

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Agenda Sustainability Commission

Officers: Chair Aurora Taylor, Vice Chair Elizabeth Bagley, Secretary Erik de Jong

Members: Gerry Hope, Adam Vail

Staff Liaison: Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator

Assembly Liaison: Chris Ystad

Monday, September 14, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

Approve the May 4, 2026 minutes.

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*not to exceed 3 minutes on topics off the agenda*)

V. SPECIAL REPORTS

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

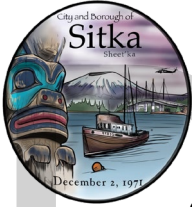
A. Approve the Sitka Community Renewable Energy Strategy Data Quality Benchmarks

VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*not to exceed 3 minutes on topics on or off the agenda*)

IX. REPORTS (*Staff, Chair, Assembly, Commissioners*)

X. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

XI. ADJOURNMENT



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Minutes Sustainability Commission

Officers: Chair Aurora Taylor, Vice Chair Elizabeth Bagley, Secretary Erik de Jong

Members: Gerry Hope, Adam Vail

Staff Liaison: Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator

Assembly Liaison: Tim Pike

Monday, May 4, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order at approximately 6:03 p.m.

Present: Aurora Taylor (Chair), Elizabeth Bagley, Gerry Hope, Erik de Jong, Adam Vail, Timothy Pike (Assembly Liaison)

Absent: None

Staff: Bri Gabel (Sustainability Coordinator),
Amy Ainslie (Planning and Community Development Director)

Public: Aaron Brakel, Grant EchoHawk (Southeast Alaska Conservation Council)

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

Hope moved to pass the agenda without changes.

Motion PASSED 5-0 by voice vote.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

Approve the April 6, 2026 minutes.

Hope moved to approve the April 6, 2026 minutes.

Motion PASSED 5-0 by voice vote.

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics off the agenda)*

None.

V. SPECIAL REPORTS

Grant EchoHawk, Clean Waters Strategist for the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC), presented on the use of heavy fuel oil and exhaust scrubbers by cruise ships in Alaska. He updated the Commission on current legislation that would require the use of cleaner fuels in Alaska, and that SEACC was building public consensus on the issue. He requested the Commission recommend the Assembly draft a resolution in support of ending heavy fuel and scrubber use in Alaska.

de Jong questioned the difference between open-loop and closed-loop scrubber technology usage by different cruise lines; EchoHawk responded that it was primarily larger cruise lines that use open-loop scrubbers, and that ending heavy fuel use would also end the use of scrubbers in Alaska.

Taylor inquired about the timelines of the bills; EchoHawk informed the Commission that while the bills were introduced during the current session, they likely would not be passed until the next legislative session.

Bagley questioned if legislation was the ideal route for the issue and asked about fuel availability in the community ports of call; EchoHawk noted that the current legislative landscape of international laws and local laws had too many loopholes, a large number of violations, as well as transparency challenges and the introduced legislation would close a gap. EchoHawk also noted that cleaner fuel oil infrastructure was well supported and widely available in the different communities that are frequented by cruise ships.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approve the CBS comments on the Tongass Preliminary Draft Plan Content

Amy Ainslie, CBS Planning and Community Development Director, introduced the item and explained that CBS was a cooperating agency in the revision process. She walked through each comment section with the Commission while Commissioners asked questions and made suggestions as needed. Suggestions included requiring references and alignment with local plans, referencing applicable statutes, ensuring the comment language matched the currently accepted terminology, emphasizing specific and measurable metrics, reframing key metrics to be led by community need rather than use, and further clarification on “high” and “low” use commercial zones, and conflicting aspects of the Management Area definitions.

Anslie and the Commission reviewed the draft map of the Sitka Ranger District in the Draft Plan Content and discussed discrepancies and concerns of its classification of certain areas within the Borough. Commissioners shared concerns about the proposed Management Areas and noted that as they were currently written, were insufficient to adequately reflect community priorities without additional opportunity for public input.

Commissioners shared concerns about the vagueness and timeline of the Draft Plan Content and appreciated Anslie’s effort to draft informative comments that highlighted the need for local government involvement in the process and further support community concerns voiced at Forest Service meetings.

Hope moved to approve the draft CBS comments on the Tongass Preliminary Draft Plan Content as written and amended through Commission discussion.

Motion PASSED 5-0 by voice vote.

B. Appoint a Commissioner(s) to serve on the Sitka Community Renewable Energy Strategy (SCRES) Team

Gabel introduced the item and explained the expectations of SCRES team members. She noted that with a finalization path now determined, additional work was needed from the Commission and Assembly to appropriately interpret recommendations from the national lab technical team to make sure that goals and actions in the final SCRES are appropriate for Sitka prior to additional public comment.

Vail and de Jong volunteered with Taylor as an alternate if needed.

VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics on or off the agenda)*

Aaron Brakel provided additional cruise ship exhaust scrubber information and spoke in support of the Sustainability Commission recommending a resolution to the Assembly to request the ending of heavy fuel use in Alaska.

IX. REPORTS *(Staff, Chair, Assembly, Commissioners)*

Staff: Gabel reported on her attendance at the Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) retreat, announced the National Lab of the Rockies (NLR) Waste-to-Energy Technical Assistance report was finalized and now available, and reminded Commissioners of the upcoming SCRES Community Energy Planning Event the following week.

Assembly: Pike thanked Taylor and Bagley for their presentation at the previous Assembly meeting.

Commissioners: Bagley informed the Commission that Project Drawdown's new "Carbon in Context" tool was available online and that it was intended to help the public understand abstract concepts like Metric tons of Carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO_{2e}) in approachable ways.

X. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

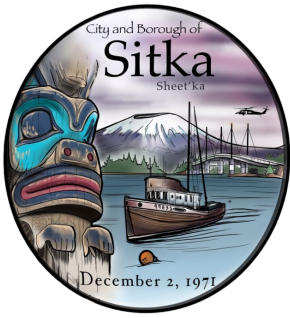
The next meeting was scheduled for June 1, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Harrigan Centennial Hall.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seeing no objection, the meeting ADJOURNED at approximately 7:40 p.m.

Minutes by Erik de Jong, Secretary



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Sustainability Commission Members
From: Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator 
Date: September 8, 2026
Subject: **Approve the Sitka Community Renewable Energy Strategy Data Quality Benchmarks**

Background

Having accurate and representative data has been commonly called for across the Sitka Community Renewable Energy Strategy (SCRES) and other community engagement efforts led by CBS. However, all data collection methods carry inherent biases that cannot be completely avoided but can be mitigated. There are a variety of statistical methods that can be used to help and make minor corrections to data that may not fully capture the intended target audience as well as inform collection efforts to target certain groups of interest.

To inform collection strategies, the following benchmarks have been proposed to support the final SCRES community input to be as accurate of a representation of the community as possible.

Recommendations

1. Aim for a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

Confidence level is probability that the sample accurately reflects attitudes of the population. The industry standard is 95%.

Margin of error is a statistical measure of how closely the results from a survey mirror the views of the whole population. The smaller the margin of error, the more confidence can be had in the sampled results. For instance, a 60% "yes" response with a 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level means there is a 95% chance that between 55% and 65% of the population thinks "yes."

2. Aim for a sample size of between 327 and 367 responses.

The confidence level of the sample will be reported in the final SCRES. Efforts will be made to reach the minimum recommended sample size of 327 with a target sample size of 367. If this is not possible, the adjusted confidence level will be reported.

Sample Sizes Needed to Meet Various Confidence Levels

Population Size	Confidence Levels with 5% Margin of Error				
	80%	85%	90%	95%	99%
2,150 Active Voters	153	190	242	327	508
7,016 Target Audience (16 yrs+)	161	202	263	367	607
8,319 U.S. Census est.	161	203	264	368	615

Recommended sample sizes based on different target audiences within Sitka's population using Cochran's formula adjusted with the Finite Population Correction. For all calculations, the proportion was set to 50%.

Recommended Target Audience: Sitka residents that are over 16 years old, which is approximately 7,016 people. While the survey will not be restricted to any age, it is a more realistic population given the purpose of the survey.

Sample Size Minimum: 327 responses; this uses the total cast votes in the 2025 municipal election. This may reflect residents who actively participate with CBS.

Sample Size Target: 367 responses; this uses size of the recommended target audience of Sitka. It should be noted that this adjustment does not sufficiently change the sample size recommendation but is included for transparency.

3. Aim for a $\pm 5\%$ demographic parity.

To improve representativeness of the population from the responses, collect appropriate demographic data and compare responses with U.S. Census data. Demographic data may be sensitive to some participants, so the kinds of demographic questions should be the minimum amount necessary to measure parity. It should be noted that demographic data is optional.

4. Target a minimum of 30 responses for high-priority groups.

Certain groups may be considered high priority for the Sustainability Commission and/or Assembly for the final SCRES. To maintain anonymity of responses, high-priority groups should not include more than two demographic variables and have a minimum of 30 responses to support statistical comparisons.

Currently proposed high-priority groups are:

- Renters
- Non-white residents
- Potentially high/severely energy-burdened residents/households

SITKA 2024 DEMOGRAPHIC ESTIMATES	EST. POPULATION	INCLUDED TARGET AUDIENCE?
SEX AND AGE		
Male	4,261	Y
Female	4,107	Y
Under 5 years	368	N
5 to 9 years	478	N
10 to 14 years	431	N
15 to 19 years	489	Y/N
20 to 24 years	477	Y
25 to 34 years	1,315	Y
35 to 44 years	1,152	Y
45 to 54 years	979	Y
55 to 59 years	488	Y
60 to 64 years	712	Y
65 to 74 years	871	Y
75 to 84 years	461	Y
85 years and over	147	Y
HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	577	Y
Not Hispanic or Latino	7,791	Y
White	6,607	Y
Black or African American	146	Y
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,701	Y
Asian	917	Y
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	184	Y
Some Other Race	800	Y
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
Less than \$10,000	176	Y
\$10,000 to \$14,999	226	Y
\$15,000 to \$24,999	527	Y
\$25,000 to \$34,999	259	Y
\$35,000 to \$49,999	669	Y
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1155	Y
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1088	Y
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2184	Y
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1188	Y
\$200,000 or more	904	Y
HOUSING		
Total housing units	4,161	Y
Owned	2567	Y
Rented	1594	Y

U.S. Census Bureau. *ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates*. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05. Retrieved September 3, 2026.

Possible Motion(s)

I move to approve the SCRES data quality recommendations as published in the packet.

I move to amend/add/subtract/replace recommendation # with _____.

(Staff will conduct vote to amend main motion)