



# Sitka 2022-2027 Strategic Plan

© Don Kluting

Adopted  
September 27, 2022

Revised  
November 2024



# A Message From the Steering Committee

In Sitka, we value community and quality of life. We are known for our natural beauty, rich history, and cultural heritage. We have a small-town atmosphere where neighbors know each other and are willing to lend a helping hand. Over the past several decades, Sitka has grown from a quiet logging and fishing town to a bustling tourism destination and a thriving maritime industry. This growth has given way to additional developments, such as a vibrant downtown showcasing locally owned businesses, growing regional community healthcare system, and expanded government services to support the community.

With growth comes change, but also the opportunity to chart our own course for the future. Our community has weathered a lot over the past few years – a global pandemic, record-high inflation, and political polarization, to name a few. Additionally, we are facing complex challenges, such as increased demand for housing options, record levels of tourism, food security, rising costs and demands for infrastructure maintenance, and changing needs to support today's workforce.

While we have a lot of priorities in our community, the reality is we, as the local government entity, cannot focus on everything at the same time. As we look ahead to the future of our community, we have the opportunity to collectively decide the direction in which we want to go. Equally important, we must be strategic about our resources and the decisions we make to ensure we arrive at our desired destination.

Our core purpose is to provide public services that support a livable community for all. For this reason, we pursued the development of a strategic plan in early 2022. This plan is a five-year road map to guide our organization in achieving our shared vision. Rooted in a substantial outreach effort to gather input from the Assembly, community members, local partner organizations, and the CBS organization, the strategic plan is focused on goals and tactical actions for the CBS to achieve the community's highest priorities over the next five years. The planning process also accounts for the significant input gathered during the recent Comprehensive Plan update process as well as an analysis of current community conditions and trends.

Over the past year, we have engaged hundreds of community members and collected thousands of comments to make Sitka a sustainable and livable community for all. We are grateful to everyone who shared their ideas through the community survey, interviews, community group conversations, and focus groups. Thank you for your investment in the future of Sitka!

We will use this plan to chart the course for the CBS organization and seek out the partnerships that will bring our goals to life. We will regularly communicate our progress and keep this plan updated to maintain its responsiveness and relevance to our community. Our team looks forward to growing the future together.



Alone we can do so little;  
together we can do so much.  
- Helen Keller



# Acknowledgments

## ASSEMBLY

Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor  
Timothy Pike, Deputy Mayor  
JJ Carlson, Vice Deputy Mayor  
Thor Christianson  
Kevin Mosher  
Chris Ystad  
Scott Saline

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor  
John Leach, Municipal Administrator  
Melissa Wileman, Public & Government Relations Director  
Amy Ainslie, Planning Director  
Robert Baty, Police Chief  
Melissa Haley, Finance Director  
Jess Ieremia, Library Director  
Ron Vinson, Utility Director  
Mark Seavey, Asset Manager  
Mark Hodges, Deputy Harbor Master  
Joshua Branthoover, HR Director

## CONSULTING TEAM

Sara Wilson, Owner & Principal Strategist  
Ashley Sonoff, Facilitation & Strategy Associate  
Sasha Konell, Communications & Engagement Director



SSW CONSULTING

REVISED NOVEMBER 2024



# Table of Contents

- 06 Introduction
- 07 Goals + Process
- 11 Mission, Vision, Values + Goals
- 14 Action Plan
- 20 Plan Implementation
- 22 Appendix

”

In the face of uncertainties, planning defines the particular place you want to be and how you intend to get there.

- Peter Drucker

“

# Introduction

## WE ARE GROWING THE FUTURE TOGETHER!

Sitka is known for its small-town friendly atmosphere, vibrant local economy, and stunning natural beauty. We want to preserve what residents love about Sitka while ensuring our community is a livable place for all Sitkans for years to come.

The CBS Strategic Plan is our five-year road map to guide the organization as we pursue the vision and goals reflective of the current community and organizational needs.

## WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?

The Strategic Plan is an opportunity for the community to reflect on the current state of our community and organization, determine what we want Sitka to be in the future, and ultimately define how the organization will drive this vision forward in alignment with our mission and values.

A strategic plan acts as a compass. It helps our organization focus on a set of shared goals and guide it toward achieving them. The strategic plan provides defined goals and actions, rooted in community-identified priorities and informed by an understanding of current trends, along with an action plan and key performance indicators to measure progress over time. Furthermore, it fosters a culture of strategic management for the organization by serving as a resource to guide both long-term planning as well as daily decisions concerning the organization's delivery of services and the community's future.

The Strategic Plan will guide the work of the CBS organization over the next five years through the development of a mission, vision,

values, goals, and actions that will help improve the services we provide to our community. The plan includes an implementation structure to promote accountability and transparency as we pursue our goals and actions. Additionally, the implementation structure supports regular updates to keep the plan relevant and responsive to community and organizational needs. The process builds on the input collected from the comprehensive planning effort in 2018 and includes a significant outreach effort in 2022 to gather input from the community, its partners, and the organization.

## WHY NOW?

The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) organization has weathered many changes over the last few years. This period of transition is a great opportunity to refocus with the development of a mission, vision, goals, and how to strategically align the resources to best serve our community over the next five years. Our community is facing complex challenges, such as housing needs, growth in tourism, cost of living affordability, infrastructure, food security, and supporting our local economy. To address these issues, it will require focused efforts, collaboration with community and regional partners, and strategically aligning our community resources to create positive change.

We highly value our community and want CBS services to be responsive to the needs of all Sitkans. The strategic planning effort has been an opportunity to come together to decide the future direction of our community. While we can't focus on every issue simultaneously, this is a way to understand the community's highest priorities for the next five years and guide the organization in addressing those needs.

# Strategic Plan

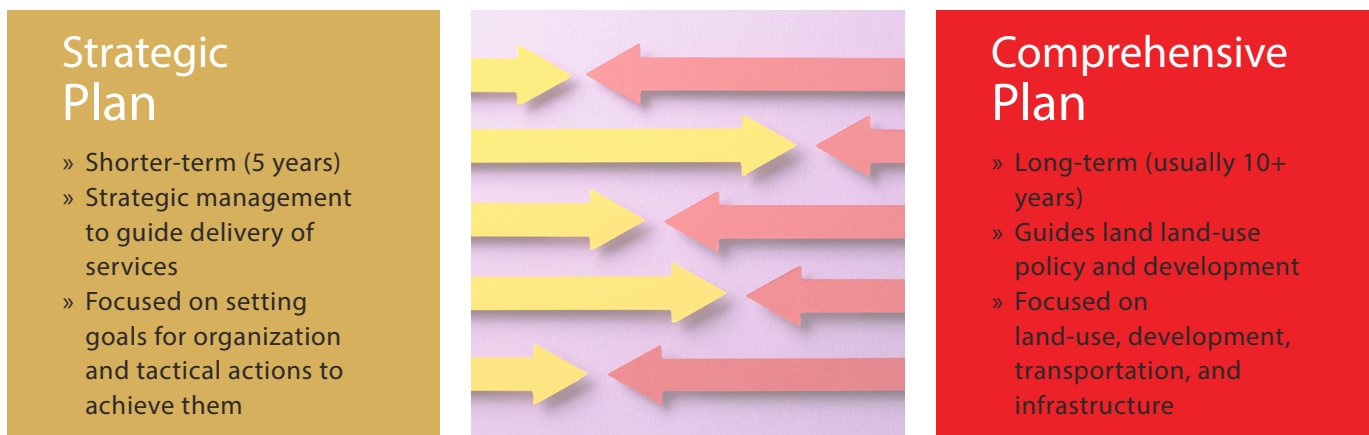
## Goals + Process

We set out to achieve the following goals during this process:

- » Build a plan to guide Sitka over the next five years
- » Develop a plan informed by the public engagement gathered through the Comprehensive Plan update and through additional targeted outreach
- » Identify the vision and values, critical strategic initiatives, high-level goals, and a reporting framework to guide the City's work

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND A STRATEGIC PLAN?

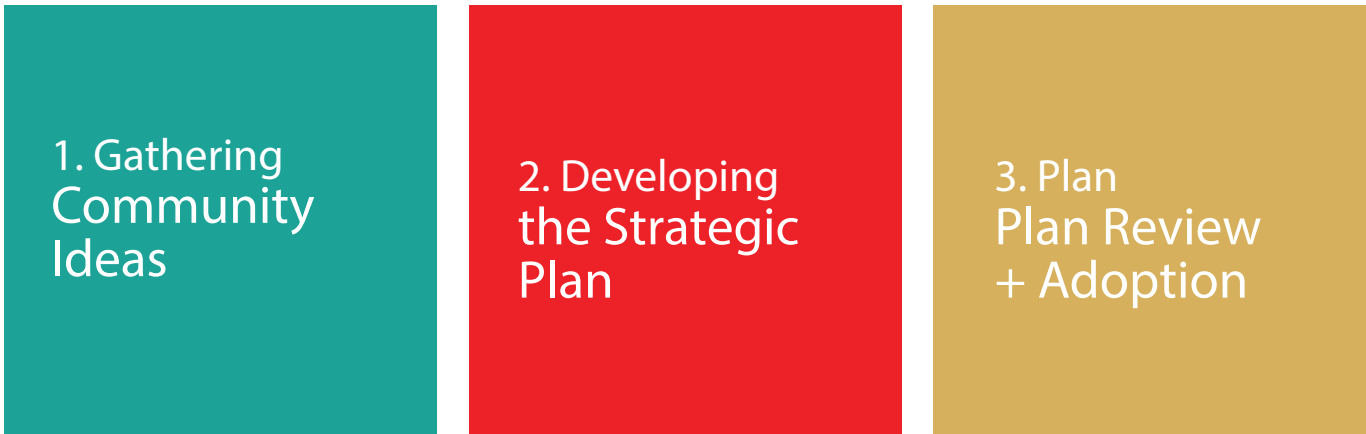
Sitka's Comprehensive Plan is a long-term (10+ years) guide for policy decisions related to community land use and development. The City and Borough of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan has been in existence since 1976 with regular reviews and updates, the most recent being May 2018. In contrast, the Strategic Plan takes a shorter-term look (5 years) and is focused on the delivery of services to the Sitka community. The strategic plan will help us focus on our goals and guide us toward achieving them with tactical action items.



### STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

Community and organizational engagement is the foundation of the strategic planning process. Building on the results of the large-scale community engagement conducted during the Comprehensive Plan update process in 2015-2018, the strategic plan community engagement focused on facilitating inclusive opportunities to ensure the vision and values are reflective of all people in Sitka. CBS staff was also engaged in the process to provide input and direction on operational improvements for the organization.

## GROWING THE FUTURE TOGETHER WAS ORGANIZED INTO THREE PHASES



### PHASE 1: GATHERING COMMUNITY IDEAS

After kicking off the project in February 2022, the Steering Committee, comprised of 12 representatives from CBS Departments and the Assembly, developed a Communications and Engagement Plan to assist with gathering ideas. The Steering Committee committed to an inclusive process that sought to include the input of all voices, whether through previous engagement in the Comprehensive Plan update process or through new outreach opportunities for the strategic plan. Additionally, the Steering Committee prioritized process integrity throughout the outreach efforts to build relationships and create trust that enables reliable government activity in a transparent environment.

The Steering Committee guided the process and designed multiple opportunities and tools to engage the community and organization in the Strategic Plan development, including:

- » Strategic planning workshop
- » Community survey
- » Presentations and outreach to Boards, Commissions, + Community Groups
- » Community leader interviews
- » CBS staff survey
- » Focus groups
- » Utility bill insert
- » Fact sheet
- » Social media, media release, and radio
- » Project website

### Communication + Engagement Goals

The following goals and values guided the team’s engagement efforts:

- » Engage targeted stakeholders to develop a five-year strategic plan that will guide CBS
- » Build on the results of the broad community engagement conducted for the comprehensive planning process
- » Create project awareness across the community and organization and facilitate inclusive outreach opportunities to ensure the vision and values are reflective of Sitka



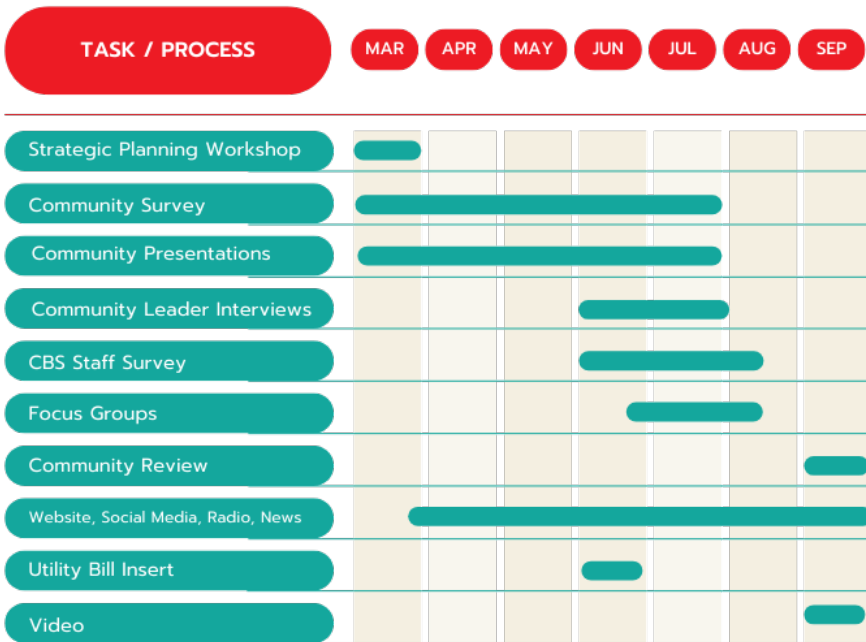
## Communication + Engagement Values

**INCLUSIVE:** this will be an inclusive process that seeks to include the input of all voices - whether through their previous engagement in the comprehensive plan process or through new outreach opportunities for the strategic plan. The process will seek to be inclusive and accessible to foster trust and build relationships to help achieve the resulting goals and actions.

**INTEGRITY:** We will ensure process integrity through our outreach efforts. Process integrity is the ability to build relationships and create trust that enable reliable government activity in a transparent environment.



# STRATEGIC PLAN Engagement Calendar



[sitkagrowingthefuturetogether.org](http://sitkagrowingthefuturetogether.org)

## ENGAGEMENT BY THE #'S

11 COMMUNITY GROUP PRESENTATIONS

8 COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEWS

635 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

35 FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

646 AVERAGE REACHED THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

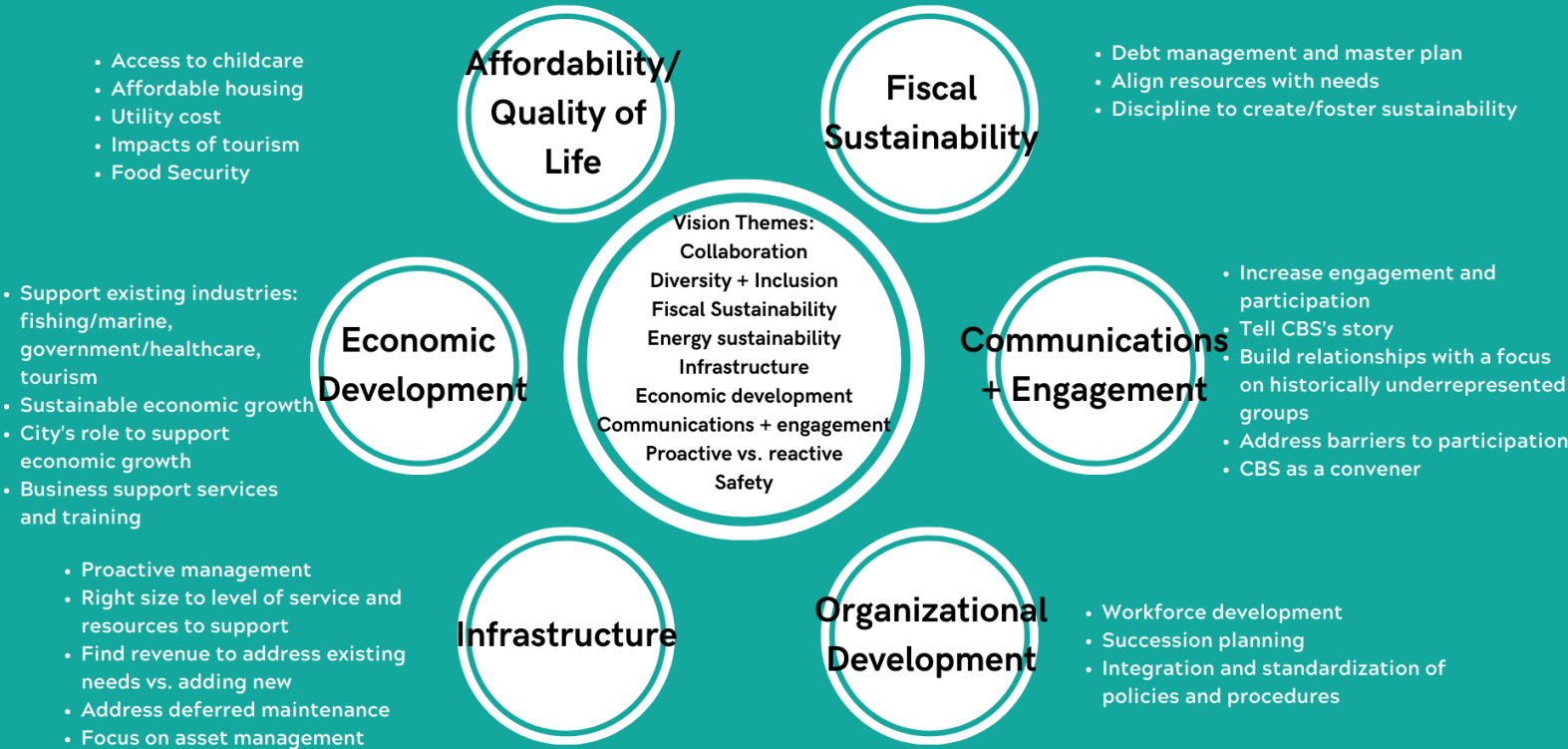
912 UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS



**PHASE 2: DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The project team carefully analyzed the thousands of community comments gathered through the outreach activities to identify common ideas, comments, and trends. Following the analysis, the project team organized the information into six outreach themes representing community priorities as shown below.

## Strategic Planning Outreach Themes



**PHASE 3: ADOPTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The project team presented the draft strategic plan to the Sitka Assembly on September 1st to gather feedback. The project team incorporated the Assembly's comments into the revised draft strategic plan and invited community members to review the revised draft online and provide comments. The project team incorporated the community comments to develop a final version of the strategic plan, which was presented to the Assembly for adoption on September 27th.

# Mission, Vision Values + Goals



© Don Kluting

## Mission

### WHY WE EXIST

Provide public services for Sitka that support a livable community for all.

## Vision

### OUR DESIRED FUTURE STATE

CBS is an organization that values everyone and proactively works together to serve the community. We are fiscally sustainable, supporting a diverse economy and well-managed infrastructure. We are innovative in seeking ways to protect and preserve Sitka's natural environment. We are a respected employer where people enjoy their work and provide valued public services.

# Values

## WHAT GUIDES US



### SERVICE

We take care of our community and each other. We anticipate and meet needs, are solution-oriented, and deliver outstanding work with pride.



### INTEGRITY

We uphold high ethical standards, treating everyone with respect, honesty, and fairness. We are transparent, trustworthy, and courageous in doing what's right.



### TEAMWORK

We encourage collaboration, breaking down silos through open communication. We embrace diversity, inclusion, innovation, and camaraderie. By working together, everyone achieves more.



### KINDNESS

We treat others with kindness and respect. Our workplace does not tolerate bullying or toxic behavior. Instead, we prioritize safety and well-being. We are friendly, considerate, and generous in our interactions.



### ACCOUNTABILITY

We take ownership of our work and welcome feedback. By setting clear expectations and staying consistent, we can effectively address challenges and achieve our goals.

# Goals

WHAT ARE OUR DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATION?



## Quality of Life

Preserve the quality of life and affordability for all Sitkans

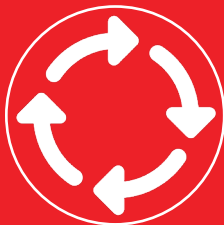
## Communication

Improve communications and strengthen relationships within the community



## Sustainable

Align resources and financial and economic policies with CBS' goals for a sustainable community



## Infrastructure

Plan and invest in sustainable infrastructure for future generations



## Service

CBS is recognized as being a great place to work and excellent service provider to the community



# Action Plan

The Action Plan contains the policies, programs, and projects CBS will implement to fulfill the organization's mission and achieve the five-year vision and supporting goals.

## WHAT IS AN ACTION?

The actions represent a policy, program, or project. The actions are organized by goal areas and support the overall organization mission and vision. The actions were informed directly by the ideas and priorities shared by community members and CBS employees during the strategic plan outreach process.

The scope and timeline of the actions vary. Some actions are significant undertakings and will require multiple years to achieve, while others are smaller in nature and can be achieved in a shorter time frame. Regardless of size and scope, all actions play a critical role in improving the delivery of services to the community.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THESE ACTIONS?

The actions of the strategic plan are internally focused with the CBS organization responsible for implementing these actions. Each action will be assigned to a project lead and team of CBS employees. While CBS plays a critical role in achieving these actions, the organization, and ultimately the community, will be most successful through working together with community partners to implement the plan.

“Execution is the ability to mesh strategy with reality, align people with goals, and achieve the promised results.”

-Larry Bossidy

# Goal 1: Preserve the quality of life & affordability for all Sitkans

---

1.1 Identify opportunities to address housing needs through policies and CBS assets

1.2 Identify opportunities to relieve the burden of utility costs

1.3 Review the impacts and benefits of tourism, and develop policies that prioritize the quality of life for all Sitkans

1.4 Continue to facilitate community partners to develop a community-wide strategy to improve access to childcare

1.5 Continue to facilitate community partners to address the challenges of food security



# Goal 2:

## Improve communications and strengthen relationships throughout the community

---

**2.1** Develop a communication and engagement plan to increase engagement and participation through storytelling and enhancing Sitka's communication tools and networks

**2.2** Collaborate as needed with non-profits + community groups to discuss community challenges, updates, and opportunities

**2.3** Identify opportunities to foster relationships with underrepresented groups/populations in the community to improve engagement and representation



# Goal 3:

## Align resources and financial and economic policies for a sustainable community

---

**3.1** Develop a fiscal policy that includes guidelines for areas of fiscal operations such as debt management, infrastructure replacement, metrics for fiscal health of funds, reserves, and other areas

**3.2** Prepare financial forecasts and life cycle models for all assets to bring resources in alignment with the City's top priority needs

**3.3** Identify and implement policies that will use the economic benefits of tourism to improve Sitkans quality of life

**3.4** Convene economic partners to explore the addition of business support services and employment training programs



= COMPLETE & ONGOING

# Goal 4: Plan and invest in sustainable infrastructure for future generations

---

4.1 Identify infrastructure gaps and pursue funding to address existing capital needs and deferred maintenance

4.2 Develop asset management plans for future capital investments



4.3 Identify the levels of service for CBS's infrastructure and identify the resources needed to support these levels

4.4 Collaborate with public land management agencies and stakeholders to maintain and develop sustainable active transportation infrastructure, including parks, fields, cabins, trails, and water access


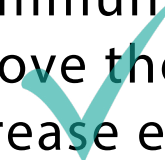


= COMPLETE & ONGOING

# Goal 5:

## CBS is recognized as being a great place to work and excellent service provider to the community

---

- 5.1 Develop a workforce development plan that outlines clear policies for staff training and professional development
- 5.2 Prepare a succession plan that addresses development of the current workforce and future workforce recruitment and retention strategies 
- 5.3 Identify and develop necessary standard policies and procedures to promote organization-wide stability and service-level consistency
- 5.4 Identify customer service gaps + implement process improvements for service delivery
- 5.5 Develop a internal communication and engagement plan and policies to improve the flow of information in the organization and increase employee engagement 



# Plan Implementation

## STRATEGIC PLAN NEXT STEPS

Following the Assembly's adoption of the strategic plan, CBS staff will use input and direction from the Assembly to prioritize the actions for implementation based on staff capacity and available resources. CBS staff will identify leads for each action. These leads will be responsible for the following:

- » Overseeing the implementation of the action
- » Developing a project charter (will identify the project team, stakeholders, timeline, key performance indicators, etc.)
- » Identifying resources for implementation
- » Engaging and updating the Assembly, Boards/Commissions, Organization, and the Community as needed
- » Reporting progress, challenges, and opportunities to consider during implementation
- » Recommending updates to the action if needed

Once the action leads have been assigned and the work has been prioritized, the actions prioritized for implementation will be considered in the budget development process. This will help in identifying resources for the action implementation if needed.

At the end of 2023, CBS staff will coordinate an annual progress report for the strategic plan. The progress report will document progress, challenges, opportunities, and potential updates to the actions as needed. This report will serve as a communication tool back to the Assembly and the community to maintain accountability in implementing the vision and goals.

## UPDATE

In November 2024, the Council gathered for a strategic planning retreat. With insights from the community, the Assembly and staff reviewed and updated the plan's action items. Additionally, we identified actions that have been successfully completed and will continue to inform and shape CBS operations. These completed actions are indicated with checkmarks in the document.

## FOSTERING A CULTURE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

While this is the first iteration of this strategic plan, it is intended to foster a culture of strategic management and guide the organization in developing a more efficient, effective, and transparent system of providing public services. The process below describes the recommended system for implementing the plan and making regular annual updates to it to ensure it remains relevant in meeting current community and organizational needs.

Regular engagement from the community, the Assembly, Boards/Commissions, and the organization are essential to fostering a system that is responsive and accountable. The graphic below illustrates what the annual process will look like going forward to maintain alignment between the strategic plan, the budget, and the departments' work plans. It also highlights where the engagement will take place, so the community, elected officials, and staff understand when and how to participate and get involved in this process.

It is recommended the strategic plan undergo a complete update every five years to conduct more comprehensive engagement, review the mission, vision, and values, and examine the broader community context. These major updates will ensure the five-year vision continues to serve as a North Star in guiding the community and organization. These community engagement efforts also help to foster strong relationships with Sitka's community and its partners and build support for implementing the goals.

# Strategic Plan Road Map

This road map shows how the Assembly, community, and organization can get involved in identifying goals for CBS. The process repeats each year with the destination being continuous community and organizational improvement.



# Appendix

The appendix provides more detailed engagement results gathered through the strategic planning process. These details provide additional context for the vision, goals, and actions in the strategic plan.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

Building off the community engagement data gathered as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, the community survey aimed to capture what community members enjoy most about Sitka, how Sitka can be a better place for residents, what areas CBS should prioritize in the next five years, and their communication preferences for receiving information from CBS. The project team promoted the community survey using both traditional and digital methods, including an insert in the utility bill mailings, press release, promotion on local radio stations, CBS website, and social media channels.

The community survey resulted in the most significant community response (689 respondents) of all outreach activities. To support our goal of inclusivity and include perspectives from all groups in our community, the survey included an optional question to collect respondents' demographic information. The following chart displays the demographic information provided by respondents who chose to answer the optional questions.

The project team carefully reviewed thousands of comments to identify common themes and trends that would lay the groundwork for the strategic plan goal areas.

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Sitka Demographics*
<b>Total Population</b>	635	7.7%	8,257
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	193	30.4%	51.4%
Female	363	57.2%	48.6%
Prefer not to say	4	0.6%	-
Other	26	4.1%	-
Did not respond	49	7.7%	-
<b>Age</b>			
18 and under	12	1.9%	23.6%
18-24	55	8.7%	5.3%
25-34	117	18.4%	14.3%
35-44	114	18.0%	14.5%
45-54	90	14.2%	12.7%
55-64	98	15.4%	14.5%
65+	99	15.6%	15.1%
Did not respond	50	7.9%	-
<b>Race/Ethnicity*</b>			
White	445	70.1%	61.2%
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin	29	4.6%	5.9%
Black or African-American	12	1.9%	0.4%
Asian	22	3.5%	6.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	77	12.1%	14.8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	16	2.5%	0.2%
Middle Eastern or North African	2	0.3%	-
Other (please specify)***	37	5.8%	16.7%
Did not respond	62	9.8%	-

\*Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

\*\*Sum of responses is greater than 635 as some respondents made more than one selection.

\*\*\*Includes ACS categories "Some other race" and "Two or more races"



## **FOCUS GROUPS**

The project team invited interested community members to participate in a series of three focus groups during the first week in August to discuss the following topics:

- Key themes from community engagement survey
- Tourism + Economic Development
- Food Security

The first focus group discussed the key themes that emerged from the community survey, community leader interviews, and presentations to Boards, Commissions, and community groups. These topics included housing, cost of living, tourism, sustainability, infrastructure, financial stewardship, economic development, and communications and engagement. The second focus group included representatives from the local business community and discussed tourism and economic development specifically, as well as the relationship between tourism and quality of life. The third focus group included representatives from the Sitka Local Foods Network, Alaska Food Policy Council, food banks, grocery stores, local food producers, and other community organizations. This group discussed food security and explored opportunities to alleviate high cost of food, increase access to fresh produce, improve environmental sustainability, and support disaster preparedness.

Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, develop ideas, and discuss the role CBS should take in addressing these community priorities. The themes that emerged from the focus groups were consistent with the community input gathered in the survey, interviews, and presentations. The discussions helped guide the project team in finetuning the goals and actions to support community priorities.

## **OUTREACH SUMMARY**

The project team provided opportunities throughout the process for the community to learn about the strategic planning process and provide input on the strategic plan. The following matrix outlines the themes from each outreach activity.



Outreach Activity	Date	Participants	Themes
Strategic Planning Workshop	March	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of Living/Quality of Life</li> <li>• Fiscal Sustainability</li> <li>• Communications + Engagement</li> <li>• Organizational Development</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> </ul>
Community Group Presentations	March-July	11 groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love the community feel and access to nature</li> <li>• Affordability – housing, food, cost of living</li> <li>• Growing retiree population/workforce shortage</li> <li>• Isolated economy/not enough services to support residents</li> <li>• Infrastructure maintenance</li> <li>• Encourage/support youth to stay in community</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Support economic development</li> <li>• Workforce development</li> </ul>
Community Survey	May - July	635	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of living</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Food security</li> <li>• Cost of utilities</li> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Quality of life</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Education</li> </ul>
Community Leader Interviews	June - July	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love the community, nature, and quality of life</li> <li>• Housing – need more availability, concern about high cost</li> <li>• Balancing tourism with protecting quality of life</li> <li>• Cost of living – people are being pushed out</li> <li>• Lack of childcare</li> <li>• Housing - More efficient land use, open up new land, multi-family</li> <li>• Food – remove sales tax on food</li> <li>• Continued relationship with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska</li> <li>• Continued community engagement effort by City to build trust and positive relationship with community.</li> </ul>
Staff Survey	June-August	56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to improve communication and engagement with employees</li> <li>• More employee support programs are needed</li> <li>• Employee pay should be evaluated</li> <li>• More access to professional development</li> <li>• Shared vision and goals for the team</li> <li>• Imbalance of workloads for departments</li> <li>• Need for customer service training</li> <li>• Cost of living has a major impact on staff</li> </ul>
Focus Groups	June - August	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing availability and affordability</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Fiscal sustainability</li> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Food security</li> </ul>

The community outreach process gathered thousands of comments from community members for the strategic plan. The chart below provides a matrix of the 2022 goals and actions with comments gathered during the community engagement activities to provide context for action implementation.

Goal	Action	Community Engagement Notes
1. Preserve the quality of life for all Sitkans	1.1 Convene community partners to develop a community-wide strategy to improve access to childcare	Work with Sitka School District and other organizations to develop options for more before/after school care for school-aged children and daycare for infants/toddlers.
	1.2 Develop a plan to improve housing options for all in Sitka	Apply for grants and/or other funding options to develop permanent affordable housing units. Open additional land for development. Change building code to allow for higher-density housing. Designate CBS employee to coordinate efforts, write grants, and work with community organizations. Workforce housing.
	1.3 Identify opportunities to relieve the burden of utility costs	Explore utility bill credit program for sustainability measures taken on property.
	1.4 Review the impacts and benefits of tourism, and develop policies that prioritize the quality of life for all Sitkans	Limit the days and numbers of cruise ships. Consider only allowing cruise ships on weekdays. Create policies that support locally-owned downtown storefronts, including the transfer of ownership/management. Planning for the boom and bust cycles of tourism and revenue. Allow one-way street option on cruise ship days to allow local access while giving tourists enough space. More opportunities for year-round employment. Branding and wayfinding to support town identity and consistent look and feel of community. Shop local first efforts. Convene local business owners to hear directly from their experience in summer 2022 season.
	1.5 Convene community partners to develop an action plan that will address the challenges of food security	Sitka Assembly declare food security a priority. Secure land for community gardens. Designate CBS employee to support community garden coordination, gardening labor, grant writing and other funding opportunities to support efforts, establishing and coordinating neighborhood resiliency districts for community disaster preparedness. Remove the tax on food. Agricultural zoning to allow lower tax rate for people growing food. Lower utility rate for vertical gardening. Improve access to fresh produce. Vertical indoor gardening to provide year-round produce. Support soil health through composting. Prioritize edible landscaping over ornamental on public land. Potential partners: Sitka Tribe of Alaska, University of Alaska, Sitka School District, local radio stations, Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association (ALFA), local grocery stores, etc. Town hall meeting with community members to discuss food security. Conduct a citywide emergency food drill. Educational programming for emergency food storage. Establish neighborhood resiliency districts to support emergency food preparedness. Work with fishing industry partners to donate seafood to food insecure community members. Create a pool of funds to support processing of seafood, storage, and distribution.

2. Improve communications and strengthen relationships within the community and organization	2.1	Develop a communication and engagement plan to increase engagement and participation through storytelling and enhancing Sitka's communication tools and networks	Town hall meetings with trained moderators. Social media. Local media (newspapers, radio, etc.) Update CBS website. Public education on role of taxes, how money is allocated, etc.
	2.2	Identify opportunities to foster relationships with underrepresented groups/populations in the community and implement findings to improve service delivery to these groups	Sitka Tribe of Alaska Filipino community
	2.3	Annually convene non-profits, CBS boards and commissions, and other community groups for a community summit to discuss community challenges, updates, and opportunities for collaboration	
3. Align resources and financial and economic policies for a sustainable community	3.1	Develop a fiscal policy that includes guidelines for areas of fiscal operations such as debt management, infrastructure replacement, metrics for fiscal health of funds, reserves, and other areas	
	3.2	Prepare financial forecasts and life cycle models for all assets to bring resources in alignment with the City's top priority needs	
	3.3	Convene economic partners to explore the addition of business support services and employment training programs	Internships and mentorships with local businesses. Align industries with courses offered at high school so graduates are more prepared for available jobs. Foster partnerships between business community and Sitka School District. Support working waterfront, fix seawall, affordable harbor rates
	3.4	Identify and implement policies that will balance the economic benefits of tourism with the impacts on Sitka's quality of life	

4. Plan and invest in sustainable infrastructure for future generations	4.1	Identify and pursue funding to address existing capital needs and deferred maintenance	Higher property tax for non-residents. Progressive income tax. Revisit property tax and sales tax exemptions for senior residents.
	4.2	Develop asset management plans for future capital investments	
	4.3	Identify the levels of service for CBS's infrastructure and identify the resources needed to support these levels	
	4.4	Collaborate with public land management agencies and stakeholders to maintain and develop sustainable active transportation infrastructure, including parks, fields, cabins, trails, and water access	
5. CBS is recognized as being a great place to work and excellent service provider to the community	5.1	Develop a workforce development plan that outlines clear policies for staff training and professional development	Training varies greatly by department - communicate opportunities and make it accessible to all
	5.2	Prepare a succession plan that addresses development of the current workforce and future workforce recruitment and retention strategies	Conduct a salary survey. Evaluate employee support and wellness programs. Develop internship opportunities targeted for Sitka students.
	5.3	Improve customer service levels and evaluate process improvements for service delivery	Provide customer service training for employees. Bring more services online to allow people to do business with CBS outside of business hours. Evaluate improvements to trash service and receptacles.
	5.4	Identify and develop necessary standard policies and procedures to promote organization-wide stability and service-level consistency	
	5.5	Develop an internal communication and engagement plan and policies to improve the flow of information in the organization and increase employee engagement	

## SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED SEPT. 5-19 ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The draft strategic plan was presented to the Assembly on September 1, 2022. Following the presentation, the plan was posted online with a community comment form to submit feedback on the draft plan. Twenty one comments were submitted, and a summary of those comments are provided below:

Do you feel the CBS Strategic Plan reflects your priorities for the next five years?

21 Responses:

- » 13 – No
- » 5 – Y
- » 3 – Somewhat

Comments:

- » Doesn't include access to nature
- » Doesn't include commercial fishing industry – shipyard
- » Want more separation from U.S. Forest Service
- » No mention of active transportation (walking and biking)
- » No mention of trails, parks, or recreation, access to nature
- » No boat haul-out
- » No sure it is feasible for Sitka to limit # tourists
- » Get buses off road
- » Make arts a priority
- » Keep quality of schools
- » Substance abuse/domestic violence
- » It does not require robust financial analysis, quantitative analysis, and marketing research to support key resource allocation decisions.
- » Does not include aging school infrastructure or plans for replacement
- » Concern that succession planning will never happen

What would you add, remove, or change?

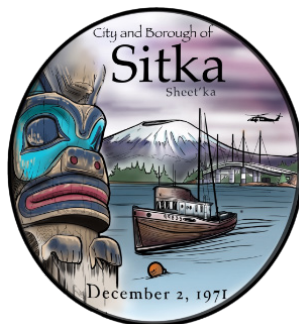
- » Tourism
- » Financial transparency and stewardship with infrastructure, utilities
- » Access to nature/trails, cabins, etc.

Comments:

- » Work with other agencies to support trail and cabin system (Sitka Trail Works)
- » Wants transparency on enterprise fund and electrical infrastructure upgrades
- » More time for public comment – difficult for commercial fishing industry to weigh in
- » Work with other agencies to develop an off-road trail system
- » Work with legal team to remove fees the U.S Forest Service charges the community of Sitka
- » I would like to see more attention given to size and shape of tourism and the benefits vs. the impact on quality of life for residents
- » tax structure for seasonal residents, especially as it relates to income producing operations and property ownership
- » sustainability and support of our substantial fishing industry, which also strongly supports our quality of life
- » Look at financial models for utility master plans
- » Under the infrastructure topic we need to closely evaluate the assumptions that engineering planners use to develop our utility Master Plans to ensure we are not inflating future costs unnecessarily.
- » Second, we need to closely evaluate the financial models used by Finance to make sure we are not duplicating and thus compounding inflation factors that may already be embedded in the utility Master Plans.
- » The community should consider a local annual dividend payment for residents, so we feel we are sharing in the financial windfall from the cruise income.
- » I would add improvements for walkers and bikers. Young and many older people cannot drive.
- » If CBS is to support the essential service of walking and biking facilities, CBS staff need to actively collaborate with other public land management agencies and stakeholders to maintain and develop shared infrastructure. Sitka Trail Works recommends an action, under Goal 1 or Goal 4, that encourages improved planning and coordination. 4.4 Collaborate with public land management agencies and stakeholders to maintain and develop sustainable active transportation infrastructure, including parks, fields, cabins, trails, and water access.
- » As the only non-profit dedicated solely to improving Sitka's outdoor recreation infrastructure, Sitka Trail Works is currently leading a multi-jurisdictional trail planning process. Our public engagement process has reached over 800 Sitkans, including 787 who responded to the 2022 Trail Plan Survey, 94% of whom reported using the trails at least several times a year.
- » Eliminate the "sustainability" effort. This is simply virtue signaling and a waste of time, effort, and money. Simply focus on delivering services as cheaply and efficiently as possible. Get out of the way of private industry and let market forces take care of affordability and availability.
- » One area I do applaud this effort is the area of tourism and quality of life. I am suspicious that the effort will be not focused on quality of life, but on the almighty tourist dollar...at the expense of quality of life. This past summer the unrestricted onslaught of cruise ship passengers definitely lowered the quality of life for residents. There has to be a balance and a serious discussion about this. Independent travelers had no chance to go visit the many sites around Sitka because of the crush of humanity.

Residents couldn't enjoy them either. The number of ships needs to be restricted with a few days a week with none so residents and independent travelers have opportunities. If part of this effort is to help local businesses why not focus on businesses that stay open all year and not shut down when the tourist season is over.

- » Fewer visitors
- » 1.3 Identify opportunities to relieve the burden of utility costs Explore utility bill credit program for sustainability measures taken on Property —this sounds like it would only benefit property owners. What about renters? People who rent have no control over the sustainability measures that a building owner might take. How can utility costs be made more manageable for renters?
- » I personally was less invested in the communication and the City employee development aspects.
- » There is focus on affordable housing and utilities. However, there are parts talking about income tax, reduction of sales tax exemptions, etc. sustainability includes taxes. Saving money from utilities to only increase taxes is a fools errand. The city needs to leverage new revenue streams not from residents. Invest that into the community and stop increasing taxes. There is a breaking point. Also, limiting tourism due to a minority of the population is foolish. Sitka's growing tourism industry is the only growing economic industry, other than government. Don't stop this growth, as this is the future of our economy.
- » Add: let residents be financially secure and use their homes the way they want, short term rentals.
- » Engage with former employees to learn from their experiences, pass on institutional knowledge, etc.
- » Set up system to tie strategic plan and budget so as to not inadvertently fund anything that is not in the strategic plan
- » Healthcare services + costs
- » Staff communication with the public + customer service
- » Prioritize cultural equity



City and Borough of Sitka  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
[www.cityofsitka.com](http://www.cityofsitka.com)  
907.747.1800