOAL 4 | WORKFORCE SHORTAGES**
Increase tourism workforce stability

**GOAL 5 | TRANSPORTATION & TRAFFIC CONGESTION**
Improve mobility and reduce tourism related traffic congestion

**GOAL 6 | WORKFORCE HOUSING**
Support seasonal and year-round solutions for workforce housing

**GOAL 7 | MONITORING AND REPORTING**
Monitor holistic impacts of tourism

**GOAL 8 | GOVERNANCE**
Establish and implement collaborative tourism governance

## Strategies

| STEWARDSHIP GOALS | STRATEGIES |
|---|---|
| **Goal 1: Manage visitor flows and operator impacts during tourism peak season** | 1.1 Strategic dispersal of cruise ship visitors<br>1.2 Integrate visitor dispersal strategies into destination promotion and marketing efforts<br>1.3 Increase enrollment of tourism operators in the Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program<br>1.4 Support full roll-out and strengthening of the TBMP<br>1.5 Develop a visitor management strategy |
| **Goal 2: Position Ketchikan as a year-round destination** | 2.1 Diversify the tourism product<br>2.2 Create a vibrant year-round downtown experience for locals and visitors<br>2.3 Lead a destination rebranding effort that supports the new year-round destination positioning and marketing strategy<br>2.4 Assess accommodation capacity for visitors |
| **Goal 3: Strengthen community engagement and tourism communications** | 3.1 Generate awareness of the new KTS<br>3.2 Build and maintain community engagement around tourism<br>3.3 Develop an educational strategy to influence responsible behavior in the community and on public lands |
| **Goal 4: Increase tourism workforce stability** | 4.1 Build robust tourism workforce pipeline<br>4.2 Improve recruitment and retention of workers |
| **Goal 5: Improve mobility and reduce tourism related traffic congestion** | 5.1 Support development of KGB transit plan<br>5.2 Develop a "Rules of the Road" educational campaign<br>5.3 Improve pedestrian, single occupancy vehicle, and tour operator mobility<br>5.4 Increase transit options and hop-on-hop-off shuttle stops/access |
| **Goal 6: Support seasonal and year-round solutions for workforce housing** | 6.1 Foster public-private partnerships for workforce housing<br>6.2 Identify and incentivize creative options for seasonal and long-term housing<br>6.3 Create community education campaign to support housing development |
| **Goal 7: Monitor holistic impacts of tourism** | 7.1 Establish a holistic and regularly updated destination data bank<br>7.2 Publish an annual indicator report |
| **Goal 8: Establish and implement collaborative tourism governance** | 8.1 Establish an interim destination stewardship council to guide KTS implementation in the near-term<br>8.2 Establish a permanent governance structure for destination management and KTS implementation |

# 4. ACTION PLAN

## *How do we get there?*

This section of the plan outlines 25 recommended strategies across the eight goals of the KTS. The objectives, priority actions, expected outcomes, partner organizations, potential funding sources, key performance indicators and implementation timeline are identified for each strategy.

Ketchikan faces the complex challenges of being a highly seasonal tourism destination. Traditionally, Ketchikan receives the highest volume of visitors in the summer, i.e. May-September. This trend line has been shifting in recent years. Cruise ships are now arriving as early as April and closing out in October. During the busy summer months, high visitation can crowd the popular downtown area and contribute to traffic congestion, impact the accessibility of recreational areas to residents, and add pressure to transportation infrastructure. Along with the sheer volume of visitors, other factors that impact visitor flows include the limited hours in port and dependence on public transportation.

Visitor management strategies such as visitor education, dispersal of visitors, diversification of priority markets and encouraging tourism product development are needed to help manage visitor flows and minimize the impact of tourism on the daily life of residents. Visitor management refers to all management tools and interventions that regulate and/or influence the movement and behavior of visitors in a destination.

As the number of visitors to Ketchikan continues to rise, all tourism providers operating throughout the destination need to be aware of their environmental and cultural footprint and take the necessary steps to reduce their overall impacts. Ketchikan's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program, created by private and public sector organizations, promotes actions such as customer service, environmental conservation, wildlife protection, reducing emissions, and protecting recreational assets. Ketchikan's TBMP program draws on the successful model implemented in Juneau which focused its practices on the issues and complaints raised by community members. The Ketchikan TBMP was established in 2019, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic and massive decrease in visitation, the program has not been formally rolled out. The KTS supports a prime opportunity to support the full roll out of the TBMP.

### Measuring Success

Key measures of success are outlined below:

▶ Reduce crowding and disperse visitors beyond hotspot areas
▶ Increase total number of operators actively participating in the TBMP
▶ Enhance resident sentiment toward tourism

**STRATEGY 1.1 | Strategic dispersal of cruise ship visitors**

High levels of visitation during concentrated periods of time puts a strain on infrastructure. When cruise ships arrive in port, visitors who do not book tours in advance move into the downtown area and may remain there due to a combination of factors including lack of adequate transportation, an unawareness of the full scope of tourism offerings, or a short amount of time in port. This initiative considers ways that cruise visitors may effectively visit other areas of Ketchikan during their time in port outside of the core downtown.

The existing Our Town publication and the KVB website offer insight into the current activities and history of Ketchikan. The proposed map in this initiative helps to distill the information currently available and helps visitors move more efficiently throughout the destination to maximize their participation in these different experiences. One of the powerful expected outcomes of this initiative is also the wider distribution of the economic benefits of tourism.

| STRATEGY 1.1: Strategic dispersal of cruise ship visitors outside the downtown area |
|---|
| **Implementation Timeline:  Years 1-3** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Develop a visitor management system where a variety of opportunities can encourage visitors to explore outside the downtown area<br>▶ Provide adequate infrastructure to support tourism activities<br>▶ Monitor visitor flows to inform strategies to remedy bottlenecks of visitor congestion |
| **Priority Actions:**<br>1.1.1 Create an inventory of current experiences for visitors outside of the downtown area to be an easy reference for cruise visitors, tour operators, and independent travelers. Complement with a map that highlights key themed itineraries. An action team can be established as part of the destination stewardship council to develop the inventory and map.<br>▶ Develop themed itineraries to help visitors decide where to go based on interest areas that help highlight the main attraction pillars in Ketchikan (cultural, natural, marine, foodie, etc.) with attractions across Ketchikan. Components of the map should include:<br>  ▶ Potential itineraries to align with visitor needs. Consider content to guide visitors with  a specific amount of time or are visiting on a specific day to explore Ketchikan. Supports cruise visitors to see Ketchikan highlights during their short visit and the overnight visitors in a deeper dive into their interest area or participate in longer experiences. This may include "a day in Ketchikan" itinerary and note the amount of time that each attraction is anticipated to take to visit.<br>  ▶  If the attraction/experience offers guided visits (such as the Saxman Native Village, Alaska Rainforest Sanctuary, etc.) or can be experienced without a guide.<br>  ▶ The typical dates for activities, noting seasonality.<br>  ▶ The general cost of the activity (can use dollar signs to represent price).<br>  ▶ Color coding of themes.<br>  ▶ Activities including (but not limited to): walking, kayaking, boat tours, lesser-known hiking trails, off-season experiences.<br>  ▶ Public transportation information.<br>  ▶ Small businesses including tour guides.<br>▶ Create an inventory of current experiences for visitors specifically outside the downtown area.<br>▶ Develop a reference that integrates themed itineraries and attractions and sites to visit related to themed itineraries outside the downtown area.<br>▶ Market themed itineraries and inventory of experiences in destination marketing efforts (see initiative 1.3). |

## STRATEGY 1.1: Continued

1.1.2 Implement a hop-on-hop-off tourist bus system (See Initiative 5.4) so that visitors can access different areas in Ketchikan that aren't easily reachable on foot. This allows cruise visitors to reach varying experiences in their short time in port.

▶ The route of the hop-on-hop-off bus could support the area hubs on the Ketchikan map developed in initiative 1.1.1, stopping at one or multiple attractions under each hub.

1.1.3 Create new locations of existing experiences (such as the salmon ladder) so that visitors can still take part in quintessential Ketchikan activities without high visitor density at one location. Consider impacts on neighborhoods and respecting local accessibility in this process.

### Partner Organizations:

KGB, City of Ketchikan, Ketchikan Visitor Bureau (KVB), Local Tour Operators, Ward Cove, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, Village of Saxman, cultural and environmental NGOs, Cruise Line Industry Association Alaska (CLIA), Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA), Historic Ketchikan, Ketchikan Indian Community, Alaska Native organizations, logging industry, Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association (SSRAA)

### Desired Outcomes:

▶ A downtown area less saturated with visitors
▶ Fewer traffic issues and no extra congestion derived from these initiatives
▶ Expand the economic impact of tourism throughout Ketchikan
▶ Increase involvement from Alaska Native operators

### Key Success Metrics:

▶ Reduce downtown congestion
▶ Improve resident sentiment towards tourism

### Potential Resources and References:

▶ Historic Ketchikan's Waterfront Conceptual Master Plan
▶ KVB Visitor Guides/Website
▶ *Our Town* publication

### Potential Financial Sources:

▶ CPV Tax
▶ Private Sector
▶ US Economic Development Administration
▶ Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities - grants
▶ Federal transportation grants

**STRATEGY 1.2 |** Integrate visitor dispersal strategies into destination promotion and marketing efforts

As outlined above, strategic dispersal of visitors can support the community on many levels while also enhancing the overall visitor experience. Visitor education and communications is needed to successfully support dispersal of visitors. This initiative proposes utilizing ongoing communications and marketing efforts to influence movement of visitors by connecting them to transportation options and tourism experiences, attractions and sites that may be lesser known.

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**STRATEGY 1.2:  Integrate visitor dispersal strategies into destination promotion and marketing efforts**

**Implementation Timeline:  Years 2-3**

**Objectives:**
▶ Promote tourism attractions and experiences outside of downtown Ketchikan to cruise visitors
▶ Promote transportation options to expedite movement of visitors beyond the downtown core

**Priority Actions:**

1.2.1 Devise a content development promotion strategy around the dispersion itineraries developed as part of Initiative 1.1. Key elements of the promotion strategy may include:

▶ Create a visitor information guide or map to showcase itineraries (outlined in initiative 1.1.1). This can be produced as a print and digital format and marketed to cruise passengers
   ▶ Integrate with current maps and visitor publications from the KVB and Historic Ketchikan
▶ Building detailed itineraries into trip-planning information on the Visit Ketchikan website
▶ Developing the itinerary materials into social media which can include some of the top attractions, interviews with business owners and local experts, a "how to" guide for accessing public transportation
▶ Using the itineraries for PR and media outreach to promote "unexpected ways to experience Ketchikan"
▶ Working with Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce to promote the visitor guide to frontline workers
▶ Hosting familiarization tours with cruise industry excursion representatives to build awareness of new themed itineraries and experiences
▶ Provide more information to build excitement and comfort around how to venture beyond the downtown area to cruise visitors shoreside:
   ▶ Distribute themed itinerary maps at visitor centers and information kiosks.
   ▶ Utilize a local ambassadors program to help guide visitors coming off of cruise ships to different attractions and given local insights about Ketchikan for a more personalized experience.
   ▶ Ads on cruise ships about experiences outside the main downtown area. Can provide a list of activities with increments indicating the time to travel on foot or via transport to experience.
   ▶ Ensure some new experiences account for inclement weather.

## STRATEGY 1.2: Continued

**Lead Partner Organizations:**

KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, tour guides and operators, Cape Fox Tours

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶   Development of visitor information to promote activities and attractions outside of the downtown core

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶   Number of visitor guides distributed

▶   Increased visitation to attractions outside of downtown Ketchikan, especially among cruise visitors

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶   Existing KVB marketing budget to support product development and creation of marketing collateral including digital and print content

## STRATEGY 1.3 | Increase enrollment of tourism operators in the TBMP

The TBMP program's guidelines include everything from providing positive guest experiences and reducing the strain on local roads to environmental actions including waste and recycling management, wildlife protocols, emissions standards, impact on coastal zones. The guidelines rely on adherence to local ordinances and implementation of the good practices though there are no verification or enforcement measures in place. Greater uptake in this program can help to improve the overall quality of the visitor experience and minimize the unnecessary impacts on resident quality of life.

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### STRATEGY 1.3: Increase enrollment of tourism operators in the TBMP

**Implementation Timeline:** Years 1-3

**Objectives:**
- Increase community awareness of the TMBP
- Drive business participation in the TBMP
- Improve the overall quality of the visitor experience by increased adoption of the TBMP

**Priority Actions:**

1.3.1 Devise a marketing and communications plan that operates in tandem with the implementation plan for the TBMP. Promotional efforts should include the following tactics:
- Educational webinars for potential business participants
- Online training series
- Communication materials that include an email newsletter to Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce members and TBMP database, social media, paid advertising in relevant community and industry outlets. Updates via these communication channels will help to keep the community, businesses, and stakeholders informed of the TBMP roll out process and annual performance of all participating operators

1.3.2 Gather business testimonials from existing participants to communicate the value of the TBMP to incorporate into the outreach campaign to incorporate into communication materials.

1.3.3 Create a visitor-facing TBMP campaign to raise awareness about sustainability best practices within the destination
- Develop messaging and tagline around the impacts and practices of the TBMP
- Create a marketing campaign to promote the messaging. Tactics can include:
  - A branded logo or icon sticker or window decal for businesses to display
  - Social media toolkit with branded content to disseminate messaging
  - Talking points for businesses
  - Flier or postcards with messaging

1.3.4 Build awareness of TBMP within the community and communicate the important role residents play in the success of the program; an action team can be established as part of the destination stewardship council to lead this work

## STRATEGY 1.3: Continued

1.3.5 Create communication materials, such as a TBMP newsletter, to keep the community, businesses, and stakeholders informed of the TBMP roll out process and annual performance of all participating operators

1.3.6 Encourage operator participation in TBMP through direct incentives
- ▶ Define incentive requirements such as training or evidence of implementation of TBMP operations
- ▶ Completion of defined requirements could result in direct incentives such as:
  - ▶ Inclusion on the walking map or visitor guide
  - ▶ Access to limited permits for excursions to local assets

**Partner Organizations:**

KGB, KVB, Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, the Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA), City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman

**Desired Outcomes:**
- ▶ Increased number of businesses signed on to the program and staff trained
- ▶ Improvement in the quality of visitor experience
- ▶ Increasing numbers of operators are enrolled in the TBMP program correlates with increased visitor satisfaction and decreased calls to the TBMP hotline

**Key Success Metrics:**
- ▶ 10% increase of operators enrolled in the TBMP program
- ▶ Reduction in complaints received on the visitor hotline and general conduct violations

**Potential Resources and References:**
- ▶ Existing website and marketing tools via the KVB and Chamber

**Potential Funding Sources:**
- ▶ Continued funding through the KGB community grant programs, existing allocation of funding for marketing including website and other marketing efforts
- ▶ Additional funding can be sourced from CPV fees

## STRATEGY 1.4 | Support full roll-out and strengthening of the TBMP

Ketchikan's Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) was developed in 2019 but was never fully implemented. Ketchikan's TBMP program does not include any supporting training modules to help operators understand best practice implementation, nor does it direct operators to the available educational and training programs offered throughout the state and island. Another consideration might be developing a local ordinance for best practices that would be more appropriate in regulation. Finally, the TBMP could certainly go further with more advanced sustainable tourism best practices such as: visitor behavior guidelines, cultural heritage interpretation, and responsible visitation messaging. As tourism rebounds, it is important to utilize the value resource to build capacity of local operators, improve the overall visitor experience, and be responsive to resident concerns.

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### STRATEGY 1.4: Support full roll-out and strengthening of the TBMP

**Implementation Timeline:** Years 2-5

**Objectives:**
▶ To increase participation in TBMP ultimately enhancing the overall quality of the visitor experience and minimizing impacts on resident quality of life and quality of the natural environment

**Priority Actions:**

1.4.1 Develop and promote a suite of educational resources that build capacity as an incentive to participate in the program. Resources could include (but are not limited to):
▶ Existing tour operator training materials
▶ Educational webinars enrolled participants
▶ Formal tour operator training and certificate program

1.4.2 Leverage the existing tour operator training and education programs that are available from KVB and other local resources
▶ Increase distribution of Ketchikan 101 for residents and businesses
▶ Audit KVB's current Resource Guide for Operators/Guides and identify new additions:
  ▶ Alaska Host, Visitor Industry Certificate, and other training opportunities
  ▶ "Rules of the Road" information (Strategy 5.2)
  ▶ Local ordinances
  ▶ Tour scripts

1.4.3 Develop online learning modules to support operator/guide education and training. Subjects could include (but are not limited to):
▶ Visitor Communications
  ▶ Ketchikan History and Heritage Script
  ▶ Responsible Visitation and Behaviors
▶ Operator Best Practices
  ▶ Understanding Local Ordinances
  ▶ Rules of the Road (Strategy 5.2)

1.4.4 Formalize a Tour Operator Training Program that could be voluntary or compliance-oriented
▶ Establish a distribution strategy to widely share the resource guide with operators/guides
▶ Expand existing Train the Trainer program to ensure more operators participate
▶ Define expectations for operators' participation and provide certificate for completion

## STRATEGY 1.4: Continued

1.4.5 Determine if a compliance (licensing) program to enforce compliance of operator/guide expectations is necessary

▶ Potential TBMP compliance procedures might include:
  ▶ Annual application submission of best practice evidence
  ▶ Completion of defined set of training requirements including driver training
  ▶ Conduct annual review of hotline call-ins and complaints and provide action plan for improvement before renewal as needed

1.4.6 Determine if current and new TBMPs should be regulated by local ordinance

▶ Utilize the Attraction and Impact Inventory framed in  to determine if there are specific sites under undue pressure that need to be better regulated
▶ Identify beaches, trails, and other areas that may need to be considered commercial vs noncommercial and/or restricted on certain hours and/or days

### Partner Organizations:

KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, tour operators, Cape Fox Tours, KGB, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman

### Desired Outcomes:

▶ The TBMP has gained financial support for a full roll out and activation of the program
▶ Increased number of businesses signed on to the program and staff trained
▶ Improvement in the quality of visitor experience
▶ Increasing numbers of operators are enrolled in the TBMP program correlates with increased visitor satisfaction and decreased calls to the TBMP hotline
▶ Local operators are enthusiastic about learning opportunities which improve their operational footprint and visitor satisfaction

### Key Success Metrics:

▶ TBMP operational plan implemented
▶ Allocated budget line item for TBMP operational plan
▶ 10% increase of operators enrolled in the TBMP program on an annual basis
▶ Reduction in complaints received on the visitor hotline and general conduct violations
▶ New resource guide updated and published

### Potential Resources and References:

▶ Existing KVB website and marketing tools

### Potential Funding Sources:

▶ CPV Tax
▶ Continued funding through the KGB community grant programs, existing allocation of funding for marketing including website and other marketing efforts (via the KVB)
▶ Additional funding can be sourced from Passenger Fees

## STRATEGY 1.5 | Develop a visitor management strategy

One of the first steps involved in visitor management is conducting a rapid assessment of the current conditions associated with visitor flows, mobility and impacts at key locations, attractions and sites. The assessment looks at visitor preferences and mobility trend lines and identifies an inventory of key locations, attractions and sites. This assessment is followed by a community participatory planning process through which thresholds of acceptable change for the key locations, attractions and sites are defined. The technical term for this participatory planning process is Limits of Acceptable Change. The following frames the initial steps Ketchikan can take to advance this process.

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### STRATEGY 1.5: Develop a visitor management strategy

**Implementation Timeline:  Years 1-4**

**Objectives:**
▶ To take the first step in objectively identifying the specific attractions and assets that may be threatened by overuse
▶ Define limits of acceptable change

**Priority Actions:**

1.5.1 Convene a visitor use management action team as part of the destination stewardship council

▶ Conduct stakeholder mapping and identify a diverse group of community stakeholders to participate on the action team
▶ Establish terms of reference for action team contributions including anticipated timeline for activities and actions for the initial/baseline scope of work
▶ Coordinate an initial meeting to complete the attraction and use inventory, establish a capacity indicator framework, and define management strategies

1.5.2  Develop official inventory of priority tourism attractions and sites and assess impacts occurring

▶ Identify key tourism attractions and assets (natural, cultural, man-made physical) within the community and create an inventory database
▶ Identify the top 5-7 attractions and sites within the destination which the action team feel are currently, or on the verge of, needing management actions to address the increasing pain points
  ▶ These assets would be determined through discussions with the action team, based on the visitor sentiment research, and/or through other observational methods
▶ Define key characteristics of the use/capacity impacts that are occurring. These include:
  ▶ Location of use
  ▶ Amount of use
  ▶ Time of use
  ▶ Type of use
  ▶ Visitor behaviors
  ▶ Impacts occurring (crowding, ecological damage, safety, etc.)

## STRATEGY 1.5: Continued

**1.5.3 Conduct a Limits of Acceptable Change study that expands the utility of the Attraction and Impact Inventory**

- ▶ Complete a Visitor Flow Study
  - ▶ Document where visitors are going after disembarking cruise ships or arriving at the airport
  - ▶ Determine the areas that visitors frequent and implement visitor management tactics to balance visitors
- ▶ Establish a Capacity Indicator Framework to effectively monitor use and impacts at priority attractions and sensitive sites and the correlation of increasing visitation to specific sustainability outcomes
  - ▶ Define the desired conditions and thresholds for use at each asset
  - ▶ Identify capacity correlation indicators as needed (e.g. visitor to resident ratio; percent of use of local attractions)
  - ▶ Establish protocols and success metrics for ongoing monitoring
- ▶ Working with all applicable stakeholders, define Visitor Use and Capacity Management Strategies that are enacted if and when indicators exceed thresholds to ensure the key assets maintain their desired conditions
  - ▶ Example management strategies could include:
    - ▶ Communications to shift behavior
    - ▶ Permitting to limit number of users
    - ▶ Develop sites to handle more capacity
  - ▶ Establish protocols for how to activate management strategies (e.g., who, what, when, how)
- ▶ Use findings from the Limits of Acceptable Change Study to manage overnight visitor expectations of what to expect during busy cruise days and to educate them on actions to take to best enjoy their visit while cruise ships are in port (such as avoiding specific places at certain times)

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**Partner Organizations:**

- ▶ KGB, City of Ketchikan, KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, United States Forest Service (USFS), Alaska Native organizations, nonprofits

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**Desired Outcomes:**

- ▶ With the completion of an asset and impact inventory and/or a more comprehensive Limits of Acceptable Change Study, local stakeholders can objectively make decisions to best manage local tourism assets and attractions

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**Key Success Metrics:**

- ▶ Initial meeting held
- ▶ Assets and impacts identified and cataloged
- ▶ Limits of Acceptable Change Study commissioned

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**Potential Funding Sources:**

- ▶ CPV Tax

During the off-season months (i.e. October-April) Ketchikan receives few visitors. Cruise ship visitors account for 95% of annual visitors to Ketchikan, a majority of which visit Ketchikan between May and September. Many businesses are only in operation during the summer months which can limit the opportunities for visitors during the off-season. The rainy weather in the fall, spring, and winter can make experiences provided in the summer unavailable or less enjoyable, so unique off-season experiences are needed to draw in visitors with a distinct value proposition.

In the Ketchikan resident sentiment survey distributed in summer 2022, respondents felt that priority should be put on growing air travelers (83% moderate or high priority) and small cruise ships (82% moderate or high priority) while the growth of large cruise ship tourism (50% low priority) was considered low priority. To grow these other markets, Ketchikan needs to be positioned as a year-round destination.

The annual occupancy rates between 2008 and 2017 showed a peak in 2012 and a decline since 2015. The average annual occupancy rate during those years was around 55%, which is lower than optimal, but there are no monthly breakdowns to show occupancy during the tourist season versus the off-season. These statistics do not explain the challenge that tourism stakeholders articulated during the KTS development process. Tourism leaders state that demand for accommodations in the summer months now exceeds supply. In other words, the maximum accommodation capacity, i.e. total number of available rooms island wide, is not meeting the growing demand for accommodations in summer months. They felt that this accommodation capacity deficit is affecting overnight visitor numbers. To successfully position Ketchikan as a year-round destination, visitor accommodation capacity needs should be evaluated and the occupancy rate needs to be consistently monitored and recorded monthly. The opportunity to build up accommodation capacity to meet current and future demand should also be considered.

The crowding at key tourism attractions during the peak season can negatively affect the overall experience of overnight visitors. Visitor management strategies such as visitor education, communications and dispersal of visitors, can help to influence the movement and expectations of overnight visitors during summer months.

During the off-season, airlift capacity decreases in response to the drop in demand. Air arrivals to Ketchikan are mostly from the western U.S. (73%), followed by the South (12%) and the Midwest (8%). Considering untapped markets that can still reach Ketchikan relatively easily (1 layover, 8-hour trip) in conjunction with expanded lodging capacity and the promotion of Ketchikan for events and meetings could expand off-season visitation. Additionally, 67% of air arrivals in 2017 had visited Alaska before. As the "Gateway to Alaska", Ketchikan has unique marketing power to encourage visitors to take their first trip to Alaska to Ketchikan as an overnight visitor to explore what the state has to offer. Coordination with Alaska Airlines and an airlift capacity working group could be considered to increase airlift capacity to Ketchikan during the off-season.

Off-season events, experiences, and tour packages in Ketchikan could include opportunities that cannot be experienced during the summer months. Ketchikan already has a thriving art scene during the off-season, but many of the festivals and events are one day long and over the weekend. To encourage visitors to take part in these special experiences, additional activity opportunities should be created such as Ketchikan master classes and some current experiences can be expanded such as the art walks.

There are opportunities to improve visitor flows and the diversification of tourism offerings in Ketchikan to support a thriving year-round tourism economy. Increased overnight visitor accommodation options during the peak season, showcasing a variety of rich experiences in off-season months can help to attract more overnight visitors.

As emphasized throughout the KTS process by community leaders, as coordinated Ketchikan tourism management advances and the community looks at diversifying this industry to build a year-round economy, approaches should consider other scalable economic development opportunities. Opportunities could include extensions from existing traditional livelihoods such as commercial fishing, canneries and other potentially scalable industries such as timber management.

Additional considerations could be cottage industries and small-scale manufacturing to support established trades and upskilling opportunities for a broader range of Ketchikan residents.

**Measuring Success**

Key measures of success are outlined below:
- ▶ A healthy and stable occupancy rate experienced year-round
- ▶ A growing number of opportunities for activities for visitors and locals in the off-season
- ▶ Off-season business management downtown with partnership between private sector, public sector, and the arts community

## STRATEGY 2.1 | Diversify the tourism product

The off-season in Ketchikan is rich with events highlighting the thriving art community in the destination. Many single day festivals are held throughout the winter months which gather the attention and participation of locals. However, these seasonal events are not widely attended by visitors partially due to limited promotion with no other dedicated activities to incentivize off-season travel. This initiative considers creating new opportunities for visitors to experience Ketchikan in a different way than they can in the summer months in tandem with the marketing of existing and new events to encourage off-season visitation (Spring, Fall, Winter).

| STRATEGY 2.1: Diversify the tourism product |
| --- |
| **Implementation Timeline: Years 2-4** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Market existing and newly created opportunities to visit during the off-season<br>▶ Increase the number of overnight visitors |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>2.1.1 Promote the off-season as a unique time to experience Ketchikan's rich culture without crowds. Inventory existing off-season events and activities and use in marketing material including an off-season calendar. (see initiative 2.4)<br>▶ These events and activities can be categorized with the tourism product themes identified for the map in initiative 1.1.1 (cultural, natural, marine, foodie)<br><br>2.1.2 Work with local organizations to offer classes and artistic, educational and cultural activities in the off-season to help round out visitors' experience and increase length of stay. With the prominent off-season art festivals and events in Ketchikan as a starting point (they typically occur as single day events on Saturdays without activities during the week), the community could expand on existing visitor interest by offering master classes in the off-season not offered in peak season to create a unique value proposition for Ketchikan. Ketchikan master classes could include:<br>  ▶ Totem Heritage Center totem carving classes<br>  ▶ Rainforest Sanctuary wilderness classes (plant and animal identification, survival training, etc.)<br>  ▶ Bawden Street Brewing Company and/or Baleen Brewing Co tours and brewery classes<br>  ▶ Commercial/charter fishing demonstrations and short courses<br>  ▶ Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council (KAAHC) or KIC or local galleries offer art classes or Alaska Native craft courses, etc.<br>▶ According to the Ketchikan resident sentiment survey from summer 2022, eco-, cultural, and scientific & educational tourism are considered the most important types of tourism to develop so educational sessions and experiences could be created in collaboration with scientific and educational institutions such as the USDA and UAS Ketchikan<br>▶ Host artisans from other small art communities in the U.S. to share their craft, collaborate on art initiatives, and open new visitor markets<br><br>2.1.3 Engage residents to sell local products at events<br>▶ Encourage Alaska Native artists to join the Indian Arts and Crafts Board Source Directory and pursue partnerships with the Board (through the U.S. Department of the Interior)<br>▶ Expand local art walks for local businesses to gain more exposure with visitors<br><br>2.1.4 Activate a previous proposal that allows nonprofits to collect the sales tax on items like tickets on a voluntary basis to gain additional revenue to support off-season activities |

2.1.5 Engage and partner with industries not currently directly involved in tourism such as fishing and logging to create experiences that give visitors a look at Ketchikan's unique cultural and heritage connections to land and sea. Examples could include:

▶ Commercial and charter fishermen create short experiences that generate revenue - e.g., give tours and tell the stories of their boats and their operation, give fishing/casting lessons, or create other authentic "snapshot" demonstrations of the importance of the fishing culture

▶ Tasting menus from expert fishermen in collaboration with local restaurants to create a unique way for visitors to learn more about the fishing industry and local cuisine

▶ Establish opportunities for the logging industry to display their trade beyond the Great Alaska Lumberjack Show, including developing "up close"experiences such as guided tours and educational talks to tell the stories and heritage of lumberjack and logging culture

▶ Introduce saltwater sportfishing and fly fishing to new audiences, such as families and female travelers. Offer "family fly days" women-only saltwater fishing clinics and tournaments, and other innovative approaches

2.1.6 Coordinate with Alaska Airlines to explore providing additional flights to Ketchikan during the off-season and provide special prices, incentives and package deals for off-season conference, events, etc.

▶ Market these opportunities through the Alaska Airlines site and KVB media

▶ Explore subsidizing flights so there is a consistent number of flights during the off-season

▶ Establish airlift capacity working group to assess strategies to enhance airlift capacity and consider the possible structures and mechanisms for subsidizing airlift capacity in the off-season for key priority markets

2.1.7 Explore reestablishing the Inter-Island Ferry link with Prince Rupert Island to encourage a greater number of ferry travelers to Ketchikan

2.1.8 Promote alternative operations during the off-season such as conferences and events

▶ Market Ketchikan as a conference and event destination
  ▶ Market to more typical SE Alaska and the Pacific Northwest markets
  ▶ Market to new potential cities including Chicago, Boston, and Omaha where flights to Ketchikan only include 1 layover (and oftentimes flights that are under 8-12 hours) but offer an entirely different ambiance than the origin destination
  ▶ Target markets should include small to medium businesses or organizations that can be accommodated in the Ted Ferry Civic Center and/or hotel meeting spaces

▶ Offer incentives such as discounts in the off-season for locals to use lodging facilities for special events and conferences

**Partner Organizations:**

Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council (KAAHC), KVB, City of Ketchikan, KGB, Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) and Native Organizations, cultural and art NGOs, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce local businesses, Alaska Airlines, Indian Arts and Crafts Board (DOI), USDA, University of Alaska (UAS) Ketchikan

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Inspire visitation outside of summer months (more year-round visitors)
▶ Increase overnight visitors
▶ Encourage business and community involvement

**Success Metrics:**

▶ Visitor volume
▶ Visitor spending
▶ Increase in year-round employment opportunities

**Potential Resources and References:**

▶ KAAHC Wearable Arts Show and other arts events
▶ KVB Visitor Guides/Website (including calendar of events)

**Potential Financial Sources:**

▶ Transient Occupancy Tax
▶ USDA
▶ Cultural Institutes
▶ Nonprofit sales tax collection

## STRATEGY 2.2 | Create a vibrant year-round downtown experience for locals and visitors

A vibrant year-round downtown experience is important to visitors, business owners and residents. Downtown Ketchikan sees lots of visitors in the summer but many businesses are closed throughout the off-season, leaving the downtown looking desolate. There are complaints that only certain areas of Downtown see a majority of the cruise visitors while businesses only a few blocks away do not have the same foot traffic. This initiative considers how the Downtown could be managed equitably to promote year-round visitation from locals and visitors

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### STRATEGY 2.2: Create a vibrant year-round downtown experience for locals and visitors

**Implementation Timeline:  Years 2-4**

**Objectives:**

▶ Re-organize visitor flows to create a more even spread of cruise passengers in the summer and provide an experience for visitors and locals in the off-season

**Priority Actions:**

2.2.1 Establish a downtown task force to create opportunities and incentives for downtown businesses to ensure year-round appeal

▶ Members to include KGB, City of Ketchikan, downtown businesses, and arts and culture NGOs

▶ Guidelines on closing businesses seasonally to maintain the aesthetics of downtown and incentivize visitors

▶ Engage local artists with the Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council (KAAHC) to create art pieces (window art, door art, street art, etc.) to beautify closed businesses during the off-season. It is recognized that there was a similar attempt in the past but it failed because there wasn't sufficient consensus. This second attempt will need to focus on consensus building

▶ Develop incentives for local businesses to stay open beyond peak season to support more activity downtown

2.2.2 Implement visitor management tactics to ensure that visitation is balanced across downtown and there is an equitable distribution of visitors to businesses

▶ Street entertainment strategically located throughout downtown to attract visitors to additional areas

▶ Utilize local artists to create an "explore Ketchikan" ground art that can help visitors choose their adventures from these launching points

▶ Complete visitor study periodically after implementing visitor flow measures to gauge progress against the baseline (see initiative 1.5)

▶ Utilize an app or online platform to offer self-guided walking and cultural tours for visitors

▶ Create music busking shelters to attract visitors to certain areas to enjoy performances by local musicians

2.2.3 Create a directory of businesses open during the off-season to promote and map out itineraries for off-season downtown adventures

▶ Market itineraries and experiences to overnight visitors

▶ Create a passport program where locals and visitors can earn rewards for making purchases at a certain number of participating local businesses open during the off-season

2.2.4 Build upon initiatives in the Ketchikan Waterfront Conceptual Master Plan with Historic Ketchikan and the City of Ketchikan

▶ Some of these initiatives include:
  ▶ The "Seawalk" and pedestrian walkways
  ▶ Expand wayfinding and interpretive signage, pedestrian seating (craft locally) and lighting
  ▶ Waterfront Advisory Group to encourage community participation in waterfront development, provide technical support, and review proposed actions
  ▶ Develop an informational app for smartphones to teach visitors about Ketchikan through walking tours and to guide visitors with maps of Ketchikan
  ▶ Provide raincover along popular walking routes
  ▶ Create childrens' play areas
  ▶ Utilize planter boxes to separate vehicles and pedestrians and add natural beauty

**Partner Organizations:**

Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council (KAAHC), KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, City of Ketchikan, KGB, Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) and Native Organizations, Historic Ketchikan, Cruise lines, local businesses, art NGOs

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Equitable support for tourism businesses in the downtown area
▶ A vibrant downtown year-round including operating businesses and visually appealing storefronts and streets
▶ Better visitor flows creating less density issues
▶ Encouraging year-round visitation and support for downtown businesses

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Visitor flow downtown (complete period visitor flow studies to measure progress)
▶ Visitor spending

**Potential Resources and References:**

▶ Waterfront Conceptual Master Plan
▶ Historic Ketchikan's Waterfront Conceptual Master Plan
▶ KVB Visitor Guides/Website
▶ Our Town

**Potential Financial Sources:**

▶ Transient Occupancy Tax
▶ Sales Tax
▶ USDA, Main Street America and other downtown development funding
▶ Private sector

**STRATEGY 2.3 | Lead a destination rebranding effort that supports the new year-round positioning and marketing strategy**

Following the development of the KTS and the new community orientation around its tourism industry, Ketchikan will be uniquely placed to reposition itself and attract new visitors. This is the time to strengthen marketing efforts by rebranding and launching a new strategic marketing effort. Some of the work required to develop a new brand, including conducting a destination audit and compiling a SWOT analysis, can be built from research findings from the KTS. It is recommended that rebranding and development of a marketing strategy be carried out by a destination marketing agency, but there must be stakeholder participation supported by tourism and community leaders, so that residents feel their values are integral to how Ketchikan is promoted to visitors.

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| **STRATEGY 2.3:  Lead a destination rebranding effort that supports the new year-round destination positioning and marketing strategy** |
| **Implementation Timeline:  Years 2-5** |
| **Objectives:** <br> ▶ Develop a new brand identity for Ketchikan that invites  opportunities for year-round tourism, promotes newly available products and visitor experiences, and appeals to additional visitor markets <br> ▶ Create a new marketing strategy to support the re-branded destination promoting Ketchikan to independent travelers |
| **Priority Actions:** <br><br> 2.3.1 Hire a marketing and branding agency to undertake this work. The following steps should include: <br> ▶ Develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) to source and select potential creative agencies <br> ▶ Identify an appropriate budget and timeline with key milestones <br> ▶ Solicit an agency through the RFP process <br> 2.3.2  Implement and oversee the branding development being conducted by an agency <br> ▶ Work with the selected agency to provide background research and studies conducted during the development of the KTS <br> ▶ Create a branding steering committee made up of tourism and community stakeholders to oversee the agency's work and be responsible for final decision-making |
| **Partner Organizations:** <br><br> KVB, KGB, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Cape Fox Corporation, Village of Saxman, Ketchikan Indian Community |
| **Desired Outcomes:** <br> ▶ Ketchikan as a tourism destination launches and establishes a year-round brand identity <br> ▶ A new marketing strategy  penetrates the independent traveler market with the new brand identity |
| **Key Success Metrics:** <br> ▶ A new brand for the destination is developed and launched that reflects year-round positioning of Ketchikan <br> ▶ A marketing strategy that supports the new brand is developed, adopted, and established in the marketplace by the KVB |
| **Potential Resources and References:** <br> ▶ KTS background research including Situation Analysis Report and resident sentiment surveys, destination diagnostic |
| **Potential Funding Sources:** <br> ▶ KVB tourism marketing budget |

## STRATEGY 2.4 | Assess accommodation capacity for visitors

Currently, 95% of annual visitors to Ketchikan are cruise ship passengers, so to decrease the high dependence on cruise visitors and support overnight visitors, lodging capacity must be increased.

The development of lodging should be informed by visitor needs and preferences to ensure the proper type of lodging is expanded. There are traditional lodging (hotels, motels) and alternate lodging (RV, camping, house boats, sharing economy, etc.) to consider. With alternate lodging, proper consideration should be given for regulations to ensure their development contributes to the tourism economy equally to traditional lodging. In the Ketchikan Housing Survey 2021, 53% of residents supported increasing regulation of short-term housing such as AirBnB while only 35% opposed.

During the peak season, there is limited accommodation capacity for overnight visitors; and during the off-season, existing accommodations have low occupancy levels. This priority action calls for monitoring of current traveler demographics and lodging trends to determine the best path forward for lodging development to support year-round overnight visitors.

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### STRATEGY 2.4: Assess accommodation capacity for visitors

**Implementation Timeline:  Years 1-5**

**Objectives:**

▶ Evaluate and expand the current lodging offerings to accommodate more overnight visitors in the tourist season and encourage increased use during the off-season

**Priority Actions:**

2.4.1 Collect monthly hotel occupancy data consistently and conduct a gaps and needs analysis

▶ Identify and roll-out incentives such as marketing and promotion benefits that encourage hotels to provide occupancy data on a monthly basis

▶ Ensure KVB has funding to monitor the occupancy rate year-over-year to track the level of lodging needed

▶ Identify gaps and needs based on current trend lines (occupancy rate and other key indicators)  and projections

2.4.2 Identify priority overnight visitor demographics to determine what type(s) of lodging is needed to expand summer accommodations and develop necessary lodging facilities

▶ Complete a lodging demographic study of summer overnight visitors, collecting information including: type of lodging used for the trip (traditional versus alternative), type of desired lodging for future visits, travel budget, location of activities during the visit, transportation used for the trip (car, public transport, boat, bike, walking, etc.)

▶ Grow base of traditional lodging (hotels) to match the needs of summer overnight visitors

▶ Grow base of alternative lodging (RV, camping, house boats, sharing economy, etc.) to match the needs of summer overnight visitors

▶ Consideration of repurposing/remodeling infrastructure to create accommodations (see initiative 3.2.3)

▶ Housing task force (initiative 3.1.2) could help regulate Short Term Rental (STR) market for sharing economy lodging to capture data on the STRs, identify any needs for management, and collect the Transient Occupancy Tax

**Partner Organizations:**

KVB, KGB, City of Ketchikan, lodging businesses, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Creatively use available spaces to create accommodations

▶ Increase the lodging capacity for overnight summer visitors

▶ Continue to look at the interplay of the tourism product offerings, growth in year-round tourism and lodging offerings

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Consistent reporting of occupancy rates by months

▶ Higher occupancy rates year round

**Potential Resources and References**:

▶ Regulations on Short Term Rentals

▶ Ketchikan Visitor Profile and Economic Impact Analysis, 2018

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ Transient Occupancy Tax

Community-centered tourism is the future of Ketchikan. A robust community communications and education strategy is needed to support this pivot. It is critical for community tourism leaders to develop and lead strategies that help residents feel informed, help tourism businesses engage in industry programming, and help visitors understand how to respect the values of Ketchikan. Traditional marketing and destination promotion designed to attract visitors must also pivot to engage key stakeholders, especially the host community, and communicate different messages.

Through the development of the KTS, leadership has recognized that tourism has a broader audience than visitors alone, and it's critical to maintain a dialogue with members of the community who feel the impacts of tourism in their daily lives. Residents need to understand the value of tourism and the management tools and tactics to enhance that value—from increasing economic benefits to reducing quality of life impacts. The community has to be part of tourism planning and consulted through an ongoing engagement process led by tourism and community leadership. This includes tourism stakeholders such as small business operators.

Providing visitor education around the values of the community will help safeguard Ketchikan's future and preserve what makes it a unique place. There are proven communications tools to adopt for supporting stewardship of the natural environment, persuading visitors toward better behavior, and acknowledging local residents in creating a successful destination.

Communications initiatives included in this plan require the participation of multiple community organizations and leadership to operate in tandem. Some of the work outlined will require coordinated and shared investment to fund communication and engagement activities that ensure information is reaching key audiences.
There are elements of communication and educational programming included in the other goals, and these will be integrated under a new tourism governance structure, supported by entities such as a communications task force, and a recommended tourism engagement coordinator. The strategic focus of the following initiatives is on community engagement and  communication as a pillar for tourism success.

### Measuring Success

Key measures of success are outlined below:

▶ An educated and informed community who understand the value of tourism and are engaged with tourism leadership

▶ Increased feedback from the community, including tourism stakeholders, on tourism planning

▶ High level of buy-in for the KTS in the private sector, public sector, civic sector, and the wider community.
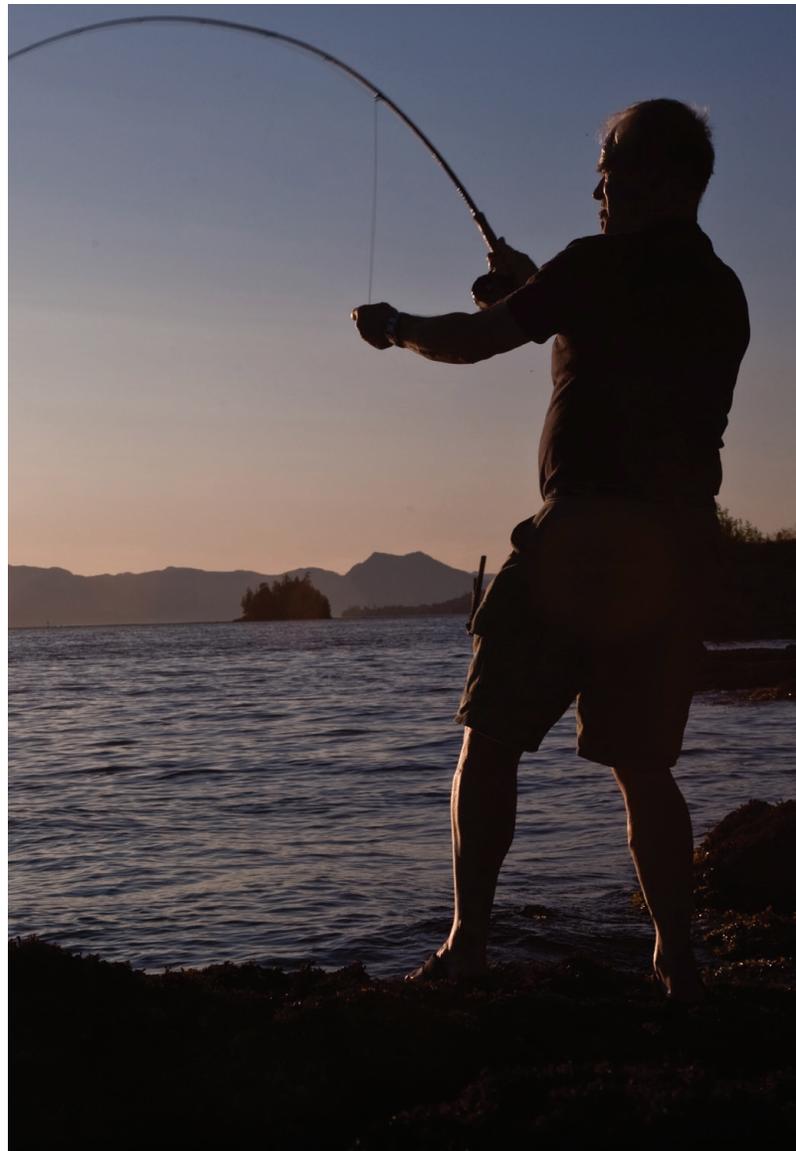
## STRATEGY 3.1 | Generate awareness of the new KTS

The process of engaging and informing the community can bolster the success of the new KTS. Community members and stakeholders will be invested in the plan and the process if they are well-informed. This initiative helps secure a wide understanding around the adoption and implementation of the KTS.

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| **STRATEGY 3.1:  Generate awareness of the new KTS** |
| **Implementation Timeline: Year 1 within six months of completion and formal adoption of the KTS** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶  Inform the community including residents and tourism stakeholders about the completion of the KTS<br>▶  Generate positive PR and engagement opportunities around the new approach to tourism in the Ketchikan region |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>3.1.1 Develop a six-month marketing-communications and engagement action agenda for the new KTS. This agenda would detail marketing tactics including:<br>▶  Community outreach calendar of events and information sessions to provide presentations on the KTS to targeted residents and stakeholder groups<br>▶  Calendar of:<br>    ▶  Earned media content including editorial coverage and press engagement<br>    ▶  Paid content including print and digital advertising, coordination of information platforms including KTN Talk and KGB social media<br>▶  A target stakeholder list including press and industry and community partners that will be reached during the outreach process<br><br>3.1.2 Develop and implement communication toolkits that clearly articulate the KTS development process and the benefits of adopting the final document. The tool kit to include:<br>▶  Talking points for the KGB staff, KTS community advisory and steering committee members<br>▶  Fact sheet for the general public which can be published on KTN Talk and on social media platforms |
| **Partner Organizations:**<br>KGB, KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, KTS advisory and steering committee members |
| **Desired Outcomes**:<br>▶  The KTS has been presented to the community and key stakeholder groups have been well-informed |
| **Key Success Metrics:**<br>▶  Total number of attendees at community events and meetings<br>▶  Total volume of marketing and media impressions generated about the KTS through earned and paid media efforts |
| **Potential Resources and References:**<br>▶  KGB's engagement platform, KTNTalk.com |
| **Potential Funding Sources:**<br>▶  KGB community development and planning budget will be required to execute and coordinate community outreach and events, along with marketing efforts including media advertising |

**STRATEGY 3.2 | Build and maintain community engagement around tourism**

The community engagement process used to develop the KTS over the last 15 months set the stage for regular and consistent engagement with residents and stakeholders. This can serve as a foundation for initiating more regular information sharing that can help residents feel more informed about the holistic impacts of tourism. Ongoing island wide community engagement is critical for solving many of the issues identified in the KTS. The creation of a full-time position to establish and sustain community engagement across all local jurisdictions will require a coordinated agreement and the financial resources.

The following initiatives support data-driven information dissemination and continued two-way dialogue.

| STRATEGY 3.2: Build and maintain community engagement around tourism |
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| **Implementation Timeline: Years 2-5** |
| **Objectives:** <br> ▶ Provide data-driven updates within an annual indicator report on the industry for residents and tourism stakeholders including small business operators <br> ▶ Develop systems to support information, education, and feedback from the community |
| **Priority Actions:** <br><br> 3.2.1 Develop a communications taskforce of industry stakeholders, including public and private sector, and community members that represents cross-sections from all jurisdictions to create and oversee a communications and engagement strategy <br><br> 3.2.2 Allocate funding to create a full-time Tourism Community Engagement Coordinator position within the KGB to implement and coordinate community outreach and engagement, and coordinate communication activity around the Destination Stewardship Council. This role would eventually report to the tourism governance structure <br><br> 3.2.3 Publish an annual tourism indicator report of metrics and trends analysis (See initiatives under Goal 7 for details) <br><br> 3.2.4 Coordinate an annual "state of tourism" public forum to present key performance metrics, provide ongoingreporting, and facilitate general awareness in the community on tourism industry updates <br><br> 3.2.5 Develop and plan a series of quarterly industry-led informational events to provide key stakeholders with opportunities to present progress updates on strategies or topics specific to their sector. These can be hosted in different locations within Ketchikan to reach out in all areas <br><br> 3.2.6 Continue to build out tourism planning updates and content to KTN Talk and grow this platform as a resource for community engagement and input on the tourism industry <br><br> 3.2.7 Resume annual or bi-annual resident and tourism stakeholder engagement surveys for the community to ensure a regular feedback loop is supported |

**Partner Organizations:**

KGB, KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA)

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ The community (residents and tourism stakeholders) is informed and participating in a two-way dialogue through engagement platforms and events

▶ The community develops trust and confidence in a collaborative process that includes residents, stakeholders and operators

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Recruitment of a contracted or full-time equivalent tourism community engagement coordinator, serving within the KGB

▶ Number of resident and tourism stakeholder surveys completed annually

▶ Number of participants offering feedback on KTN Talk

▶ Number of attendees at community tourism town hall meetings

▶ Increased number of satisfied residents and overall increase in resident sentiment survey scores

**Potential Resources and References:**

▶ KGB staff time (new full-time position) to coordinate efforts of surveys development, distribution, analysis, coordination of community town hall meetings, and any marketing efforts to promote all engagement initiatives

▶ Ketchikan Gateway Borough's engagement platform, KTNTalk.com

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ Funding for position via all local jurisdictions, funding for marketing and communication outreach including media placement

**STRATEGY 3.3 | Develop an education strategy to influence responsible behavior in the community and on public lands**

This initiative aims to encourage responsible behavior in residents and visitors , convening frontline tourism stakeholders who are currently working in education and communications into a task force to oversee the development of consistent, streamlined messaging and communication within the overall marketing strategy.

Because cruise and overnight visitation and behavior is distinctly different, the messages delivered to them must be tailored to them.

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**STRATEGY 3.3: Develop an education strategy to influence responsible and respectful behavior in the community and on public lands**

**Implementation Timeline:  Years 3-5**

**Objectives:**
▶ Educate and influence responsible behavior in cruise and overnight visitors
▶ Devise messaging and education that informs residents

**Priority Actions:**

3.3.1 Identify resident and visitor behaviors in town and on public lands through survey results and additional consultation with key stakeholder groups

3.3.2 Create an outreach strategy framework that can be applied according to the following:
▶ behavior
▶ audience
▶ season
▶ outreach partners

Explore distribution channels for potential outreach communications, including industry partners and by type of visitor

3.3.3 Develop a series of campaigns with educational messaging that aligns with the TBMP to address priority behaviors of identified audiences, such as responsible commercial vehicle driving, responsible behavior around wildlife, or shop local awareness; Devise messaging and tactics to reach both cruise and overnight visitors

3.3.4 Develop partnerships with national organizations that have established and recognized responsible visitation messaging such as Leave No Trace

3.3.5 Provide local businesses with training and a toolkit for their employees, including frontline workers and guides, on  the responsible visitation education campaign

**Partner Organizations:**

KGB, KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce (KCC), Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA)

**Desired Outcomes:**
- Coordinated distribution of visitor education materials
- Targeted and responsive campaigns
- Increase in positive resident and tourism stakeholder sentiment

**Key Success Metrics:**
- Number of responsible visitor campaign materials distributed/ impressions generated
- Number of businesses engaged in visitor education
- Positive results of resident, tourism stakeholder, and visitor surveys

**Potential Resources and References:**
- KGB community tourism engagement coordinator to oversee and coordinate visitor education campaigns
- Communications taskforce to support dissemination of visitor education and campaigns

**Potential Funding Sources:**
- KVB and KGB potential funding for development and production of any collateral such as collateral (posters, window decals, webpages, social media assets and content development)

Workforce shortages have been a persistent challenge for Ketchikan. Tourism businesses cannot hire the workers they need to properly serve their customers, which ultimately results in subpar service, service interruptions, and other operational disruptions. While the problem is partly due to the national labor shortfall caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are other causes. Labor shortages are exacerbated by the cost of living in Ketchikan and other Alaskan cities, which is 24%-27% greater than the national average, as well as by rising rental and housing costs. In addition, Alaska ranks 27 out of the 50 states for workforce development.

There are opportunities to build the dynamic and diverse workforce that is critical to the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry in Ketchikan. Tourism businesses can work collaboratively with academic, nonprofit, and public sector partners to create industry-level workforce programs that engage, recruit, and retain a diverse workforce. They can also advocate for and actively support building affordable workforce housing (see Goal 6), health care, and childcare.

### Measuring Success

Key measures of success are outlined below:
▶ Greater stability in the workforce for tourism, especially filling areas of need during the times of the year that experience the greatest shortages.
▶ A growing and thriving workforce.

## STRATEGY 4.1 | Build a robust and diverse tourism workforce pipeline

Private businesses, educational institutions, and state and local governments need to work together to strengthen Ketchikan's workforce and workforce development ecosystem. Private businesses have the opportunity to pool resources and use industry-level shared services to implement workforce recruitment programs that can more effectively and efficiently address the scale of the problem. The destination needs a diverse as well as skilled tourism workforce, requiring new pathways to employment for workers from all backgrounds. Diversity brings new ideas and perspectives to business and government and better represents the nation's and Ketchikan's diverse population.

| STRATEGY 4.1: Build a robust and diverse tourism workforce pipeline |
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| **Implementation Timeline: Years 2-3** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Pool resources and create strategic partnerships for industry-level workforce development program<br>▶ Increase the number of prospective and qualified workers in particular youth, Alaska Natives, retirees, immigrants and international workers |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>4.1.1 Create industry-level workforce pipeline development programs by tourism businesses pooling resources at an association level. A part-time coordinator can help to implement key initiatives, i.e. 4.1.2 and 4.1.3<br><br>4.1.2 Establish a "Sister City" Workforce Exchange Partnership; "sister city" options should ensure transferrable skills and prioritize coastal, marine, forest destinations such as Hawaii and Puerto Rico<br><br>4.1.3 Ensure greater diversification of tourism workforce to include youth, Alaska Native, retiree and immigrant communities<br>▶ Attract a growing number of retirees that are stepping in as auxiliary workers throughout the travel industry (they may be traveling in their RVs so housing may not be an issue)<br>▶ Engage with Tribal Nations to create a pipeline of interested and engaged tourism talent<br>▶ Establish programs with high schools and colleges that help to organize job fairs provide skills assessment and training (e.g. AK Host SVC training), mentorship, internships and placements. Programs to prepare highschoolers for summer work should start early so that students are ready to start work by June |
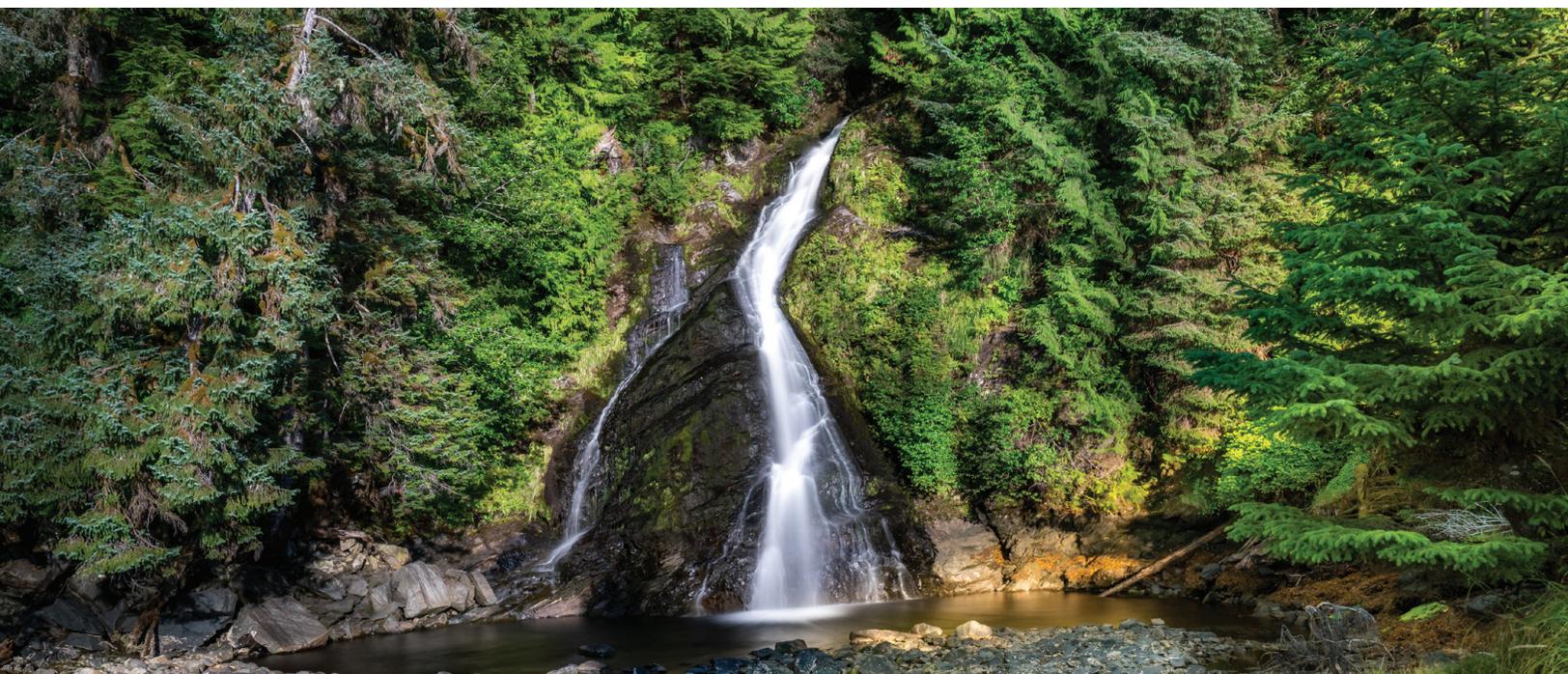
**Partner Organizations:**

KVB, Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Coolworks, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, Ketchikan Indian Community, Job Center, US Forest Service (USFS), University of Alaska, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, RYC (youth center), Grow Ketchikan, Cape Fox Corp, Saxman Tribe, Southeast Sustainable Partnership, Other Southern SE Tribes

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Predictable flow of year-round and seasonal workers

▶ Reduces recruitment costs

▶ Increases quality of service delivery

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Percentage of tourism business experiencing service interruptions and other operational disruptions over the last year

▶ Rate of employee turnover

▶ Results of sustainable industry-wide workforce programs

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ State- and federal-level grants

▶ Tools and approaches being developed by potential strategic partners, such as the U.S. Travel Association, who are developing resources for the industry to build an inclusive workforce

## STRATEGY 4.2 | Improve recruitment and retention of workers

Retaining employees from season to season is an ongoing challenge in Ketchikan. The turnover rate for the tourism and hospitality industry has persistently remained high. The Southeast's forecasted recovery to pre-pandemic levels (4,300 jobs in 2019) estimated that leisure and hospitality has an estimated recovery of 86% (i.e. 3,700 jobs) in 2022. There is an urgent need to improve recruitment and retention to build a stable workforce.

| STRATEGY 4.2: Improve Recruitment and Retention of Workers |
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| **Implementation Timeline: Years 4-5** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Increase total number of jobs filled in the tourism industry through recruitment efforts outside Ketchikan<br>▶ Reduce workforce turnover |
| **Priority Actions:**<br>4.2.1 Establish ongoing, centralized industry-wide workforce recruitment programs (linked to Strategy 4.1). A workforce facilitator/project manager will oversee recruitment, job postings, incentives and media promotion - could be funded by Chamber members pooling resources for facilitator position<br>▶ Workforce recruitment programs should target and address the different needs of seasonal and full time employees<br>▶ Digital marketing budget and campaign to help educate on career paths + more<br><br>4.2.2 Conduct a workforce needs assessment to help identify the scope of the problem and prioritize needs: tour guides, bus drivers, USFS - youth recreation trail restoration, retail workers, restaurant workers and fish processing. This situation analysis report will help to inform these recruitment efforts<br><br>4.2.3 Identify the greatest barriers to recruitment as part of the workforce needs assessment and find industry wide options for offering benefits to employees that may only be possible by pooling resources. Priority benefits to consider include housing options and offering childcare, health insurance, mental health services and possibly retirement benefits |
| **Partner Organizations:**<br>KVB, Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Coolworks, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, Ketchikan Indian Community, Job Center, USFS, University of Alaska, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Cape Fox Corp, Saxman Tribe, Southeast Sustainable Partnership, Other Southern SE Tribes. |
| **Desired Outcomes:**<br>▶ Full-staffing, meaningful work, skilled-sustainable workforce |
| **Key Success Metrics:**<br>▶ Employee retention rate<br>▶ Employee turnover rate<br>▶ Number of sustainable workforce programs that are supporting the needs of the tourism workforce |
| **Potential Funding Sources:**<br>▶ Tourism businesses pay into industry-level program<br>▶ State- and federal-level grants<br>▶ Tools and approaches being developed by potential strategic partners such as the U.S. Travel Association, which is developing resources for the industry to build and inclusive workforce |

Mobility and traffic congestion are consistently raised as a priority in managing Ketchikan tourism growth and quality of life for residents. The resident sentiment toward tourism survey deployed in 2022 indicated that 54% of respondents believe the number of people visiting has a negative impact on the quality of life and 90% feel that tourism contributes to traffic problems. Specific concerns raised by residents in particular included limited capacity for residents to use public transportation during peak season and air pollution concerns due to use of older commercial vans and buses and excessive idling of vehicles.

Transportation and traffic congestion are complex issues to resolve. Infrastructure improvements can be expensive and timelines lengthy and these priorities are balanced against other community needs. Efficient transportation and mobility are critical considerations as the community looks to diversify tourism offerings, move visitors to less popular attractions and locations and to open up workforce housing outside of the city core.

A multi-tier and collaborative approach between the public and private sectors is needed to effectively tackle transportation and mobility challenges. Given limitations on the expansion of roadways, creative approaches are needed to balance the needs of residents to get to and from work and to support the flow of their everyday lives and to disperse visitors around the island. The following initiatives present a mix of short-term education and engagement solutions and long-term infrastructure investments, including wayfinding and signage, expansion of transit solutions, and road and infrastructure improvements.

### Measuring Success

Key measures of success include:
- More flexible shuttle services are available to disperse visitors
- Public transit capacity is expanded to support resident utilization
- Expanded signage and wayfinding improves visitor flows and support the visitor experience
- Traffic congestion is reduced downtown by commercial vans and buses

## STRATEGY 5.1 | Support development of KGB transit plan

This initiative focuses on supporting the KGB in updating the community wide Transit Development Plan. The current plan is nearly 20 years old and is not reflective of the changing needs of the community, current technology or trends, and transit and transportation infrastructure to support visitor growth. Building from the February 2021 resident Transportation Plan Survey, a continued focus for this strategy should include dynamic stakeholder engagement to reflect resident sentiment and needs and to leverage resources across public and private sectors in plan design and implementation.

| STRATEGY 5.1: Support development of KGB transit plan |
| --- |
| **Implementation Timeline: Years 1-2** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Leverage the KTS and other emerging plans (e.g., KGB Transit Development Plan), programs, and collaborative efforts to improve transportation and transit infrastructure and mitigate traffic congestion |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>5.1.1 Establish a private and public sector transportation action team - Convene a transportation action team as part of the destination stewardship council (see 8.1.2) comprised of public, private, and citizen-at-large representation to support development of the updated KGB Transit Development Plan (commencing in 2023) and associated collaborative efforts to mitigate traffic congestion. Tasks for consideration:<br>▶ Establish idling education program and enforcement for small (locust) passenger vans and larger tour vehicles (leverage TBMP)<br>▶ Appropriate speed limits to support safe traffic flows<br>▶ Designated loading and unloading zones<br>▶ Collaborative approach for community education and communication on transportation, traffic patterns and congestion, and pedestrian flow<br>▶ Mitigate vehicle back-ups and traffic congestion - coordinate with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AKDOT) to identify locations for additional highway pull outs with possible integration with bus or shuttle stops<br>▶ Identify impediments to improved visitor disbursement and access to transit. Examples include: s-curve at Talbots; promenade delineation/build-out, upper Gorge Street and Rain Bird/Bus Stop reconnect<br>▶ Preferred locals routes (3rd avenue bypass)<br>▶ Seasonal "closures" for certain sized commercial vehicles on specific routes or roads<br>▶ Identify and pursue collaborative opportunities for pursuing grants for transportation infrastructure<br><br>5.1.2 Support the creation of the KGB Transit Development Plan and implementation strategy. Initial transit plan priorities include:<br>▶ Better use of KGB vehicle assets and supporting transit infrastructure - route design, pedestrian access, and transition to electric and other more efficient vehicles<br>▶ Wayfinding improvements and understanding where vehicles/assets are needed to help with dispersing people<br>▶ Potential carrying capacity for visitors could be expanded if people are moved around differently - reducing impediments. Delineating the boardwalk promenade - bus stops, wayfinding, etc./walkability to Rainbird trail or other attractions that are closer to the downtown area. Look for ways to "open up" the downtown area<br>▶ Downtown parking plan and potential infrastructure to maintain resident/community access<br>▶ Locations and development of bicycle lanes |

**Partner Organizations:**

KGB, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AKDOT), City of Ketchikan - Public Works and Police/Fire Departments, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman, CLAA, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, and large tour operators.

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Collaborative transportation planning between public and the tourism industry/private sector

▶ An updated KGB Transit Plan that is reflective of the current and changing needs of the community and tourism growth

▶ Less traffic congestion on main roadways and the Ketchikan downtown core

**Success Metrics:**

▶ Completion of Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit Plan supported by community stakeholder engagement; sub-plans and milestones are completed with initial implementation in late 2023

**Potential Resources and References:**

▶ Alaska Department of Transportation - annual transportation plans

▶ The Economic Value of Public Transit in Alaska - AK DOT/May 2022

▶ City of Ketchikan Resident Transportation Plan Survey, February 2021

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit and Planning and Building Departments

▶ Federal transportation funding

▶ Grants - Alaska Department of Transportation and Planning

## STRATEGY 5.2 | Develop a "Rules of the Road" educational campaign

The strain of increased commercial and single occupancy passenger vehicles is evident throughout the KGB and in particular the downtown area, especially during peak tourism periods. With limited opportunities to expand roadways, it is increasingly more important to identify management strategies and educational materials to move vehicles more efficiently and safely throughout the community. This strategy is focused on comprehensive education and a vehicle safety campaign to support improved traffic flow throughout the KGB. A powerful resource to build out this initiative will be the KVB TBMP framework.

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### STRATEGY 5.2:  Develop a "Rules of the Road" educational campaign

**Implementation Timeline: Years 3-5**

**Objectives:**

▶ Educate commercial operators and all motorists on the rules of the road

**Priority Actions:**

5.2.1 Develop an educational program that includes a manual supported by policies and training programs including best practices for commercial operators that is shared with all Ketchikan businesses and residents. The campaign should consider:

▶ Pricing requirements for licensing process for commercial operators

▶ Development of a training webinar or video

▶ Orientation (kick-off) at the beginning of the peak season for tour operators

▶ Creation of fact sheets that outline the key policies and best practices, to include:

  ▶ Staging areas and timing - for cabs, Uber/Lyft, Walmart and other non-tour related transportation

  ▶ Guidance on transportation flows, routes and traveling through town

  ▶ Proper use of cross walks

  ▶ Education to support permanent infrastructure to support protection of pedestrians (e.g., historically appropriate bollards and safety roping in key pedestrian corridors)

  ▶ "How to" guidance to interpret signage

  ▶ Webpage with digital versions of fact sheet and the manual, along with training materials for commercial drivers and businesses

  ▶ High-level messaging campaign for distribution and placement in local media, via tourism partners including Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce members, TMBP participants

5.2.2 Integrate the "Rules of Road" educational program into the TBMP (see Initiatives 1.3 and 1.4)

▶ Training for commercial drivers and in future possible certification within the TBMP

▶ Reinforce law on preventing vehicle "trains"

## STRATEGY 5.2: Continued

**Partner Organizations:**

KGB, Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities, City of Ketchikan - Public Works and Police/Fire Departments, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman, Cruise Line Association of Alaska, KVB/TBMP program leads, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, and Ports and Harbors, US Coast Guard, large tour operators

**Desired Outcomes:**
- Improved traffic flow on highways and in downtown
- Less possible confrontations between all pedestrians (e.g., residents and visitors) and tourism operators
- Ensure safety for drivers, vehicles, and pedestrians

**Key Success Metrics:**
- Smoother traffic flows within downtown and north to south roadways
- Rules of the Road educational campaign and compliance guidance is developed and implemented
- Inclusion of Rules of the Road within the TBMP and enforcement assistance between the KGB and City of Ketchikan

**Potential Resources and References:**
- TBMP as a mechanism for distribution of manual, policies and training

**Potential Funding Sources:**
- KGB
- City of Ketchikan
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
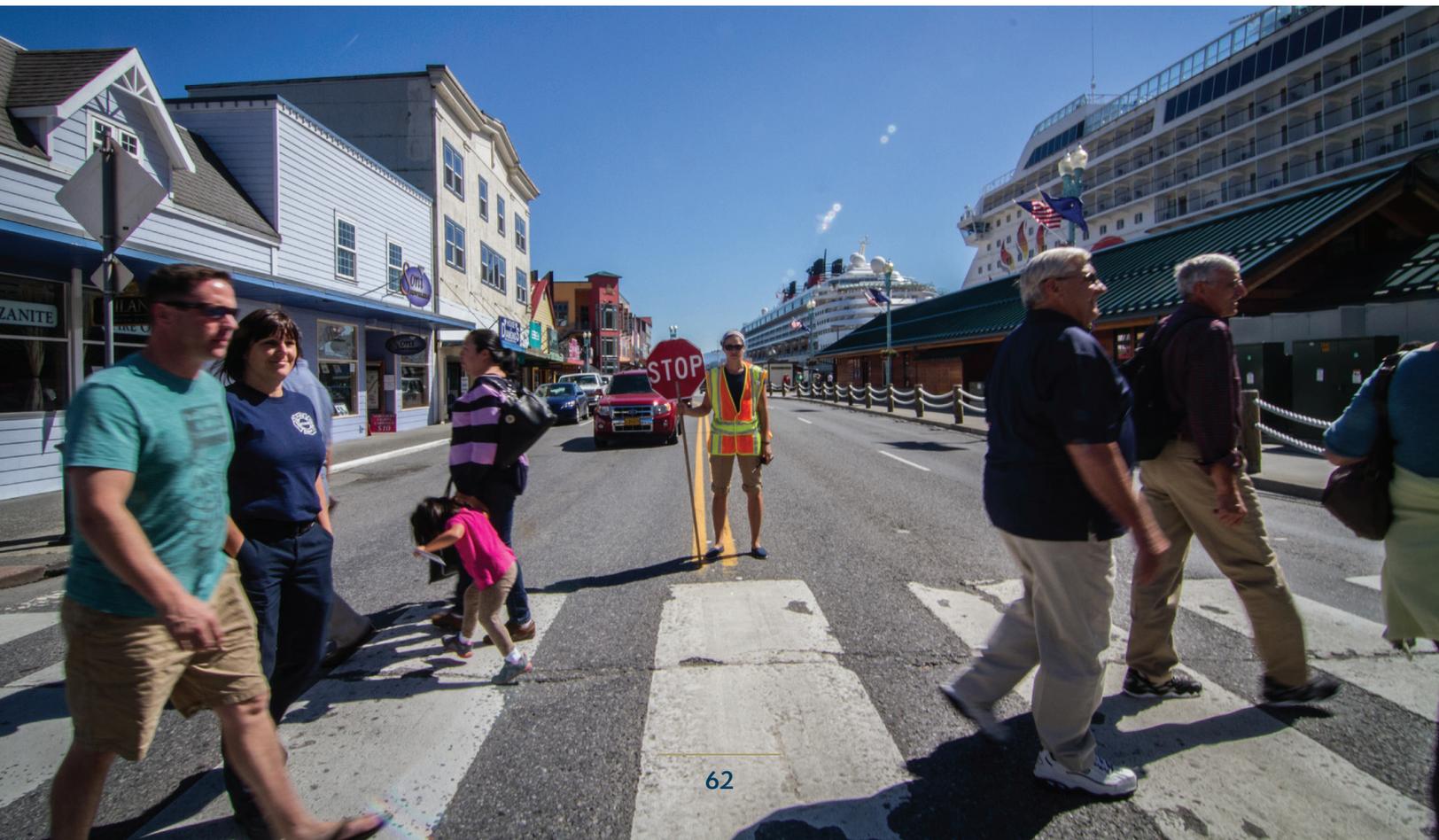
## STRATEGY 5.3 | Improve pedestrian, single occupancy vehicle, and tour operator mobility

Improving and expanding wayfinding and signage is an important strategy for improving traffic flows and reducing traffic congestion. This strategy was identified as a top priority in the Ketchikan Waterfront Master Plan. This plan presents specific tactics to improve the visitor experience, increase safe vehicle and pedestrian movement in downtown Ketchikan as well as to enhance the cohesiveness of themes and illustration of the cultural and historic heritage of Ketchikan and southeast Alaska.

| STRATEGY 5.3: Improve pedestrian, single occupancy vehicle, and tour operator mobility |
|---|
| **Implementation Timeline: Years 2-4** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Improve visitor experience and reduce potential visitor and all pedestrian conflicts with motorists<br>▶ Utilize and expand infrastructure to support pedestrian dispersion and safe vehicle travel through the downtown area |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>5.3.1 Create a collaborative community wayfinding and signage/communication sub plan as part of integrated transportation planning and updated KGB Transit Development Plan. Possible components to include:<br><br>▶ Development of consistent placement/quality of signs to reflect Ketchikan culture and history, & heritage<br>▶ Paving patterns/color coordination on segmenting and purpose of roadways and walkways including sidewalk and pavement messaging to increase safety and pedestrian access and awareness<br>▶ Expand crossing guards training/certification requirements to support better flow and visitor services<br>▶ Infrastructure at crosswalks - improved safety with push button access<br>▶ Covered walkways in areas to disperse and protect visitors from inclement weather<br>▶ Permanent installation of bollards and safety roping to improve pedestrian flow and safety<br>▶ Expanded lighting to illuminate paths<br>▶ Expanded (update to) walking tour map w/overlay with shuttle services<br>▶ QR codes to take advantage of phone use for location assistance |
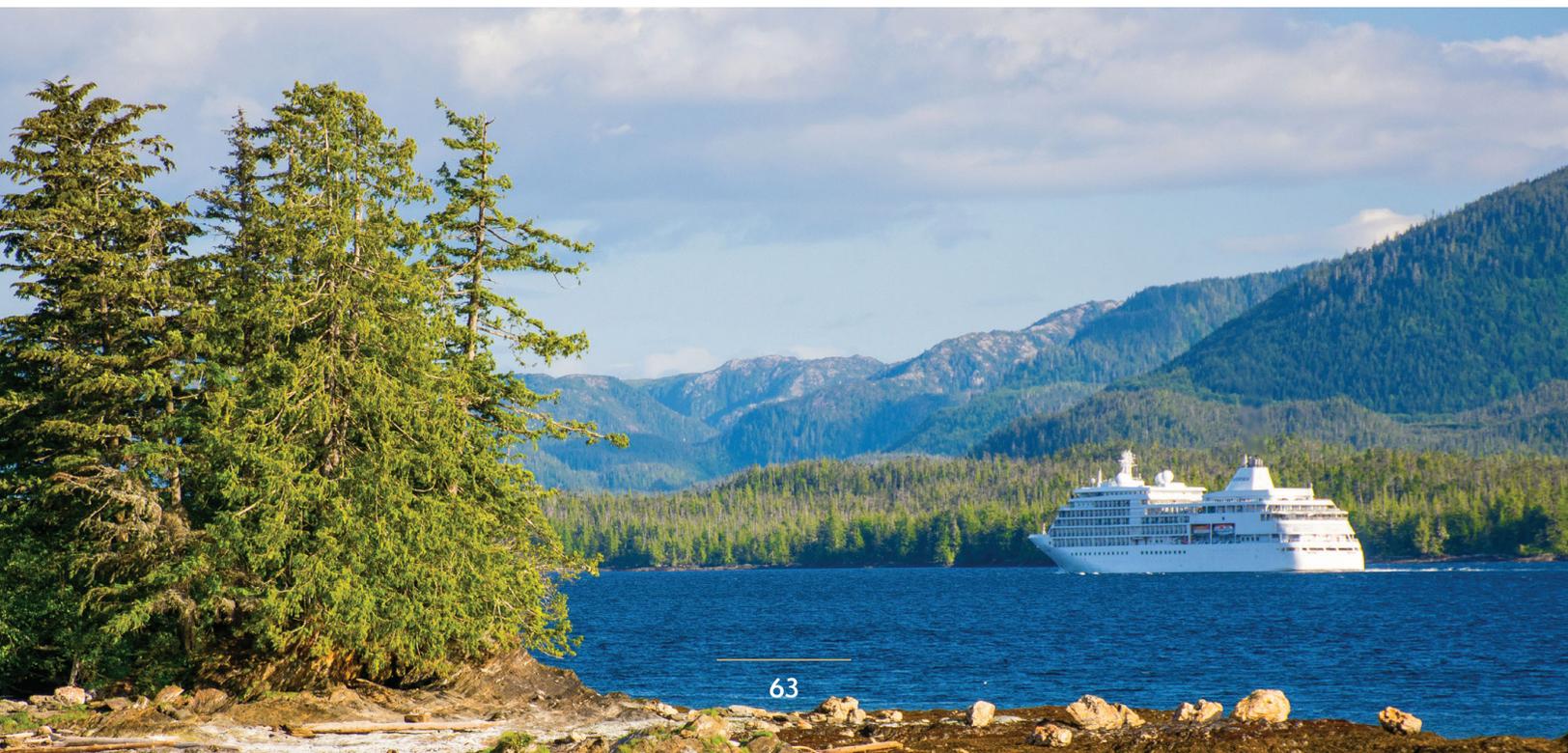
**Partner Organizations:**

KGB, Historic Ketchikan, City of Ketchikan - Public Works and Police/Fire Departments, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman, KVB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, Alaska Department of Transportation, and Ports and Harbors.

**Desired Outcomes:**
- Improve flow in downtown areas
- Reduce congestion and vehicle pedestrian conflicts
- Development and execution of a wayfinding and interpretative plan for the KGB

**Key Success Metrics:**
- A wayfinding and signage plan is developed with a detailed implementation timeline
- Collaborative efforts are supported to ensure that the KVB, tour operators and others design and develop educational collateral and programs aligned to the community wayfinding and signage plan

**Potential Resources and References:**
- Conceptual Waterfront Master Plan
- Existing wayfinding and historical signage
- References from Ketchikan Visitors Bureau
- References from existing tour operators

**Potential Funding Sources:**
- KGB
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities - grants
- Federal transportation grants

## STRATEGY 5.4 | Increase transit options and hop-on-hop-off shuttle stops/access

Increasing and incentivizing usage of transit options is an excellent way to ease traffic congestion and reduce the number of vehicles on Ketchikan roads and highways. It also improves the visitor and resident experience by offering safe, lower stress transportation options. With limited ability to add roads, expand tourism offerings and disperse visitors especially into the Tongass National Forest, creative approaches to move residents and visitors around Ketchikan is increasingly more important. The creation of land and water based shuttle experiences provides transportation flexibility and can open up access to lesser known areas of the island. Stakeholder discussions during the development of the KTS identified opportunities for private/public partnerships to expedite solutions and pilot programs.

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**STRATEGY 5.4: Increase transit options and hop-on-hop-off shuttle stops/access**

**Implementation Timeline: Years 2-4**

**Objectives:**
- Increase public transit use by visitors to reduce vehicle traffic congestion and improve visitor experience
- Identify transit needs for residents to diversify types of services, ease of use and increase utilization of public transportation
- Disperse visitors more easily throughout the community

**Priority Actions:**

5.4.1 Complete a transit efficiency study/review to evaluate flows and vehicles utilized to evaluate redundancy and gaps in public and private sector (commercial) tour operations and transportation services. Include consideration of:
- Private operators plans for expanded offerings identify opportunities to collaborate and pilot solutions
- Identify gaps in service to key attractions
- Specific needs to increase routes and number of buses and shuttles. Note: KGB is looking at more frequency of buses (every 10-12 minutes between Berth 4 and Heritage Center). These would be higher capacity buses (50-60 people). Some of this is funded
- Direct complimentary bus/shuttle service to Safeway, Walmart, A&P, and Three Bears during the summer. There are a lot of crew members and locals in the downtown area that go to these places
- Identify incentives for using public transportation that are supported by local businesses

5.4.2 Implement a waterfront shuttle/taxi service to improve visitor and resident experience and lessen land based traffic congestion
- Consider hop-on-hop-off water shuttles to serve existing docks at Thomas Basin, Berth 1/2, Berth 3, Berth 4, Bar Harbor/Plaza, Gravina, and potentially airport/Petro dock.

5.4.3 Explore opportunities/incentives for the private sector to create land based hop-on-hop-off pilot service for visitors
- Start offering cruise visitors a pre-purchased pass on board, route information provided in advance and at stops and on shuttles
- Subsequent expansion of resident and independent traveler access supported by shared community/public sector funding

5.4.4 Identify infrastructure needs to improve dispersion, visitor experience, and safe access throughout the community
- Improvements to waterfront including completion of promenade around the Lumberjack show venue (e.g., implement Historic Ketchikan's Waterfront Conceptual Master Plan)
- Determine need for a walkway at Ward Cove to provide better and safer access to bus services
- Create a Bike Ketchikan program including rentals and designated lanes on promenade
- Increase bus service to Ward Cove for both independent travelers and cruise passengers. (Silver bus service)
- Approach Ward Cove/Norwegian Cruise Lines to offer bus service to key attractions
- Pedestrian access to and from Berth 4 (New Town)

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Better visitor disbursement throughout town
- Reduced congestion on sidewalks and streets
- Improved/more authentic visitor experience
- Potential to increase visitor capacity without as many negative side effects.
- Confirm needs for routes, frequency, and types of vehicles (e.g., buses, vans)
- Expanded transit options for residents that are low/no cost
- Established best practices for all shuttle services

**Key Success Metrics:**

- Advance of improvements to waterfront promenade (including implementation of Ketchikan Waterfront Conceptual Master Plan)
- Land hop-on-hop-off service is offered by 1-2 private companies with coordination with KGB and City
- Water hop-on-hop-off taxi service is piloted and if successful is implemented fully in 2025

**Potential Resources and References:**

- Conceptual Waterfront Master Plan
- KGB transit planning and transportation programs
- Private sector tour operations and transportation services

**Potential Funding Sources:**

- KGB
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities - grants
- Federal transportation grants

## Goal 6: Support seasonal and year-round solutions for workforce housing

The availability of affordable and quality housing is foundational for thriving communities and critically important to Ketchikan, a community growing in popularity as a tourism destination. As indicated in the KGB's 2021 Ketchikan Housing Survey, the ability to secure affordable and quality housing to rent or buy is challenging for a substantial percentage of the Ketchikan workforce. This correlates with workforce recruitment and retention challenges throughout Ketchikan for all private and public sector employers, especially within the tourism sector. Southeast Conference's 2022 Southeast Alaska by the Numbers Report indicates that for Ketchikan 58% of respondents to their business survey stated that housing is a significant barrier, and 20% see it as a moderate barrier to workforce recruitment and retention.

Some key workforce housing challenges identified through the tourism strategy development process include lack of resources focused on housing; limitations on available land for housing; building costs including freight; and, the increase of short-term rentals (STRs) drawing off rental availability, especially for summer seasonal workforce.

A collaborative community approach to addressing workforce housing has proven valuable in many tourism destinations similar to Ketchikan. Most effective is a central individual or community organization that leads the effort supported by committees or working groups with representatives from local governments, non-profit and advocacy organizations, private businesses, and citizens-at- large, which provides a dynamic combination of resources and a variety of potential solutions.

The following strategies recommend designation of resources to address workforce housing needs; incentivization and creative reuse of buildings for housing; and, a comprehensive education and engagement campaign to raise awareness on housing zoning, codes, and regulations to promote housing development.

### Measuring Success

Key measures of success:

▶ A community housing coordinator position is created and staffed
▶ A diverse stakeholder community housing task force is created
▶ Annual assessment of housing inventory is developed
▶ Incentive programs are created to encourage infrastructure redevelopment

## STRATEGY 6.1 | Foster public-private partnerships for workforce housing

Throughout Ketchikan there are many efforts by both local governments and employers to identify and develop housing for both seasonal and year-round workers. These efforts are largely disparate and therefore may not be efficient and cost effective in addressing this expensive and complicated challenge.

Strategy 6.1 recommends creating new partnerships and enhancing staffing that will enable Strategies 6.2 and 6.3.

| STRATEGY 6.1: Foster public-private partnerships for workforce housing |
|---|
| **Implementation Timeline: Years 1-2** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▸ Allocate more permanent resources to expand access to affordable and attainable housing |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>6.1.1 Create a housing coordinator position to work with jurisdictions and trade associations. Possibly funded jointly by the KGB and City of Ketchikan in close collaboration with other jurisdictions. This position could be embedded within a trade association to ensure maximum coordination between public and private sectors<br><br>6.1.2 Convene a *housing task force* composed of public sector (all jurisdictions), trade association representation of the private sector, and other key nonprofits. Ensure coordination with relevant agencies (e.g., transportation and public works) across all local jurisdictions.<br><br>6.1.3 Establish policies for the use of Borough resources and land to promote the development of workforce housing |

**Partner Organizations:**

Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce (coordinator's employer and clearinghouse for information), KGB, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman, Native organizations, NGOs dealing with health and human services, large employers, major builders, realtors, project management companies, local and regional lenders/banks.

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Consistent focus and allocation of resources to establish affordable and attainable housing for both seasonal and year-round workforce

▶ Create greater collaboration and community inter-connections

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Housing coordinator is jointly funded and housing task force is inclusive of public, NGOs, and private sector including realtors and banks/financing institutions with citizen at large engagement

▶ Resources are designated including staffing to consistently focus on expansion of seasonal and year-round/permanent workforce housing

▶ Short-term inventory of community-wide empty bunk houses and other existing housing is completed

▶ Longer term development and housing inventory is completed and a mechanism is established to update annually–collaborative effort led by housing coordinator

**Potential References & Resources:**

▶ Ketchikan Housing Survey 2021- KGB

▶ Assembly Housing Presentation - August 15, 2022 (identifies available parcels including possible uses and zoning)

▶ Ketchikan Comprehensive Housing Assessment (CHAP) - 2019

▶ Juneau Economic Development Council - visitor product cluster working group and late 2022/early 2023 SE region housing needs survey (Ketchikan-specific data and inventory)

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ State and federal grants

▶ Housing capital fund

▶ Transient Occupancy Tax

▶ Sales tax

▶ CPV tax

▶ Real estate transfer tax

**STRATEGY 6.2 | Identify and incentivize creative options for seasonal and long-term housing**

The development of more permanent "brick and mortar" housing is expensive and challenging in many communities, but Ketchikan faces extra challenges with its physical limitations bordered by national forests and coastal waters as well as obstacles such as affordably and easily sourcing building materials. Looking at housing solutions requires creative approaches that include more concentrated portable solutions such as tiny homes; expansion of RV parks and possible year-round campground infrastructure; use of live-aboard ships; and, the repurposing of underutilized or abandoned buildings such as warehouses, schools and churches. This strategy draws from several successful examples of these types of quicker win approaches to housing in Ketchikan. Through collaborative and creative cost and resource sharing, opportunities exist to scale solutions and begin to chip away at the communities housing shortage.

| STRATEGY 6.2: Identify and incentivize creative options for seasonal and long-term housing |
| --- |
| **Implementation Timeline: Years 2-4** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Increase seasonal and long-term housing availability<br>▶ Leverage the sharing economy<br>▶ Identify non-traditional housing options |
| **Priority Actions:**<br>Utilize resources within Initiative 6.1 to support the following actions for housing infrastructure<br><br>6.2.1 Leverage the sharing economy by:<br>▶ Providing education and incentives for room and rental of accessory dwelling units for seasonal employees<br>▶ Establishing mechanisms to capture data on STRs and identify strategies for management of this sector and capture of lodging tax<br><br>6.2.2 Incentivize micro housing/bunk houses; small units within existing structures or in new infrastructure; and, tiny homes<br><br>6.2.3 Repurpose/Remodel Existing Infrastructure - identify abandoned or dilapidated structures and resources to refurbish canneries, warehouses (e.g. Ward Cove, other), churches, and schools<br><br>6.2.4 Prioritize temporary housing options including:<br>▶ House swaps<br>▶ Development of RV parks (seasonal and/or year-round options)<br>▶ Explore seasonal "worker camps" on underutilized public or privately owned sites<br>▶ Expansion of RV parks (seasonal and/or year-round options)<br>▶ Accommodation ships and barges (e.g.Ward Cove's Malaspina)<br>▶ Incentives for seasonal businesses to accept some lease liability for employee housing<br><br>6.2.5 Establish long-term housing zoning and codes including:<br>▶ Land trades or incentives for large employers to build housing (see Solution #3)<br>▶ Evaluate and promote existing tax incentives for renting or/selling to local workforce<br>▶ Create incentives for selling homes to the local workforce<br>▶ Promote and/or restructure zoning that enables and adds incentives for current properties to create employee housing on their properties |

**Partner Organizations:**

KGB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman, Native organizations, Housing Authorities - Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) and Tlingit and Haida, NGOs dealing with health and human services, large employers, major builders, realtors, property management companies, and, local and regional lenders/banks

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Utilization of unoccupied structures and spaces for housing (e.g., warehouses, churches, schools)

▶ Identification of more flexible housing options

▶ Fostering community connections, trust-building and income generation for local homeowners

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Guidance drafted  encouraging best practices that support workforce housing options

▶ Short term rental (STR) rules and regulatory framework established including mechanism to capture lodging tax

▶ Consistent and frequent island-wide communications

▶ Short-term inventory of island-wide empty bunk houses and other existing seasonal housing options completed during first year of KTS implementation

▶ Initial inventory of possible infrastructure available to repurpose/redevelop housing is completed

**Potential References & Resources:**

▶ Assembly Housing Presentation - August 15, 2022 (identifies available parcels including possible uses and zoning)

▶ Other community models (e.g., Truckee/Lake Tahoe and Jackson Hole, Wyoming)

▶ Community has few permit fees and zoning requirements

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ State and federal grants

▶ Housing capital fund

▶ Sales tax

▶ Real estate transfer tax
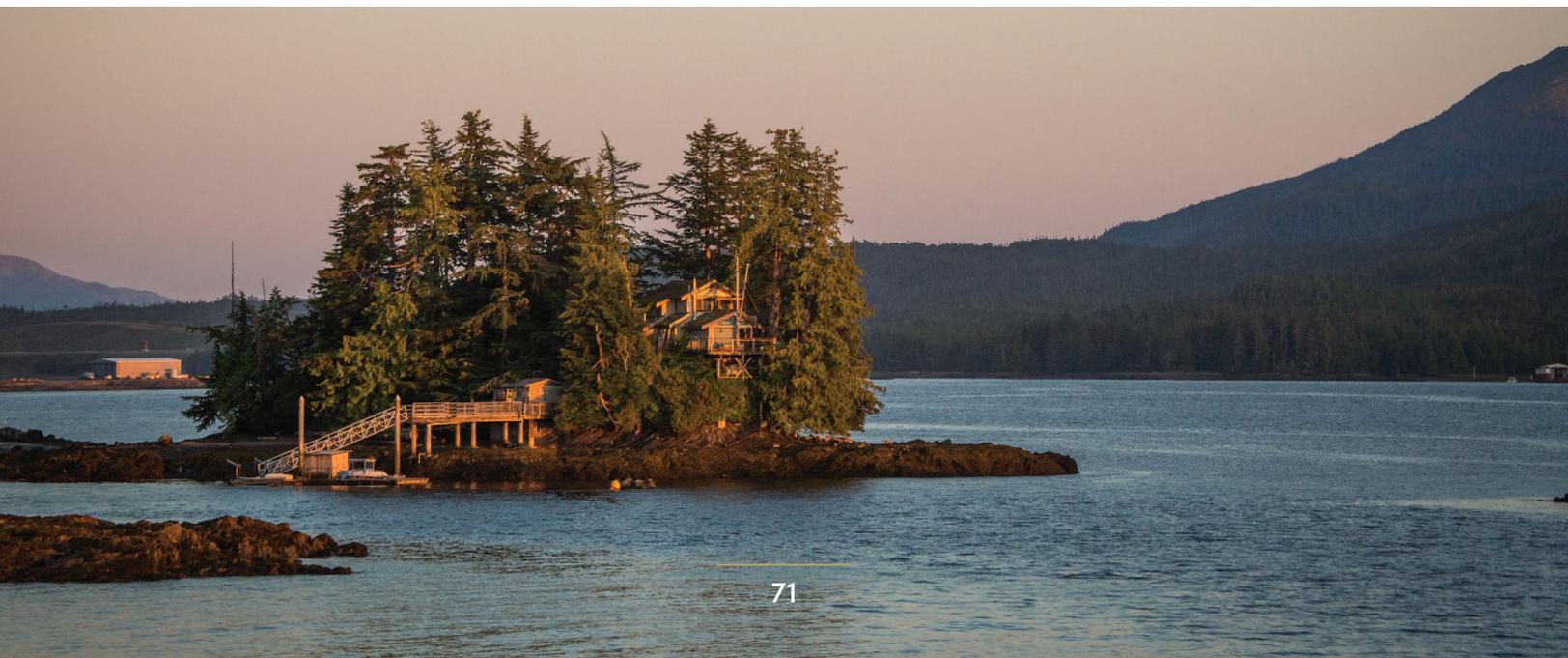
## STRATEGY 6.3 | Create community education campaign to support housing development

In recent years, the KGB Planning and Development Department has been working diligently to revise zoning and building codes to promote development of workforce housing. Complementing this is an effort to keep residents informed as a means of removing barriers that preclude development of more affordable and flexible housing options. In light of these efforts, spreading the word and "demystifying" building and planning codes was raised as a priority throughout community stakeholder discussions to support greater awareness and better use of community development incentives. This strategy prioritizes dynamic community education and engagement around incentivizing development of workforce housing.

| STRATEGY 6.3:  Create education and engagement campaign to support housing development |
| --- |
| **Implementation Timeline: Years 3-5** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Develop education and awareness materials and outreach campaigns that explain current codes and programs and identify opportunities to modify rules that allow for and promote creative reuse and development of housing |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>6.3.1 Inventory existing housing programs and identify current outreach approaches. Coordinate with KGB Code and Planning Committee to publish a consolidated report and/or reference (annual or as needed) that guides community members on interpreting codes, rule changes and incentives to promote creative housing approaches and access to outlying areas (transit priorities)<br><br>▶ Consider tax structure that may be a disincentive for housing development. Support with public town halls<br><br>6.3.2 Create a "decoding the code" community information guide of zoning, development codes, and property rules. This should be available both as a print guide and digitally. An official launch of the guide can provide a webinar presentation and an FAQ of the goals for designing and disseminating this guide within the community |
| **Partner Organizations:**<br><br>KGB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman,Native organizations, Housing Authorities - Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) and Tlingit and Haida, NGOs dealing with health and human services, large employers, major builders, realtors, property management companies, and, local and regional lenders/banks |
| **Desired Outcomes:**<br>▶ Broader awareness and engagement with year-round residents and businesses on efforts to reduce barriers to housing development<br>▶ Collaboration between local governments and private sector to increase housing availability |
| **Key Success Metrics:**<br>▶ Terms are defined and resources are published to "decode" current zoning codes and property rules to support development of workforce housing<br>▶ Standardized sales and occupancy taxes collected for STRs<br>▶ Increased private sector efforts to develop workforce housing |
| **Potential Resources and References:**<br>▶ Assembly Housing Presentation - August 15, 2022 (identifies available parcels and zoning)<br>▶ KGB sales/occupancy taxes on STRs/enforcement resources |
| **Potential Funding Sources:**<br>▶ KGB resources<br>▶ Support funding from Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce |

## Goal 7: Monitor holistic impacts of tourism

While Ketchikan stakeholders do monitor a variety of indicators, the range of indicators is quite limited and the monitoring activities are inconsistent. There is consistent tracking of cruise arrivals, yet there is limited tracking of overnight visitors including rooms sold and occupancy rates (no month by month data available). There is also some information on Ketchikan's visitor profile (outdated) and economic impacts of tourism. The State of Alaska, KGB and City of Ketchikan report data related to tourism taxes and fees. The State of Alaska and the U.S. federal government have comprehensive data on labor and environmental resources. While there is some monitoring occurring, Ketchikan lacks a holistic system that aggregates the data and interprets the full scope of tourism impacts to inform opportunities and priorities.

There is a need to define a holistic set of indicators and establish an ongoing monitoring system to track impacts of tourism over time on the community, cultural attractions and environmental resources. A holistic set of indicators that cuts across key pillars of sustainability—quality of economy and work, quality of life, quality of the natural environment, quality of the experience and the enabling environment for tourism—can provide Ketchikan with a snapshot of the full impacts of tourism.

You can't manage what you don't measure, which is why holistic tourism impact monitoring is critical to maintaining a competitive and healthy visitor economy in the long-term. Holistic destination monitoring can be a powerful tool to better understand the impacts of visitation to site use, environmental resources, the community and infrastructure. The knowledge gained from monitoring and data trend interpretation can be used to inform local decision making and provide insights for future forecasting.

The following strategies describe recommendations to further advance current tourism impact monitoring efforts.

### Measuring Success

Key measures of success are outlined below:
▶ Destination monitoring action team is formed
▶ Relevant impact indicators identified and cataloged
▶ Annual indicator report published

**STRATEGY 7.1 | Establish a holistic and regularly updated destination data bank**

While community stakeholders do monitor some key indicators that shed light on the impacts of tourism, much of the data is outdated and it is not comprehensive enough. The indicators that are being tracked are mainly focused on demand and economic impacts and there is a very limited focus on quality of life indicators. The current reporting does not capture the full scope of impacts on the local economy, community, visitor experience and natural environment. The objective of this strategy is to convene all key stakeholder groups and establish a centralized and holistic data bank to capture, analyze and report on a comprehensive set of indicators monitoring the full impacts of tourism.

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**STRATEGY 7.1: Establish a holistic and regularly updated destination data bank**

**Implementation Timeline: Year 2**

**Objectives:**

▶ To establish a regularly updated destination data bank with comprehensive metrics from a diverse group of community stakeholders

**Priority Actions:**

7.1.1 Establish a monitoring action team of diverse community stakeholder organizations to identify destination data sources and establish data collection protocols

▶ Determine which sectors need to have their data represented in the destination data bank

▶ Identify at least one representative organization for each sector, invite them to participate, and confirm their availability to participate in ongoing meetings

▶ Establish terms of reference for action team contributions including anticipated timeline for activities and actions for the initial/baseline scope of work

▶ Coordinate an initial meeting to define the monitoring themes for data. reporting, determine the working group oversight, identify indicators and data sources, and define protocols for data collection, validation, interpretation, and reporting

7.1.2 Define monitoring themes for data reporting and connect with organizations that have the information readily available

▶ Potential monitoring themes may include (but are not limited to):

   ▶ Quality of local economy and work: jobs, workforce earnings, tourism and sales taxes, other fees collected; tourism demand (e.g. visitation/visitor trends, cruise passenger counts, overnight visitors: rooms night sold, occupancy rate

   ▶ Quality of life: resident sentiment toward tourism; mobility, infrastructure and physical impacts (e.g. congestion, road repairs)

   ▶ Quality of  natural environment: energy, water, waste, risks from changing climate, ecosystem health, wildlife collisions

   ▶ Quality of the experience: TBMP hotline, USFS commercial permits, visitor satisfaction

   ▶ Enabling environment for tourism: tourism governance structures that support collaboration, funding for KTS implementation

7.1.3 Identify and catalog all pertinent impact indicators, including data sources and contact information for participating organizations

▶ Existing data sources include (but are not limited to):

   ▶ Indicators reported in the Ketchikan Situational Analysis Report (SAR)

   ▶ Indicators from previous community reporting

▶ Refer to the Draft Indicator Set for example indicators and data sources

## STRATEGY 7.1: Continued

**Partner Organizations:**

KVB, KGB, Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, CLAA, CLIA, USFS, State of Alaska Agencies, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Native Organizations

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ An established centralized data bank to host the various data sets related to tourism and community monitoring

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Initial meeting held
▶ Pertinent indicators identified and cataloged

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ Local jurisdictions
▶ In-kind contributions of organizations that already collect data on key indicators
▶ State and federal grants

**STRATEGY 7.2 | Publish an annual indicator report**

Once stakeholders have established a destination data bank, the next step is to annually interpret the data trends and analyze the potential impacts of tourism on the quality of the economy and work, quality of life, quality of the natural environment and enabling environment for tourism.

| STRATEGY 7.2: Publish an annual indicator report |
|---|
| **Implementation Timeline: Years 3-4** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ To transparently report on tourism impacts and inform opportunities and priorities for future planning |
| **Priority Actions:**<br>7.2.1 Working with an independent third-party such as a university or contractor, interpret data and analyze trends to communicate the full scope of tourism's positive and negative impacts to inform opportunities and priorities<br>▶ On an annual basis, convene the monitoring action team to ensure all pertinent impact indicators have been collected and validated<br>▶ Work with an independent third-party to facilitate team discussions on data interpretation and analysis of trends during the past season and previous years<br>▶ Draft an objective report of data findings and group discussions with the help of the independent third-party<br>▶ At a minimum, the report should include:<br>   ▶ Key indicators and highly readable dashboard<br>   ▶ Updates and trends on indicators reported in the Ketchikan SAR<br>   ▶ Updates and trends on community-defined impact indicators<br>   ▶ Updates and trends on user capacity indicators<br>   ▶ Updates and trends on how the community is performing on the destination diagnostic best practices<br>   ▶ A compelling story on the complex intersections of community, tourism, and sustainability, told through data, infographics, and narrative<br><br>7.2.2 Publish the report annually through readily accessible media channels<br><br>7.2.3 Consider replicating the data bank and interpretation methodology for other industries |
| **Partner Organizations:**<br>KVB, KGB, City of Ketchikan, Ketchikan Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce, City of Saxman, Alaska Native organizations, CLAA, CLIA, USFS, State of Alaska Agencies, |
| **Desired Outcomes:**<br>▶ Through objective interpretation, an annual indicator report can inform decision making and build confidence within the community that efforts are being made to identify recurring themes and address significant impacts |
| **Key Success Metrics:**<br>▶ The first indicator report is published within 12 months of the first destination data bank meeting |
| **Potential Funding Sources:**<br>▶ Local jurisdictions<br>▶ In-kind contributions of organizations that already collect data on key indicators<br>▶ State and federal grants |

To achieve the community's vision of balancing residents' quality of life and the long-term health of the visitor economy, all communities and local jurisdictions will need to share responsibility for, and work collaboratively on, management of the destination. The need for coordination across local jurisdictions was identified as a top priority among all tourism stakeholders  and the broader community based on the resident survey findings. A new tourism governance structure is needed to support the coordination and sharing of responsibilities involved in effective collaborative management.

The KTS provides a general framework to guide the "joining up" of tourism efforts across all local jurisdictions. The islandwide stewardship goals and strategic priority initiatives outlined in this strategy document are representative of what all stakeholder groups, including residents, believe to be most important to address for the future of tourism in Ketchikan. The establishment of an islandwide tourism governance structure that supports collaborative management underpins successful implementation of the community vision, stewardship goals and priority initiatives outlined in the KTS.

### Measuring Success

Key measurements of success are outlined below.
- Effective interim and permanent structures for destination management and KTS implementation are established.
- Improved coordination and collaboration across all jurisdictions (KGB, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman) and all communities (private sector, public sector, civic sector, and the wider community).
- Destination management structures communicate regularly with the private sector, public sector, civic sector, and the wider community to manage change and expectations about destination management outcomes.

## DESTINATION MANAGEMENT IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

### New Tourism Governance Needed:
▸ All local jurisdictions
▸ All stakeholder groups

BOROUGH MANAGERS

KETCHIKAN INDIAN COMMUNITY MANAGERS

CITY MANAGERS

DESTINATION COORDINATION & MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

TOURISM BUSINESS MANAGERS

COMMUNITY GROUPS & NGOS

**STRATEGY 8.1 | Establish an interim destination stewardship council to guide KTS implementation in the near term**

The establishment of a permanent governance structure for destination management will take time. While that work proceeds, an interim network is needed to maintain the momentum created by the KTS participatory planning process and to create a bridge between the current situation and the future permanent structure.

Establishing a network of key individuals and organizations that are critical to implementation of the KTS can serve as the interim governance structure. The existing KTS Community Advisory Committee, which includes representation from all key stakeholder groups, can serve as the starting point for the destination stewardship network. This group is currently made up of key leaders and leading organizations that represent all local jurisdictions/governments, tourism industry and civil society. There are advantages to this approach. The KTS Community Advisory Committee has a broad spectrum of community-specific expertise and members have a good understanding of the issues, which can make it easier for them to agree, take action and establish implementation methods and boundaries. This network can be called the Ketchikan Destination Stewardship Council (DSC).

This interim governance option offers all local jurisdictions an opportunity to test what works and what doesn't before creating a longer-term governance structure for destination management. It is important not to get stuck on this interim step, though. The interim network will need to develop a plan to establish the long-term destination management governance structure, and clearly communicate that plan to tourism stakeholders and the wider community.

| STRATEGY 8.1: Establish an interim destination stewardship council to guide KTS implementation in the near term |
| --- |
| **Implementation Timeline: Year 1** |
| **Objectives:**<br>▶ Establish an interim islandwide tourism governance structure that helps to support collaboration across all jurisdictions and stakeholder groups for KTS implementation |
| **Priority Actions:**<br><br>8.1.1 Design network structure and scope of work for the destination stewardship council<br><br>▶ Network structure recommendations: The DSC could be co-chaired by the KGB and the City of Ketchikan in close collaboration with the City of Saxman, Village of Saxman and Ketchikan Indian Community; a subset of network members will serve as a core/executive group to expedite decision-making; a network manager will be contracted to manage the network; network members will be organized into action teams based on agreed upon quick-win priority actions; network members can choose to join one or more action teams; organizations not currently involved in the network can be invited to join it<br><br>▶ Network scope of work recommendations: The destination stewardship council will guide implementation and monitoring of the KTS in the near term; support collective action around quick-win priority actions; support ongoing communications with key stakeholder groups about progress; foster trust and knowledge sharing among network participants; encourage key stakeholders to engage with and participate in the network; and remain accountable for SDMP implementation to tourism stakeholders and the wider community<br><br>8.1.2 Form a destination stewardship council that builds on the existing Project Community Advisory Committee<br><br>▶ Build on the current KTS Community Advisory Committee to form the destination stewardship network. Representatives from missing stakeholder groups will need to be added to the destination stewardship network<br><br>▶ Identify and dedicate funds for a consultant to manage the DSC<br><br>▶ Finalize the interim structure in tandem with formal launch of the KTS in the Summer 2023 |

### 8.1.3 Define year one KTS quick wins and guide implementation of priority actions

▶ The DSC will select 2–3 quick-win KTS priority actions for implementation. This approach will help to demonstrate tangible and measurable results within the first year. These quick wins can be instrumental in garnering support for more complex initiatives

▶ The DSC will work together to secure funding for year one priority actions

▶ DSC members will organize into action teams based on agreed quick-win priority actions, and network members will be able to join one or more action teams

**Partner Organizations:**
DSC organizations including leaders from all jurisdictions–KGB, City of Ketchikan, Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC), City of Saxman, Village of Saxman.

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Shared management of tourism among all local jurisdictions

▶ Trust-building, coordination and collaboration occurring among local jurisdictions and stakeholder groups (public sector, private sector, civil society)

▶ 1-2 quick-win priority actions implemented successfully within the first year

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Effective destination stewardship council established in tandem with KTS launch

▶ Ensuring representation from all local jurisdictions and key leaders and leading organizations from all stakeholder groups including residents

▶ Manager of destination stewardship council is contracted and actively working to support coordination among network of leaders

▶ Action teams formed and one to three quick-win priority actions are implemented within the first year

**Potential Resources and References:**

▶ Other community models (Oregon regional destination management networks)

**Potential Funding Sources:**
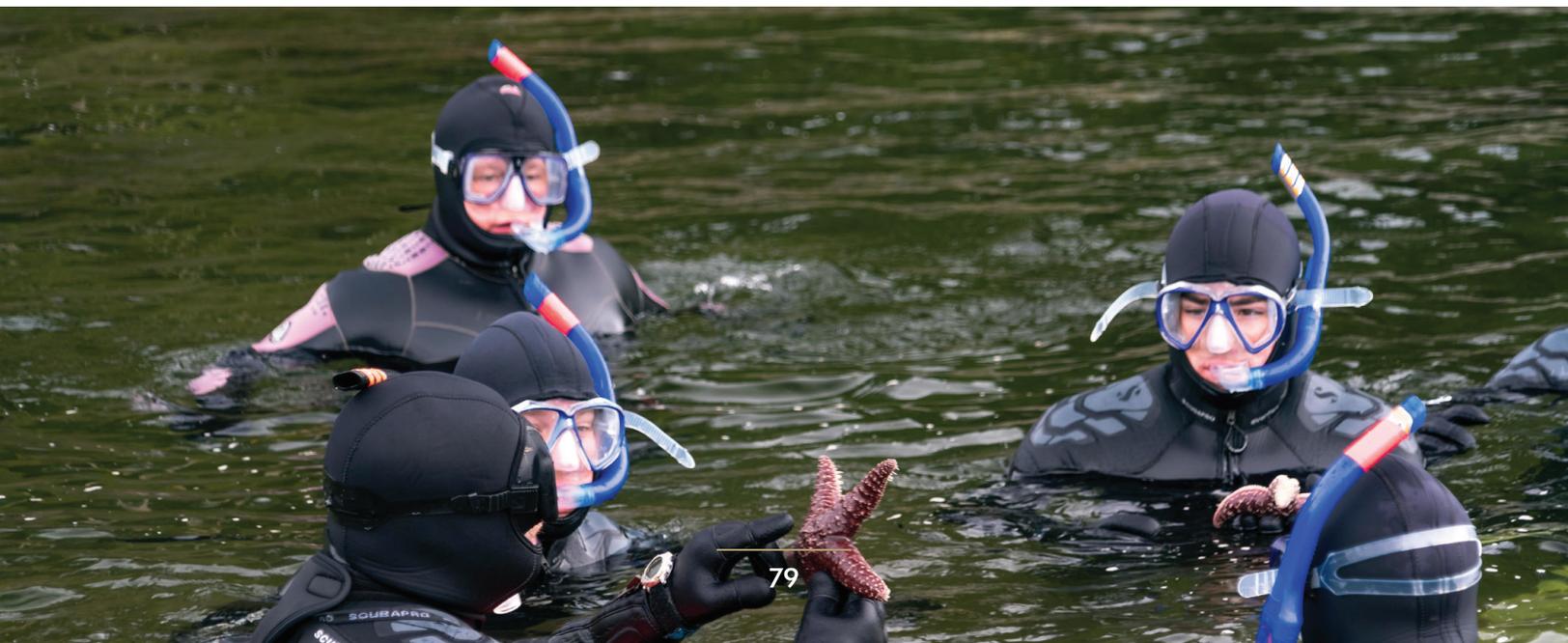
▶ Financial contributions from all key jurisdictions

## STRATEGY 8.2 | Establish a permanent governance structure for destination management and KTS implementation

A permanent governance structure is needed to sustain island wide collaborative management of tourism over time. Collaborative management will require convening and coordination at two critical levels:

▶ **Inter-governmental** – across local jurisdictions, i.e. the KGB, City of Ketchikan, City of Saxman, Village of Saxman and Ketchikan Indian Community; and

▶ **Multi-sectoral** – among key stakeholder groups, i.e. public, private and civic sectors including residents.

Ketchikan needs this permanent island-wide tourism backbone organization to serve as a coordinating body that brings together key stakeholder groups and leads a synchronized effort toward the community vision outlined in the KTS. This coordinating body will mobilize, coordinate and facilitate collaborative management of tourism. Key functions include ensuring sustained progress toward the guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, building community support and buy-in and mobilizing funding to support this initiative.

The backbone organization needs to uphold the core values and guiding principles of the KTS, and subscribe to good governance practices that prioritize building trust among all local jurisdictions and stakeholder groups, demonstrate transparency, and maintain accountability to all communities.

Destination management and marketing work hand-in-hand. While the tourism backbone organization's mandate will be focused on destination management, it will need to work closely with the KVB, i.e. the official destination marketing organization. The KTS identifies several destination marketing priorities that will help strengthen the KVB and support the alignment of destination marketing and destination management efforts. The tourism backbone organization will not displace the KVB or diminish its complementary yet differentiated responsibilities.

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**STRATEGY 8.2: Establish a permanent governance structure for collaborative management and KTS implementation**

**Implementation Timeline: Years 2-3**

**Objectives:**

▶ Agree on the organizational structure for a permanent tourism backbone organization / coordinating body

▶ Obtain buy-in for a permanent backbone organization / coordinating body from all local jurisdictions and key stakeholder groups

▶ Secure funding for the startup and ongoing operation of the permanent public sector entity

**Priority Actions:**
8.2.1 Establish a tourism backbone organization / coordinating body

▶ Socialize possible organizational structures for a tourism backbone organization / coordinating body

▶ Agree on the preferred option and timeline for establishing the tourism backbone organization / coordinating body

Governance options are outlined below. Both options situate the backbone organization / coordinating body within the public sector. A public sector entity may have stronger convening power and be perceived as having more authority. Furthermore, the broader community may more readily trust a public sector entity in balancing the interests of all key stakeholder groups, including residents

Option 1: Establish a regional tourism development and management partnership program
- ▶ How it works: Local jurisdictions enter into an interlocal agreement for the establishment of a regional Tourism Board of Directors
    - ▶ The scope of the interlocal agreement will encompass implementation of the shared vision, stewardship goals and agreed to priority initiatives outlined in the KTS
    - ▶ Local jurisdictions will contribute a set amount each year that provide funds for regional priority projects and activities and a tourism manager (contractor)
    - ▶ The KGB's Finance Director could serve as administrator of the agreement
- ▶ Considerations: Organizational governance guidelines need to be defined—the ideal new composition of the regional tourism board of directors, selection process, term limits, subcommittees, resource contributions, general duties, communicative procedures, etc.

Option 2: Establish a tourism commission.
- ▶ How it works: Establish a tourism commission modeled after KGB's Planning Commission and situated within KGB Planning. The commission would have representation from the KGB, City of Ketchikan, other local jurisdictions, trade associations (tourism and fishing) and civic sector including residents
- ▶ Considerations: Governance guidelines need to be defined—the ideal new composition of tourism commissioners, appointments, terms of office, qualifications, selection process, compensation to commissioners, general duties, communicative procedures, etc.

It is important to note that the DSC, i.e. interim governance structure, can work alongside the permanent tourism backbone organization / coordinating body. The DSC can be seen as an advisory group to the tourism backbone organization. It can serve as a broader multi-sectoral forum that ensures ongoing dialogue and collaborative impact

8.2.2 Secure funding to implement strategic initiatives of the tourism backbone organization / coordinating body
- ▶ Develop fundraising strategy that identifies high-priority funding sources at the local, state, and federal levels and takes action to secure resources
- ▶ Advocate for increase in lodging tax to fund KTS priority actions
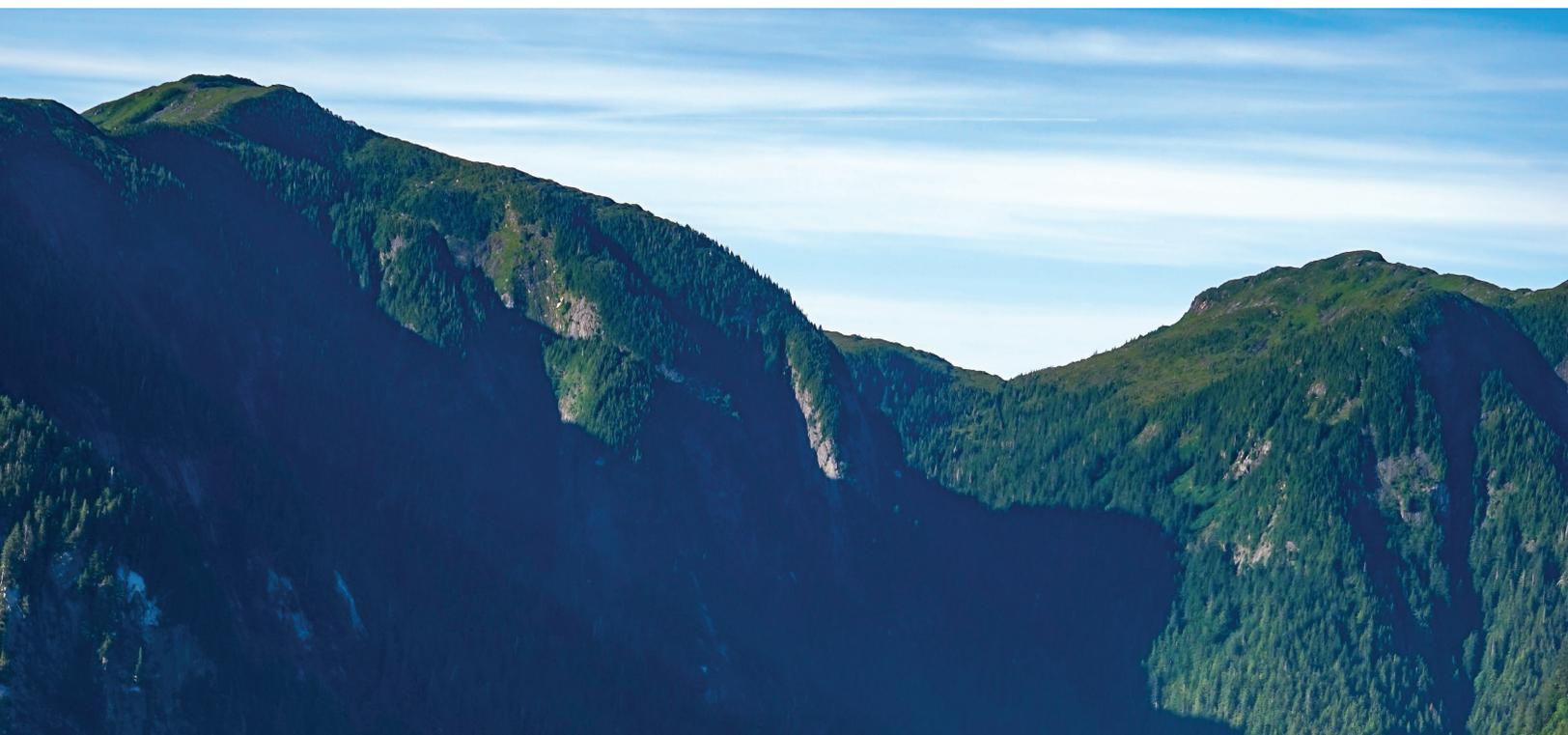
**Partner Organizations:**

Local jurisdictions—KGB, City of Ketchikan, Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC), City of Saxman, Village of Saxman, DSC participant organizations.

**Desired Outcomes:**

▶ Shared management of tourism among all local jurisdictions

**Key Success Metrics:**

▶ Functioning tourism backbone organization / coordinating body by year two of KTS implementation

▶ Trust-building, coordination and collaboration occurring among local jurisdictions and stakeholder groups (public, private, civic sectors)

▶ Successful implementation of priority initiatives outlined in the KTS

**Potential Resources and References:**

▶ Other community interlocal agreements - see Interlocal Agreement Reconstituting and Amending Cowlitz County Regional Tourism Development Partnership Program AKA "The Big Idea" and Tourism Board of Directors

▶ KGB Planning Commission Code

**Potential Funding Sources:**

▶ Financial contributions from all key jurisdictions to fund startup and ongoing operation of tourism backbone organization / coordinating body

▶ Time and effort of all key organizations participating in the destination governance structure

# 5. GOVERNANCE & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## *Are we getting there?*

This section of the strategy document provides an overview of the proposed implementation schedule for priority initiatives. It also provides additional information to guide further community discussions on the possible governance options for island wide collaborative management of tourism.

## Shared Responsibility for Implementation

The KTS serves as a framework for collective impact. The framework outlines a common agenda, shared vision, goals, strategies and priority actions that aim to inspire mutually reinforcing efforts and continuous communication across all stakeholder groups (public sector, private sector, civic sector) and local jurisdictions. Implementation of the KTS is a shared responsibility.

An interim and a permanent tourism coordinating body are critical to the successful implementation of the KTS and achieving the community vision of maintaining greater balance between the needs and aspirations of the community and visitors. Efforts should be taken to establish a destination stewardship council in tandem with the launch of the KTS (see Strategic Initiative 8.1 for details).

## Implementation Schedule

The following implementation schedule provides a suggested timeline for the rollout of the strategy. A phased approach to implementation is recommended. It is important to note that many strategic initiatives are interrelated. The timelines proposed serve as a guide. However, it is expected that the timelines may be adjusted based on local realities as well as the actual launch of an interim destination stewardship network and permanent structure for tourism governance which provide the framework for sharing responsibility for the implementation of the KTS.

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | YEARS |
|---|---|---|
| | 1.1 Strategic dispersal of cruise ship visitors | 1-3 |
| | 1.2 Integrate visitor dispersal strategies into destination promotion and marketing efforts | 2-3 |
| | 1.3 Increase enrollment of tourism operators in the TBMP | 1-5 |
| | 1.4 Support full roll-out and strengthening of the TBMP | 2-5 |
| | 1.5 Develop a visitor management strategy | 1-4 |
| | 2.1 Diversify the tourism product | 2-4 |
| | 2.2 Create a vibrant year-round downtown experience for locals and visitors | 2-5 |
| | 2.3 Lead a destination rebranding effort that supports the new year-round destination positioning and marketing strategy | 2-5 |
| | 2.4 Assess accommodation capacity for visitors | 1-5 |
| | 3.1 Generate awareness of the new KTS | 1 |
| | 3.2 Build and maintain community engagement around tourism | 2-5 |
| | 3.3 Develop an educational strategy to influence responsible and respectful behavior in the community and on public lands | 3-5 |
| | 4.1 Build robust tourism workforce pipeline | 2-3 |
| | 4.2 Improve recruitment and retention of workers | 4-5 |

| GOAL | STRATEGIES | YEARS |
|------|-----------|-------|
| | 5.1 Support development of KGB transit plan | 1-3 |
| | 5.2 Develop a "Rules of the Road" educational campaign | 3-5 |
| | 5.3 Improve pedestrian, single occupancy vehicle , and tour operator mobility | 2-3 |
| | 5.4 Increase transit options and hop-on-hop-off shuttle stops/access | 2-5 |
| | 6.1 Foster public-private partnerships for workforce housing | 1-2 |
| | 6.2 Identify and incentivize creative options for seasonal and long-term housing | 2-3 |
| | 6.3 Create community education campaign to support housing development | 3-5 |
| | 7.1 Establish a holistic and regularly updated destination data bank | 2 |
| | 7.2  Publish an annual indicator report | 3-4 |
| | 8.1 Establish an interim destination stewardship council to guide KTS implementation in the near term | 1 |
| | 8.2 Establish a permanent governance structure for destination management and KTS implementation | 2-3 |

# Annex

## Year 2 Implementation Schedule

| GOAL | PRIORITY ACTION | YEARS |
|---|---|---|
| | 1.1.2 Implement a hop-on-hop-off tourist bus system (See initiative 5.4) so that visitors can access different areas in Ketchikan that aren't easily reachable on foot | 2 |
| | 1.2.1 Devise a content development promotion strategy around the dispersion itineraries developed as part of Initiative 1.1 | 2-3 |
| | 1.4.1 Develop and promote a suite of educational resources that build capacity as an incentive to participate in the program | 2 |
| | 1.4.2 Leverage the existing tour operator training and education programs that are available from KVB and other local resources | 2 |
| | 1.5.3 Conduct a Limits of Acceptable Change study that expands the utility of the Attraction and Impact Inventory | 2 |
| | 2.1.1 Promote the off-season as a unique time to experience Ketchikan's rich culture without crowds. Inventory existing off-season events and activities and use in marketing material including an off-season calendar. (see initiative 2.4) | 2 |
| | 2.1.5 Engage and partner with industries not currently involved in tourism such as fishing and logging to create experiences that give visitors a look at Ketchikan's unique cultural and heritage connections to land and sea | 2 |
| | 2.1.6 Coordinate with Alaska Airlines to provide additional flights to Ketchikan during the off-season, and provide special prices and package deals for off-season conference, events, etc. | 2-3 |
| | 2.1.7 Increase the use of off-season lodging through the promotion of alternative operations such as conferences and events | 2-3 |
| | 2.2.1 Arrange a downtown task force to create guidelines and incentives for downtown businesses to ensure year-round appeal | 2 |
| | 2.2.3 Create a directory of businesses open during the off-season and map out itineraries of off-season downtown adventures | 2 |
| | 2.2.4 Build upon initiatives in the Ketchikan Waterfront Conceptual Master Plan with Historic Ketchikan and the City of Ketchikan | 2-3 |
| | 2.3.1 Hire a marketing and branding agency to undertake a destination rebranding effort that supports the new year-round destination positioning and marketing strategy | 2 |
| | 2.4.1 Collect monthly hotel occupancy data consistently and conduct a gaps and needs analysis | 2-5 |
| | 3.2.1 Develop a communications taskforce of industry stakeholders, including public and private sector, and community members that represents cross-sections from all jurisdictions to create and oversee a communications and engagement strategy | 2 |
| | 3.2.2 Allocate funding to create a full-time Tourism Community Engagement Coordinator position within the KGB to implement and coordinate community outreach and engagement, and coordinate communication activity around the Destination Stewardship Council. This role would eventually report to the tourism governance structure | 2 |

| GOAL | PRIORITY ACTION | YEARS |
|---|---|---|
| | 3.2.3 Publish an annual tourism indicator report of metrics and trends analysis (See initiatives under Goal 7 for details) | 2-5 |
| | 3.2.4 Coordinate an annual "state of tourism" public forum to present key performance metrics, provide ongoing reporting, and facilitate general awareness in the community on tourism industry updates | 2-5 |
| | 4.1.1 Create industry-level workforce pipeline development programs by tourism businesses pooling resources at an association level. A part-time coordinator can help to implement key initiatives, i.e. 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 | 2 |
| | 5.3.1 Create a collaborative community wayfinding and signage/communication sub plan as part of integrated transportation planning and updated KGB Transit Development Plan | 2-3 |
| | 5.4.1 Complete a transit efficiency study/review to evaluate flows and vehicles utilized to evaluate redundancy and gaps in public and private sector (commercial) tour operations and transportation services | 2-3 |
| | 5.4.2 Implement a waterfront shuttle/taxi service to improve visitor and resident experience and lessen land based traffic congestion | 2-3 |
| | 5.4.3 Explore opportunities/incentives for the private sector to create land based hop-on-hop-off pilot service for visitors | 2-4 |
| | 6.1.1 Create a housing coordinator position funded jointly by the KGB and City of Ketchikan in close collaboration with other jurisdictions. | 2 |
| | 6.1.2 Convene a housing task force composed of public sector (all jurisdictions), trade association representation of the private sector, and other key nonprofits. Ensure coordination with relevant agencies (e.g., transportation and public works) across all local jurisdictions. | 2 |
| | 6.2.1 Leverage the sharing economy | 2 |
| | 6.2.5 Establish long-term housing zoning and codes | 2-4 |
| | 7.1.1 Establish a monitoring action team of diverse community stakeholder organizations to identify destination data sources and establish data collection protocols | 2 |
| | 7.1.2 Define monitoring themes for data reporting and connect with organizations that have the information readily available | 2 |
| | 7.1.3 Identify and catalog all pertinent impact indicators, including data sources and contact information for participating organizations | 2-3 |
| | 8.2.1 Establish a tourism backbone organization / coordinating body | 2 |
| | 8.2.2 Secure funding to implement strategic initiatives of the tourism backbone organization / coordinating body | 2-5 |

# Year 3 Implementation Schedule

| GOAL | PRIORITY ACTION | YEARS |
|---|---|---|
| | 1.1.3 Create new locations of existing experiences (like the salmon ladder, totem poles in Newtown) so that visitors can still take part in quintessential Ketchikan activities without high visitor density at one location | 3-5 |
| | 1.3.6 Encourage operator participation in TBMP through direct incentives | 3-5 |
| | 1.4.3 Develop online learning modules to support operator/guide education and training | 3-4 |
| | 2.1.2 Work with local organizations to offer classes and artistic, educational and cultural activities in the off-season to help round out visitors' experience and increase length of stay | 3-4 |
| | 2.1.3 Engage residents to sell local products at events | 3-5 |
| | 2.1.4 Activate a previous proposal that allows nonprofits to collect the sales tax on items like tickets to gain additional revenue to support off-season activities | 3 |
| | 2.2.2 Implement visitor management tactics to ensure that visitation is balanced across downtown and there is an equitable distribution of visitors to businesses | 3-5 |
| | 2.3.2 Implement and oversee the branding development being conducted by an agency | 3 |
| | 2.4.2 Identify priority overnight visitor demographics to determine what type(s) of lodging is needed to expand summer accommodations and develop necessary lodging facilities | 3-5 |
| | 3.2.5 Develop and plan a series of quarterly industry-led informational events to provide key stakeholders with opportunities to present progress updates on strategies or topics specific to their sector | 3-4 |
| | 3.2.6 Continue to build out tourism planning updates and content to KTN Talk and grow this platform as a resource for community engagement and input on the tourism industry | 3-5 |
| | 3.2.7 Resume annual or bi-annual resident and tourism stakeholder engagement surveys for the community to ensure a regular feedback loop is supported | 3-5 |
| | 3.3.1 Identify resident and visitor behaviors in town and on public lands through survey results and additional consultation with key stakeholder groups | 3 |
| | 3.3.2 Create an outreach strategy framework that will help to influence responsible and respectful behavior in the community and on public lands | 3 |
| | 3.3.3 Develop a series of RV campaigns with educational messaging that aligns with the TBMP to address priority behaviors of identified audiences, such as responsible commercial vehicle driving, responsible behavior around wildlife, or shop local awareness | 3 |

| GOAL | PRIORITY ACTION | YEARS |
|---|---|---|
| | 4.1.2 Establish a "Sister City" Workforce Exchange Partnership; "sister city" options should ensure transferrable skills and prioritize coastal, marine, forest destinations such as Hawaii and Puerto Rico | 3 |
| | 4.1.3 Ensure greater diversification of tourism workforce to include youth, Alaska Native, retiree and immigrant communities | 3-5 |
| | 5.2.1 Develop an educational program that includes a manual supported by policies and training programs including best practices for commercial operators that is shared with all Ketchikan businesses and residents | 3 |
| | 5.2.2 Integrate the "Rules of Road" educational program into the TBMP | 3 |
| | 5.4.4 Identify infrastructure needs to improve dispersion, visitor experience, and safe access throughout the community | 3-4 |
| | 6.2.2 Incentivize micro housing/bunk houses; small units within existing structures or in new infrastructure; and, tiny homes | 3-4 |
| | 6.2.3 Repurpose/Remodel Existing Infrastructure - identify abandoned or dilapidated structures and resources to refurbish canneries, warehouses (e.g. Ward Cove, other), churches, and schools | 3-4 |
| | 6.2.4 Prioritize temporary housing options | 3-4 |
| | 6.3.1 Inventory existing housing programs and identify current outreach approaches | 3 |
| | 6.3.2 Create a "decoding the code" community information guide of zoning, development codes, and property rules | 3-4 |
| | 7.2.1 Working with an independent third-party such as a university or contractor, interpret data and analyze trends to communicate the full scope of tourism's positive and negative impacts to inform opportunities and priorities | 3 |
| | 7.2.2 Publish the report annually through readily accessible media channels | 3 |

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