



To whom it may concern:

This letter is to express UAF Cooperative Extension Service Sitka District's support of the conceptual development of a Community Garden in Sitka, as proposed by community member Joel Hanson, representing a collaborative effort of the two local organizations: Sitka Local Foods Network and Transition Sitka.

The community garden project fits with the Extension Service's program goals to increase knowledge and adoption of agriculture and horticulture best practices for northern climates as regards to planting, pest management, harvesting and other major grower concerns. We see potential in the community garden as both an educational site for the community and an equitable way to provide support to growers in the state who do not have current land access to gardening.

Signed,

Jasmine Shaw

UAF Cooperative Extension Service Sitka District

(907) 747-9440

To whom it may concern,

The Sitka Homeless Coalition would like to express our strong support for the proposed development of community gardens by Transition Sitka and Sitka Local Foods Network. One of which will be located near the future site of the Hitx'i Saani (Little Houses) Community.



We want to emphasize the importance of these gardens in addressing food insecurity in our community. As you know, access to healthy and nutritious food is essential for the overall health and wellbeing of our community. Unfortunately, many members of our community, including those experiencing homelessness, struggle with food insecurity and lack of access to fresh produce.

The development of community gardens by these groups will not only provide an opportunity for individuals to grow their own food but also offer a source of healthy produce for those in need. We believe that this project aligns with the goals of our community in promoting sustainable and equitable practices.

There are many additional benefits that can be reaped from the establishment of community gardens. Besides being a source of fresh fruit and vegetables, community gardens also facilitate a sense of community and establish engagement and cooperation that can lead to increased stewardship for the land, enhanced feelings of belonging, and a sense of purpose from working towards a common goal.

Furthermore, it has the potential to foster community engagement and social connections. In light of these benefits, we urge you to approve the lease of land for the development of these community gardens. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to the positive impact this project will have on our community.

Sincerely,

*Andrew Hinton*

Andrew Hinton  
Executive Director  
Sitka Homeless Coalition



# SITKA FIRE DEPARTMENT

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA  
A COAST GUARD CITY

209 Lake Street | Sitka, Alaska 99835  
www.cityofsitka.com  
907-747-3233



May 8, 2023

To Whom it may concern:

The Sitka Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was informed of a proposal to create a community garden. This proposal was brought to our attention by LEPC member Joel Hanson, who is also the project lead for the community garden in Sitka.

The Sitka LEPC would like to extend its support to this project and believe that this will provide help towards the city's strategic plan for food security. As most know, food security and the reliance on a barge from Seattle twice a week are of concern to the LEPC. This type of project should be encouraged by the whole community.

We wish the Sitka Local Foods Network, Transition Sitka, and Joel Hanson the best of luck in completing this project.

Sincerely,

Craig M. Warren, Fire Chief  
Chair, Sitka LEPC

To Whom it May Concern,

The City of Sitka Parks and Recreation Committee would like to voice our support for a community garden. We recognize any garden project using city-owned land will go through a public process when it's reviewed by the Sitka planning & zoning commission. Setting aside the issue of a specific site, we believe the joint proposal by Sitka Local Foods Network and Transition Sitka is in keeping with the mission of this committee and goals set out in the most recent long-term plan for Sitka.

A community garden will benefit Sitkans in a number of ways. Among other things, it improves our food security, fosters outdoor activity and builds community. Since we live in a town where land is expensive and not easily made productive for growing, it makes sense to set aside public space to allow residents to join forces to grow food.

As outlined by the joint proposal, we agree the site selected should meet the following criteria:

1. It is at least a half-acre in size.
2. It has good southerly exposure.
3. The lot is not too steep or irregular.
4. It is reasonably accessible to neighborhoods.
5. It should have (but not necessarily must have) access to city water, sewer, and electricity.
6. The community-at-large must be generally supportive and willing to think of the gardens as permanent public amenities, no different than parks or baseball fields.

With an agreement and contingency safeguards in place the site should be made available through a non-competitive lease to the nonprofit organization for a nominal fee.

Sitka is fortunate to have active non profit organizations that could take charge of maintaining a public garden, so the cost to the municipality will be minimal.

The 29-year-old Juneau Community Garden Association's 2.5-acre community garden in the Mendenhall Valley could be a model for Sitka's.

The current proposal has already received letters of support from the Sitka Homeless Coalition, which leases land in the Jarvis Street area, the Tree and Landscape Committee and the Sitka Tribe.

Sincerely,

Sitka Parks and Recreation Committee



## **Sitka CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

201 Lincoln Street, Room 4, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
(907) 747-7509 | [info@sitkawild.org](mailto:info@sitkawild.org) | [www.sitkawild.org](http://www.sitkawild.org)

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Protecting the natural environment  
of the Tongass National Forest and  
supporting the development of  
sustainable communities within  
Southeast Alaska

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May 16, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

The Sitka Conservation Society Board of Directors unanimously supports the conceptual development of community gardens in Sitka, after hearing from community member Joel Hanson at our May 15th, 2023 board meeting. The community gardens initiative is a collaborative effort between two Sitka based non-profit organizations – Sitka Local Foods Network and Transition Sitka.

As an organization our mission includes supporting sustainable, thriving communities across the Tongass. An important part of community sustainability involves food security. We recognize that in addition to living within balance with our natural food sources in the Sitka area, we are very dependent on food imported from the Lower 48.

Sustainable thriving communities include residents working collectively to help each other in various ways. Working toward that end, our staff helped create the Sitka Mutual Aid Network Project and worked to organize and deliver food to Sitkans who needed food for a number of reasons during the difficult Covid-19 shelter in place time. Staff also worked with local partners to implement the USDA Summer Food Service Program to provide free lunches for children. Currently, SCS is working with Pacific High School, partnered with Barth Hamburg for design and Andrea Fraga to support the expansion of PHS's greenhouse and gardening program, which supplies the school with some of its own food while empowering students by providing education about gardening and sustainable food for them.

The development of community gardens within Sitka, as proposed by Transition Sitka and the Sitka Local Food Network, is another piece in completing the puzzle of providing food security in Sitka. This project can also benefit the community by facilitating a sense of community cooperation and interpersonal connection between people, an essential component of healthy, sustainable communities. As the project comes to fruition and details are clarified, we look forward to seeing the development of a clear, long-term management plan so that this community asset can be successfully stewarded for years to come. We would also like to acknowledge the planning that has gone into minimizing bear-human interactions and reiterate that the implementation of bear mitigation measures is of the utmost importance for the Board, as we seek to live in balance with the broader environment of the Tongass National Forest that surrounds us.

We are grateful for the planning and dedication that volunteers have put towards making community gardens a reality in Sitka. We believe that the Planning Commission review will address input from the neighborhood and affected property owners, and we are hopeful that this project will move swiftly and smoothly through the permitting process and into a reality.

Regards,

Deb Bruschafer  
*Board President*





# Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Tribal Government for Sitka, Alaska

April 5, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I write on behalf of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA), tribal government in Sitka, Alaska, with over 4,500 tribal citizens. As a tribal government, STA is responsible for the health, safety, welfare, and cultural preservation of its tribal citizens. STA would like to express its support for the community gardens proposed by Transition Sitka and Sitka Local Foods Network.

STA has been a strong advocate for the access to and consumption of healthy traditional subsistence foods. While most of the community has access to a variety of subsistence resources, there is still a reliance on agriculturally grown foods. Unfortunately, access to non-indigenous fruits and vegetables is expensive and inconsistent due to shipping produce into Sitka.

Living in a community that is surrounded by state and federal lands limits the amount of land available for residential housing. This land shortfall has led to high-density housing that is not conducive to gardening on a meaningful level.

The proposed gardens would provide residents access to space they normally wouldn't have to grow their own produce. This new space won't solve all of the community's food security issues, but it will increase food resiliency and augment existing subsistence food diets.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of support, contact STA's Resource Protection Director, Jeff Feldpausch, at (907)747-7469 or email [jeff.feldpausch@itkatriben-sn.gov](mailto:jeff.feldpausch@itkatriben-sn.gov).

Sincerely,



Lawrence Widmark  
Council Chair



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

## To Whom It May Concern:

The Sustainability Commission of the City and Borough of Sitka expresses our unanimous support for the conceptual development of Community Gardens in Sitka, as proposed by community member Joel Hanson at our regular April meeting. This is a collaborative effort between two Sitka based non-profit organizations—Sitka Local Foods Network and Transition Sitka.

The concept of a community garden project fits squarely into the commission's intent and goals, as codified by Sitka's General Code 2.15.060.B. Creation of a community garden directly reflects four goals of the commission, including diminution of Sitka's supply-chain fragility, food security enhancement, solid waste consumption, reduction, composting, recycling, and re-use, and robust and healthy local ecosystems and natural communities (SGC 2.15). This project aligns with these goals, as well as the city's five-year strategic plan and the comprehensive plan.

A community garden would have a variety of benefits, including wellness through gardening, provision of locally sourced, healthy foods, and increased food security for Sitka residents. It presents the potential to increase composting through structured programs and designated sites. It also increases equity among Sitka residents by providing land space essential to gardening to renters and apartment dwellers who lack resources and legal right to self-start gardening. Land is the essential resource to provide food to Sitka, and this project cleverly leverages city land resources to provide a plethora of diverse social and environmental benefits.

The Sustainability Commission is a newly formed city commission. In March 2023, our annual priorities were proposed and voted on by commissioners, then approved by the Sitka City Assembly. We acknowledge the value of a community garden and its potential for positive impacts on community members and the environment; further, we recognize the fervor and initiative that this project and its creators embody. The benefits from a community garden, coupled with the clear alignment with city goals led us to our full support for the concept and proposal of Development of Community Gardens in Sitka.

Signed,

Katie Riley  
Chair, on behalf of the Sustainability Commission



March 23, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

As members of the Tree and Landscape Committee, we are writing this letter in support of the Proposal for the Development of community gardens in the City of Sitka. This endeavor is being spearheaded by project lead, Joel Hanson and supported by two local groups, Transition Sitka and Sitka Local Foods Network. The Tree and Landscape Committee (TLC) is a volunteer group dedicated to the beautification of our fine city through rendering hours of free labor enhancing and maintaining the grounds of city properties.

Development of community gardens is an important first step in tackling one of the main challenges facing all of us of living on an island in Alaska—food insecurity. Community gardens can be an essential resource for providing fresh, healthy food for our community.

There are many additional benefits that can be reaped from the establishment of community gardens. Besides being a source of fresh fruit and vegetables, community gardens also facilitate a sense of community and establish engagement and cooperation that can lead to friendships, enhanced feelings of belonging, and a sense of purpose from working towards a common goal.

Community gardens promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging exercise and by offering an opportunity for people to get out of the house and connect with one another. Gardening can reduce stress and result in increased feelings of wellness just from being outdoors and connecting with others.

Community gardens are found in many cities across the country, and as members of the Tree and Landscape Committee, we believe that Sitka would benefit immensely by the establishment of community gardens. We fully support this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Deb Miller, Chair

Joe D'Arienzo

Lisa Moore

Liz McKenzie