
Health Needs and Human Services Commission Agenda

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 12:00 p.m.
Harrigan Centennial Hall

Commission Members:

Michelle Kavouras, Amanda Roberts, Lawrence “Woody” Widmark
Crystal Duncan, Amy Wilson, Sophia Schwantes
Assembly Liaison: JJ Carlson

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. AGENDA CHANGES

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*For items OFF the agenda - not to exceed 3 minutes*)

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 21, 2026

VI. REPORTS

Chair:

Commissioners:

City Staff: The Clerk’s Office will provide a board/commission annual training (~30 minutes)

Assembly Liaison:

Other(s):

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. Updates from working groups

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

C. Discussion/Decision to nominate a commission member to participate as a member of Sitka’s Walkability Action Institute Team

IX. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*For items ON or Off the agenda – not to exceed 3 minutes*)

X. ADJOURNMENT

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at noon in Harrigan Centennial Hall.

Health Needs and Human Services Commission Minutes
Wednesday, January 21, 2026 12:00 p.m.
Harrigan Centennial Hall

Commission Members:
Michelle Kavouras, Crystal Duncan, Amanda Roberts,
Lawrence “Woody” Widmark, Amy Wilson, Sophia Schwantes
JJ Carlson (Assembly Liaison)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kavouras called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Michelle Kavouras, Amy Wilson, Sophia Schwantes, Amanda Roberts (zoom), Crystal Duncan (zoom), Woody Widmark (zoom)
Commissioners Absent:

III. CORRESPONDENCE /AGENDA CHANGES

Kavouras pulled item D after being notified of a change.

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (*Public participation on any item off the agenda. All public testimony is not to exceed 3 minutes for any individual, not to exceed 3 minutes*)

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 19, 2025

Wilson moved to approve the minutes of November 19, 2025. Motion passed 6-0.

VI. REPORTS

Chair – Kavouras congratulated Widmark on joining the Sitka Community Health Council, reviewed upcoming community health-related events and opportunities, and noted a federal grant opportunity.

Commissioners – None.

City Staff – Bayne announced the clerk’s office will attend the HNHS February meeting to provide a board and commission training.

Assembly Liaison – Carlson provided an updated on a recent assembly item which passed on first reading to approve a supplemental appropriation for a childcare study in Sitka. The commission was thanked for their earlier work related to childcare, specifically member Duncan and prior member Evans for their 2025 report on childcare.

Other(s) – Director of Sitkan’s Against Family Violence Natalie Wojcik provided a presentation about the work that they do.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

B. Discussion/Decision on amendments to Sitka General Code Chapter 2.30 “Health Needs and Human Services Commission”

The members reviewed and discussed the proposed amendments to SGC 2.30. While they noted some difficulty finalizing precise language, they agreed the draft reflected the intended changes. Bayne outlined the next steps, which included finding two Assembly sponsors, a legal review, another opportunity for members to review and vote on the amendments and lastly forwarding the proposed amendments to the Assembly for consideration.

Wilson moved to recommend to the assembly to update Sitka General Code chapter 2.3 Health Needs and Human Services Commission as written. Motion passed 6-0.

C. Updates from working groups

Kavouras provided a working group update addressing the goal “Mental Health and Suicide Prevention/Postvention.” The “Health and Racial Equity” working group did not have an update.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

D. Discussion/Decision to nominate a commission member to participate as a member of Sitka’s Walkability Action Institute Team

Item pulled – no action taken.

E. Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair

Kavouras moved to nominate Wilson as Chair. Motion passed 6-0.

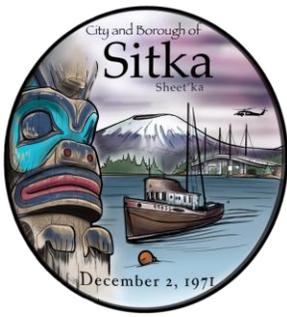
Roberts moved to nominate Kavouras as Vice Chair. Motion passed 6-0.

IX. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(For items on or off the agenda, not to exceed 3 minutes)*
None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Schwantes moved to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no objections, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Attest:
Holley Bayne
Deputy Municipal Clerk



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Health Needs and Human Services Commission

From: Melissa Lunas, Public and Government Relations Director

Date: February 11, 2026

Subject: Participation Request – Walkability Action Institute Sitka Team

Background

The City and Borough of Sitka is participating in the Walkability Action Institute (WAI), a multi-disciplinary training and technical assistance program focused on improving community walkability, safety, and access to everyday destinations. The program is supported through collaboration between Alaska Department of Health (DOH), Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), and Southeast Conference (SEC).

Over the summer, DOH, DOT&PF, and SEC worked with Sitka representatives through a structured process to observe walkability conditions, identify challenges in active transportation corridors, and select a focus area for improvements.

The DOH representative who previously participated in this effort through Public Health is no longer in that role, creating a vacancy on the WAI team. SEC has indicated that a member of the Health Needs and Human Services Commission could appropriately fill this position.

Enclosed with this memorandum is a draft summary of the work completed to date, including a few goals identified by the initial Sitka Walkability Action Institute team. These goals are intended to serve as a starting point for continued discussion and *refinement* as the team moves forward.

Analysis

The Walkability Action Institute is designed to bring together representatives from public health, transportation, planning, elected leadership, and community partners. Participation from the Health Needs and Human Services Commission would add a valuable public health and community services perspective to Sitka's ongoing work.

At a high level, Sitka's WAI goals focus on:

- Building and maintaining a strong interdisciplinary team to guide walkability and active transportation efforts
- Improving safety in high-use transportation corridors where pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, and visitors interact
- Strengthening connections between transportation routes and everyday destinations, including community facilities, recreation areas, and visitor-serving areas

Current Sitka WAI team members include:

- Assembly Member JJ Carlson
- Alexandria Lawrence, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
- Kaitlyn Jared, Southeast Conference
- Melissa Lunas, Public and Government Relations Director

Adding a Health Needs and Human Services Commissioner would help ensure that public health priorities, equity considerations, and community well-being are fully integrated into future discussions and potential implementation efforts.

As a result of completing the WAI planning process, Sitka is currently eligible for approximately \$10,000 in implementation funding. This funding may be used for pilot projects, demonstration efforts, safety-related supplies or equipment, and community engagement activities such as public meetings.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Health Needs and Human Services Commission consider designating a commissioner to participate as the DOH member of Sitka's Walkability Action Institute team through a motion.

Possible Motion

I MOVE to designate member _____ of the Health Needs and Human Services Commission to participate as a member of Sitka's Walkability Action institute team.



Active People, Healthy NationSM Alaska Hybrid Walkability Action Institute (WAI)/Walkability Virtual Academy (WVA) Team Action Plan

2025 Team Action Plan Guidance:

Each of the six Alaska teams will submit one Active People, Healthy Nation team action plan that includes the following:

- ✓ Must be specific to a [defined geographic location](#), such as county, city, or other local area (or Bethel, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Kenai Peninsula, Kotzebue, or Sitka).
- ✓ Must include a [minimum of at least two specific overarching policy, system, or environmental \(PSE\) goals and ensuing action step\(s\)](#). Potential outcomes could reflect those outlined in the [Community Guide](#), CDC real-world example [Implementation Resource Guide](#), or the CDC [Active People, Healthy Nation Physical Activity Strategies](#) list.
- ✓ Regarding the two PSE goals:
 - [One must be bicycle, pedestrian, or transit transportation](#) related, i.e., “activity-friendly routes”
 - [One must be land use](#) related, i.e., “everyday destinations”, where people live, learn, work, play, pray, and receive care.
 - The PSE goal(s) must be written in Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time (**SMART**) format. Your public health team representatives are familiar with writing SMART goals!
 - [We encourage you to submit more than two goals!](#) Most past teams submitted action plans with 2-6 goals, representative of a variety of active transportation activities.
 - [Your goals can be short-term, intermediate-term, or long-term.](#) Past teams have submitted goals with timelines ranging as short as the next six months to as long as the next 10 years of strategic planning. The action plan is unique to each location and that location’s future desires, and should be viewed as a living, ever-changing document.
 - [Goals must include at least one action step per goal as a minimum](#) (but are likely to have more than one action step). If the goal has more than five action steps, teams can adjust the chart by adding additional rows (and remove unused rows).

2025 Active People, Healthy Nation Sitka Team Action Plan



Name of Participant Team: Sitka

Goal #1: Identify at least two additional local champions and team members for the AWAI team by October 2025, with at least one of the two new members representing an elected position and/or having high decision-maker influence and authority.

Transportation (“Activity-Friendly Routes”) Land Use (“Everyday Destinations”) Not Applicable

Estimated reach: The this goal will reach the residents of Sitka, specifically all eight Assembly Members, Committee members, Visit Sitka, SEDC, and CBS Staff.

Action Steps (to include timeline):	Responsible Party:	Additional Comments/ Resources Needed:
Action Step 1.1: By 7/31/2025, community presentation of lessons learned and purpose of the AWAI program.	Sitka AWAI team	
Action Step 1.2: By 8/30/2025, Provide information directly to specific entities of interest.	Sitka AWAI team	
Action Step 1.3: By 9/31/2025, Meet with interested members.	Sitka AWAI team	
Action Step 1.4: By 10/31/2025, confirm participation of new members and update action steps/ goals of the action plans with all members.	Sitka AWAI team	

Goal #2: Implementing Safety Enhancement Elements/Features in four heavy-use Transportation Corridors in Sitka, Alaska by 2028.

Transportation (“Activity-Friendly Routes”) Land Use (“Everyday Destinations”)

Estimated reach: The benefits of this goal will reach and impact the community members of Sitka, Alaska as well the visitors (primarily Cruise) that make up the bulk of pedestrian traffic in the downtown area. The exact number of people in each of these categories will be later projected by the Assembly following the completion of Goal 1.

Action Steps (to include timeline):	Responsible Party:	Additional Comments/ Resources Needed:
Action Step 2.1: By 8/30/2025, schedule additional Walk Audits with Stakeholders to Collect Observations.	Sitka AWAI team/ JJ Carlson	Review HSIP nomination form for Harbor Drive crossing CBS Community Planner?
Action Step 2.2: By 10/31/2025, work with State DOT&PF to review functional classification of goal roadways, specifically Lincoln St.	CBS, AKDOT&PF	
Action Step 2.3: By 12/1/2025, work with CBS Assembly, Public Works, and Municipal Engineers to review and evaluate existing and potential policies and infrastructure improvement plans for supporting safety enhancements.	Sitka AWAI team/ JJ Carlson	Awareness of other tactics or ways communities address safety (cross walk types, signage, traffic patterns, other devices, etc.)
Action Step 2.4: By 3/1/2026, Work with the school to construct flower boxes or other features for a demo project and Pedestrian Safety Ambassadors for providing an observations tracker. Submit safety improvement requests to State of Alaska for State owned roadways.	CBS	

Action Step 2.5: By 8/1/2026, have conducted 3 months of a demo project at 200 Block Lincoln and Barracks.	School & Pedestrian Safety Ambassadors	
Action Step 2.6: By 8/31/2026, produce report on demo project results, recommendations and next steps	Sitka AWAI, Assembly, School	
Action Step 2.7: By 10/31/2026, Secure assembly and state approval for Safety Enhancements	CBS	
Action Step 2.8: By 3/31/2027, Secure any funding needed	CBS, SEC, DOT&PF	
Action Step 2.9: By 4/1/2028, Complete Safety Enhancement Efforts	State of Alaska & CBS	

Goal #3: Implement up to five corridor improvements along the Lincoln Street Roadway Corridor from Jeff Davis St to Metlakatla St for Vehicle and Active Transportation use to better connect travelers to the trails and facilities of the Sitka Totem Pole Historical Park by 2027. (Roads to Trails)



Transportation (“Activity-Friendly Routes”) Land Use (“Everyday Destinations”)

Estimated reach: The benefits of this goal will reach and impact the community members of Sitka, Alaska, the visitors that wish to visit the park and park event attendees. The exact number of people in each of these categories will be later projected by the Assembly following the completion of Goal 1.

Action Steps (to include timeline):	Responsible Party:	Additional Comments/ Resources Needed:
Action Step 3.1: By 8/1/2025, schedule additional Walk Audits with Stakeholders to Collect Observations.	Sitka AWAI team/ JJ Carlson	
Action Step 3.2: By 12/1/2025, work with CBS Assembly, Public Works, and Municipal Engineers to review future corridor improvement or utility improvement plans, determine possible ways to add improvements or changes to the corridor.	Sitka AWAI team/ JJ Carlson	
Action Step 3.3: By 1/31/2026, add the project to CBS Capital Improvement Lists	CBS	
Action Step 3.4: By 5/31/2026, host at least 2 community meeting	CBS, SEC	
Action Step 3.5: By 6/30/2026, budget project funding in CBS Fiscal budget for the project	CBS	
Action Step 3.6:	CBS	

By 4/1/2027, Complete roadway corridor improvements		
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