

Sitka is located among the forests of Southeast Alaska nestled between mountains and ocean. It offers land and water with profound beauty and bountiful harvests. Its isolation offers pristine scenery and unique geographical challenges. Its history and future are dependent upon working together.

Based on public input, a preferred growth scenario was selected, one that reverses the trend of spreading out in a disconnected or "unharmonious" fashion, and instead focuses on growth and development infill. These infill corridors will provide greater access to transit, jobs, walkable neighborhoods and parks and recreation. The "preferred scenario" also uses less land, reduces costs associated with road, water and sewer extensions, and encourages walkable, mixed-use development patterns, which can lend to more affordable development.




LAND USE

GOAL:

Guide the orderly and efficient use of private and public land in a manner that:

- **Fosters economic opportunity**
- **Maintain's Sitka's small town atmosphere and rural lifestyle**
- **Recognizes the natural environment and**
- **Enhances the quality of life for present and future generations**

CURRENT LAND USE STATUS



Sitka is the largest City in the United States when measured by total land area and total area combining land and water, including 1,300 miles of coastline. Comparatively, the land area is about the size of the state of Delaware. Sitka is located on Baranof Island (10th Largest Island in the United States) in the northern part of the Alexander Archipelago in the Alaska Panhandle; and is partially sheltered from the Gulf of Alaska by Kruzof Island, which hosts the iconic dormant volcano Mount Edgecumbe.

On Baranof Island are the highest mountains of the archipelago. Most of municipal boundaries of land are found within the Tongass National Forest, which is comparable to most of Southeast Alaska.

The United States Forest Service recently updated its Tongass Land Management Plan including various Land Use Designations (LUD), which are primarily focused on recreation, tourism, and natural resource management. In addition to the Tongass National Forest, there are several congressionally designated wilderness areas within the boundaries of Sitka.

Land ownership is broad. The main public ownership includes various governmental entities including the City and Borough of Sitka, the United States Forest Service, State of Alaska, (generally managed by DNR and ADFG), the University of Alaska, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the National Park Service, and US Geodetic Survey. Major private land owners include Coastal Development Company, Baranof Island Housing Authority, Andrew Jack, Benjamin Rindge, Dixie McClintock, Haida Corporation, Charlie Bower, Bert Stedman, Avrum Gross, Alaska Arts Southeast, Inc., William Goertzen, Paul White, and SEARHC.

Current mapping of natural hazards is occurring through several programs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently updating the National Flood Insurance Program's Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Base Flood Elevations. Adoption of the maps would be required to continue to be a part of the NFIP, and this is anticipated for a decision around spring/summer of 2019.

FEMA is also sponsoring the updating of a Multi-Hazard Risk Report, in addition to Sitka's update to the Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, as well as partnering with the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey to further study and map landslide risks along the road system that should be completed at the end of

2018. All of these mapping projects could have positive impacts by providing the best information to date on known multi-hazard risks, but could also have unintended consequences such as impacts to mortgages and insurance policies as well as decreased value of land or increased costs for safe development.














KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

- Declining population and demographic shift will pose numerous challenges and opportunities. Conservative residential land development may be best considering projected population decline and costs of infrastructure expansion. Quality, accessible, and affordable housing options that meets the changing needs of older populations and the next generation should be the focus.
- Promoting economic growth and job growth that is sustainable will be critical to meeting the future needs. Sustainable, living wage jobs and industries that attract young families and younger demographics should be a focus.
- Infrastructure development should consider maximizing most efficient use within current footprint, and best return on investment including economic growth opportunities when deciding to expand infrastructure.
- Current residential zoning districts have a wide mix of existing residential and commercial uses. Often, current code and current conditions are not inline. New residential zoning districts should be considered that best preserve neighborhood character and promote affordable and quality housing options. Mixed-use zones should be used to buffer single family residential from heavier commercial uses. Other design and development standards should be considered in rezoning to promote harmony of use between heavy commercial/industrial uses from more sensitive residential uses.
- Many existing developed lots do not meet existing development standards for lot size, setbacks, or use. Consider new development standards inline with existing conditions and desire for more affordable development.
- Residential and light commercial mixed-uses are located adjacent to heavy commercial and industrial uses creating disharmony of uses and affecting both residential uses and business uses. A master plan for key areas such as Jarvis, Price, and Smith streets that addresses options to protect industrial heavy commercial uses while protecting residential and residential/light commercial uses should be pursued.
- Dilapidated mobile home parks along prime waterfront offer the opportunity to seek creative solutions to improve quality of park housing and best use of developed land.
- Commercial freight and barge operations are not centrally located and are inefficiently spread out.
- Rock source is needed for current and future development.
- Water-dependent Uses are at risk of not having land to develop.
- Develop vacant and underutilized property. Affordable housing and development costs are challenges that need a variety of approaches to reduce costs and provide creative solutions.

LAND USE

Chapter Objectives

- Strategically Manage Municipal Land
- Maintain downtown's Central Business District's compact, walkable charm
- Enhance development in Greater Downtown and Future Growth Focus Areas
- Promote Social Interaction
- Maintain Environmental Quality
- Prevent Incompatible Land Use
- Strategically Plan for Future Growth
- Maximize Efficient use of existing infrastructure before building new
- Enhance Resilience
- Special Focus on Waterfront

LAND USE AND FUTURE GROWTH ACTION		Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Funds Needed	Completed
LU 1.1	Prepare a municipal land management plan to include an inventory of municipal land and make recommendations to retain, lease or dispose. <i>Cross reference with ED 2.1.</i>		MT	L	<div> PRIORITY LAND USE ACTIONS </div>
LU 2.1	Promote multi-story development in the CBD with retail and commercial uses on lower floors and residential or office uses upstairs.		OG	L	
LU 3.1	Support light commercial-professional services development along Halibut Point Road and Lake Street, from Marine Street to DeGroff Street.		MT	L	
LU 3.2	In the former Sheldon Jackson Campus area, encourage uses that support Sitka’s education, arts and sciences economy, while preserving and enhancing the historic character.		ST	L	
LU 3.5	Develop a Master Plan for the Katlian/Kaagwaantaan area in collaboration with Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, property owners, local business owners and other interested parties. <i>Cross reference HCA 1.1i</i>		LT	M	
LU 6.1	Transition to a more harmonious land use in the Price/Smith Street area and Granite Creek/No Name Mountain Area.		LT	L	
LU 6.2	Prevent future incompatible land use between residential, light commercial, heavy commercial and industrial uses.		MT	L	
LU 7.8	Review zoning code to explore changes to allow urban horticultural and agricultural uses more broadly in existing zoning districts.		ST	L	
LU 8.2	Amend development standards to promote affordable development including increasing height, decreasing minimum lot size and width, establishing lot and structure maximums in specific zones, and reducing parking requirements as appropriate. <i>Cross reference H 1.1a-H1.1e</i>		MT	U	
LU 9.2	Maintain an up-to-date Hazard Mitigation Plan that identifies response plans for a variety of disasters and emergencies such as earthquake, tsunami, flood, landslide and other.		OG	L/GF	<div> <div> Responsible Agency Time Frame Funds Needed </div> <div>  City and Borough of Sitka ST Short-term (0-2 years) L Low (\$0-99,999) </div> <div>  Collaboration MT Mid-term (3-5 years) M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999) </div> <div> LT Long-term (5-10 years) H High (\$1,000,000+) </div> <div> OG Ongoing U Unknown </div> <div> GF Grant Funded </div> </div>
LU 9.6	Consider how to best address development in moderate to high risk areas via means such as increased geotechnical analysis, mitigation, and other risk allocation or mitigation measures.		OG	U	

FUTURE GROWTH AND FOCUS AREAS

