

March 31, 2025



Big things are happening in Sitka! With the City and Borough of Sitka's Strategic Plan now into year THREE, we're seeing meaningful progress on initiatives that matter most to our community—affordable housing, sustainable tourism, childcare access, and so much more. Our Sitka team is collaborating across departments, working hand-in-hand with community partners to create a stronger, more connected, and more resilient Sitka for years to come. From innovative energy workshops to bold infrastructure projects, this plan is more than just words—it's a community-driven movement in action!

Check out some of the great things underway in YOUR community!

(CBS) STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS



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

Progress in Motion

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

Powering Sitka's Future, One Game at a Time

Sitka's Community Renewable Energy Strategy (SCRES) is gaining momentum! Community members are stepping up to shape Sitka's energy future through interactive workshops featuring Energy Quest: Plan what Sitka Powers by 2050, a custom board game built from real Sitka data.

Participants are exploring creative ways to balance energy use and generate power with the goal of electrifying Sitka by 2050. The roadmaps created will directly inform the SCRES document—helping turn ideas into action. So far, 30 roadmaps have been built, many by local high school students. Workshops are running through

March and April, and additional game sessions can be scheduled by reaching out to sustainability@cityofsitka.org.



Tourism, Safety, and Sitka's Future

Tourism in Sitka is getting a fresh look as the Tourism Commission works to implement a Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program. Recent discussions have zeroed in on the top 10 tourism-related challenges facing the community, from pedestrian safety to quality-of-life concerns.

Our CBS Mayor returned from a recent cruise industry conference with key updates. Cruise lines are keeping a close eye on Sitka's proposed visitor cap, while also showing interest in sustainable practices like alternative fuels. The mayor highlighted local efforts to ease transportation strain, including a new bussing app.

What does this all mean for Sitkans? This means there are ongoing steps to protect community livability while balancing economic benefits from tourism.



Addressing Sitka's Childcare Crisis

A new report from the Health Needs and Human Services Commission outlines a community-driven strategy to improve childcare access in Sitka. The report highlights how the lack of affordable childcare is hurting families, the workforce, and the local economy. It includes actionable recommendations, from investing in existing childcare programs to exploring new public-private partnerships.

How does this support Sitkans? These steps could help working families thrive, boost the local economy, and help keep Sitkans in town by making Sitka more livable for young families.

Sitka Community Garden

Progress is sprouting! The City is moving toward finalizing a lease agreement with the Sitka Community Garden Association this spring. **This step will help strengthen local partnerships focused on improving food security and creating more opportunities for Sitkans to grow fresh, healthy food.** Look for more updates on this initiative in the coming months!

Goal 2: Improve communications and strengthen relationships within the community

Teamwork in Action

📺 We want to extend sincere thanks to the CBS IT team, Harrigan Centennial Hall staff, Parks and Recreation, Library teams, Royal Caribbean Group, and Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal for their collaboration and keeping Sitka connected during the latest GCI internet outage.

🏐 A big shoutout to Elle Campbell, Recreation Activities Specialist, for forming CBS's first-ever city league volleyball team—creating space for fun and teamwork across the Sitka community!

🎤 Finally, a special thanks to Melissa Wileman for leading efforts to enhance CBS's Communications. Melissa is actively working with teams across the organization to develop an updated website and a robust communications plan to

keep Sitkans informed, engaged, and connected. Want to keep up with all of the happenings in Sitka? Be sure to follow our social media pages.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cityandboroughofsitka>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cbsitka/>



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

Investing in Infrastructure

Big moves are happening at Gary Paxton Industrial Park! The Haul Out Travel Lift is progressing and on schedule, with steel structures now assembled and has shipped. Four open-top containers are ready to head to the factory for final loading before the equipment is barged to Sitka. Assembly coordination with SEDA and other partners is underway!

Elsewhere, high-level construction at the site is now 92% complete, with utility work and final concrete steps moving forward as weather allows. Stay tuned for more updates and behind-the-scenes photos this spring!

How does this project impact Sitkans?



Goal 5: CBS is recognized as being a great place to work and excellent service provider to the community

Strengthening Our Workforce

CBS is taking steps to ensure staff are fully equipped to serve the Sitka community. CBS launched NEOGOV, a new workforce development platform, in early March. Department heads are already reviewing available training courses to match employees with resources for success. As part of this process, CBS will create a comprehensive workforce development plan for each position, ensuring staff receive targeted training to **enhance service delivery and community impact for Sitkans!**

CBS Administrator Corner

2024 Annual Report & State of the City Address

Municipal Administrator John Leach, presented the 2024 CBS Annual Report during the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce's State of the City event on January 22, 2025. The report celebrates milestones from CBS's Strategic Plan, key statistics like nearly 93,000 library visitors in 2024 and over 24,000 police calls, and outlines infrastructure updates such as the GPIP Haul Out and community investments fueled by tourism revenue. The report also highlights CBS's refreshed core values: Service, Integrity, Teamwork, Kindness, and Accountability. [Read the full report here.](#)







CBS Legislative Priorities Interview

In his recent KCAW interview, John discussed CBS's FY2026 Legislative Priorities. These include critical infrastructure projects like Phase 2 of the Marine Haul Out, Eliason Harbor repairs, and the Thimbleberry Bypass project. He also shared how CBS is advocating for housing and childcare funding and addressing unfunded mandates like state-required jail operations. Staff are actively sharing these priorities with state and federal officials to secure much-needed resources for Sitka!

Animal Shelter

On Monday, March 10, over 30 community members attended an informal meeting with Assembly Members Christianson, Pike, and Ystad, at Harrigan Centennial Hall to discuss potential updates to Sitka General Code Title 8, "Animals."

The discussion was largely driven by public input, with a focus on key topics such as:

-  Shelter or Pound – Determining whether the community wants a shelter or a pound, what that facility should look like.
-  Animal Intake – Ensuring animals are seen by a veterinarian upon intake.
-  Animal Surrender Rules & Responsibilities – Discussion on what the surrender process looks like and the associated costs.
-  Animal Handling & Transfer Timeline – How long CBS should be responsible for handling animals before transferring them to the Friends of Sitka Animal Shelter (FOSAS).
-  Role of the Animal Control Board – Possibly defining where the board fits within the system.
-  Veterinary Services – The potential for a bid process to secure veterinary services, with work already in progress.

- 🐾 Animal Control Officer (ACO) Vacancy – What would happen if the position becomes vacant.
- 🐾 Collaboration & Contracts – The need for a clear structure outlining relationships between the veterinarian, ACO, and volunteers.
- 🐾 Lease vs. Contract – Examining whether the shelter should operate under a lease or contract, and the implications of each.
- 🐾 Funding the Shelter – Exploring options such as tax increases or fee adjustments.
- 🐾 Reporting to the Assembly – A suggestion for quarterly updates at Assembly meetings.

This meeting provided valuable insight into community perspectives and will help guide future decisions. Stay tuned for updates as discussions continue!

Spring Clean Up THIS Week



The annual **City Clean-Up** returns from **April 5–13**, giving all residential households the opportunity to dispose of acceptable refuse at the City Solid Waste Disposal Sites—free of charge!

Plus, don't miss the **Household Hazardous Waste Collection** event on **April 12–13**, open to all Sitka residential households. Bring your hazardous waste to the Wastewater Treatment Plant at **100 Alice Loop** for safe disposal. Need more info? Visit www.cityofsitka.com.



Spring is here, Sitka!

As you enjoy the longer days and the beauty of our community, don't forget to stay connected with us. Follow [CBS](#) on [social media](#) for updates on projects, events, and community news.

We'd also love to hear from you! If you have ideas or feedback on what information you'd like to see in future newsletters, please email melissa.wileman@cityofsitka.org.

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