



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Agenda

Planning Commission

Chris Spivey, Chair
Darrell Windsor, Vice Chair
Debra Pohlman
Randy Hughey
Richard Parmelee

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

A [PM-20](#) Approval of the February 21, 2017 meeting minutes.

Attachments: [2.21.17 draft](#)

IV. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

VI. REPORTS

B [16-00](#) Planning Regulations and Procedures.

Attachments: [Planning Regulations and Procedures 2.23.17](#)

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

C [MISC 17-08](#) Discussion and direction on the Parks and Recreation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Attachments: [Agenda - March 7 Planning Commission Comp Plan Meeting](#)

[Draft Parks Recreation Trails Chapter March 3](#)

[For Reference Only - 2007 Sitka Comp Plan Recreation, Historic, Cultural, Arts](#)

D [MISC 17-09](#) Discussion and direction on the Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Attachments: [Draft Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources Chapter March 3](#)

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

NOTE: More information on these agenda items can be found at <https://sitka.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx> or by contacting the Planning Office at 100 Lincoln Street. Individuals having concerns or comments on any item are encouraged to provide written comments to the Planning Office or make comments at the Planning Commission meeting. Written comments may be dropped off at the Planning Office in City Hall, emailed to planning@cityofsitka.org, or faxed to (907) 747-6138. Those with questions may call (907) 747-1814.

Publish: February 27 and March 1, 2017



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Legislation Details

File #: PM-20 **Version:** 1 **Name:**

Type: Planning Minutes **Status:** AGENDA READY

File created: 2/23/2017 **In control:** Planning Commission

On agenda: 3/7/2017 **Final action:**

Title: Approval of the February 21, 2017 meeting minutes.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: [2.21.17 draft](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
------	------	-----------	--------	--------



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Minutes - Draft

Planning Commission

Chris Spivey, Chair
Darrell Windsor, Vice Chair
Debra Pohlman
Randy Hughey
Richard Parmelee

Tuesday, February 21, 2017

7:00 PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Spivey called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Present - Spivey, Windsor, Pohlman, Hughey, Knox (Assembly Liaison)

Absent - Parmelee

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

A Approval of the February 7, 2017 minutes.

Windsor/Pohlman moved to APPROVE the February 7, 2017 meeting minutes.

Motion PASSED 4-0.

IV. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

V. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

VI. REPORTS

B Planning Regulations and Procedures.

VII. THE EVENING BUSINESS

C Discussion and direction regarding a Critical Areas Ordinance.

Planning and Community Development Department (PCDD) Director Bosak gave a brief overview of the August 18, 2015 landslides and the research and regulatory actions that followed. The proposed critical areas ordinance would become part of Title 20. Bosak introduced municipal legal staff.

Municipal Attorney Brian Hanson introduced himself and stated that the development of this ordinance resulted from a long collaborative process.

Hanson stated that outside counsel has been involved in the drafting and review. The document has gone through many versions and has involved numerous municipal departments.

Risk management needs to balance the duties of the municipality to the public. Balance is not easy, but it is very important that the commission consider this ordinance. The city has the general duty to protect the public's safety while also allowing development. Future homebuyers and taxpayers should be considered and be reasonably protected by code. This ordinance provides for the tools of geotechnical analysis and waivers.

Paralegal Reuben Yerkes stated that this ordinance seeks to balance laissez faire government and overly burdensome government. Yerkes gave a brief overview of the definitions within the ordinance draft. Yerkes stated that the definition of "geotechnical evaluation" has undergone particularly extensive consideration. Yerkes drew attention to line 150, which is essentially a grandfathering clause. Yerkes briefly outlined the waiver process. High occupancy commercial projects shall not be eligible for a waiver.

Commissioner Hughey asked for clarification on reasonable requirements for a waiver. Hanson stated that the ordinance provides direction for each waiver to be individually developed. Hanson stated that blind waivers are disfavored while circumstance-specific waivers have more strength when landowners clearly acknowledge that they have been properly informed. Yerkes stated that the waiver provides a pressure release valve. Bosak stated that people have differing views on the role of government, but one role is clearly to inform the public.

Commissioner Pohlman asked about impacts on downhill owners who are not in a moderate or high risk area – could an uphill owner with a waiver be liable for downhill damages? Yerkes stated that no code could truly address those "act of God" concerns. Hanson stated that the waiver does not confer liability. The waiver works to protect the municipality from financial liability. Chair Spivey asked if the city granted a waiver to a property above, and a landslide goes through the upper property to a property below, could the lower property owner sue the city. Yerkes drew attention to line 65, which states that the waiver is not in lieu of other code requirements. Spivey asked if the property developed with a waiver is the cause of the slide, would the city be liable for the damages to downhill properties because the city granted the waiver. Hanson stated that the municipality would be covered under municipal immunity.

Vice-Chair Windsor asked for clarification on "high occupancy commercial use," and Bosak clarified that those are building code abbreviations and not zoning abbreviations. Yerkes stated that R-1 is housing for transient occupancy.

Pohlman asked how line 72 is defining "locations damaged by previous landslides." Pohlman stated that one insurer she spoke with would consider proximity as being within 5 miles of a previous landslide, which would be problematic in Sitka. Yerkes stated that general consensus of the existence of a landslide indicates that it is valid, in addition to geotechnical analysis.

Pohlman asked if neighboring property owners would receive notice of a

waiver and for clarification on the public process for informing the public of mapping. Windsor pointed to 20.01.020(A)2 to indicate that even properties outside the medium and high risk zones would be impacted. Hanson stated that public notice requirements are not currently in this ordinance.

Spivey asked how much this code mimics Juneau's and other community's codes. Yerkes stated that there isn't a lot to compare to, but Juneau, Seattle, and Snohomish were analyzed. Hanson stated that there haven't been any court cases in Alaska to back up the enforceability of such a waiver. Washington has found such waivers enforceable, but Alaska is yet to be determined. Spivey asked if any of Juneau's waivers have been tested in court, and Hanson stated that this is new to everyone in Alaska. Hanson stated that outside counsel conducted a nationwide review. Hanson stated that people on the east coast develop on beaches and people in the midwest develop on the Mississippi River. Hanson stated that society has become more litigious.

Assembly Liaison Knox asked about the burden of acceptance of knowledge, and what happens when the property is transferred. Hanson stated that the detailed covenant would be required to be recorded with the land record. Knox asked if this ordinance could be a model to use for other types of hazards. Hanson stated yes, but it should be individualized for the specific hazard at hand.

Hughey clarified that property owners could obtain a waiver and proceed with development, and Yerkes stated yes so long as other code provisions are met.

Pohlman asked about line 89, and stated concern that a lot line could be moved to put one property in a different risk zone. Scarcelli and Bosak stated that boundary line adjustments are typically done to resolve neighbor boundary disputes. Scarcelli clarified that the subdivision code currently allows flexibility for staff to require geotechnical analysis when deemed appropriate.

Hughey asked if a portion of the lot is in a specific risk zone, is the entire lot in that zone. Yerkes stated yes. Hughey asked if this may change, and Hanson clarified that the current ordinance draft would place the lot in the higher risk zone.

Pohlman asked why line 140 places the responsibility on the Administrator instead of others. Hanson and Bosak stated that this is consistent with the rest of code.

Spivey stated concern for how the waiver would impact the ability for a property purchaser to obtain financing. Spivey stated that he also wanted to receive input from title companies. Spivey stated that he thinks the cart is going before the horse since mapping has not been completed, but the ordinance makes sense. Hughey stated that he thinks this ordinance is good work. Windsor stated that staff did a good job drafting this. Bosak stated that some mapping has been completed, so the commission should move forward in order to determine the appropriate development for those areas. Windsor asked about treatment of unmapped properties. Yerkes pointed to line 72 which addresses unmapped areas.

Hughey asked if there are engineers in Sitka who could conduct the analysis.

Public Works Director Harmon stated that there are no geotechnical professionals in town, and it is a specialized field. The municipality has used professionals based in Washington. Harmon stated that there is so much anecdotal evidence, but his department will require solid data before it places restrictions on owners. Hughey asked about the cost. Harmon stated that there are different levels of analysis, which could begin at \$25,000-\$50,000. Harmon stated that if a higher risk area is just a corner of the lot, basic geotechnical analysis could more economically determine risk. Spivey asked if staff would help individuals connect with professionals, and Harmon stated yes.

Pohlman stated concern with the grandfather clause on line 150. Scarcelli stated that zoning code currently has provisions for legal nonconforming uses. Pohlman asked about why line 156 is so specific, and Hanson stated that he would research and provide an answer.

Administrator Gorman stated his pleasure that this ordinance is moving forward, and stated that this would ideally be in place before mapping is completed and owners have questions on how to move forward.

Bosak stated that the commission could ask for public comment or give direction on desired changes.

Andrew Friske stated that he owns 420 Kramer Avenue. Friske stated support for the waiver. Friske stated that he and neighbors have searched for a geotechnical professional, and they only found one licensed in Alaska. Friske stated that the professional believed he could plan mitigation, with plans running at least \$40,000. Actual mitigation would likely exceed \$500,000. Friske stated that he is unsure if many property owners could afford the analysis and mitigation. Friske stated that Sitka has many properties in the tsunami risk zone, and property owners need to have options.

Pohlman stated that line 104 would result in an undue burden if there is only one firm conducting this research that is licensed in Alaska. Harmon stated that the professional engineer planning the mitigation must be licensed in Alaska to practice in Alaska, and a pass-through arrangement is not an option. Harmon stated that it is easy to obtain licenses in multiple states if there is sufficient work available. Harmon addressed line 156 and stated that the cited section is the mapping section only. A property cannot be grandfathered in if a slide has occurred within 150 feet, but mapping is a bit more abstract.

Pohlman asked about the timeline for mapping. Spivey asked if the commission could see a preliminary map. Bosak stated no, that the city is not paying for the study, and the city is on the DGGs timeline. Bosak stated that a lot of Sitka is going to be in a risk zone, and she anticipates receiving maps in approximately a year. Pohlman questioned releasing land for sale as discussed during the Comprehensive Plan process prior to the mapping being released. Hughey stated that we could make a layman's guess at low-risk areas to release. Windsor stated his support for the ordinance.

Bosak stated that this should receive Planning Commission approval before going to the Assembly. Spivey stated that he would like to do research and see this at the next meeting. Bosak stated that this will be on the next agenda, and we'd be looking for a motion at that meeting.

D

Discussion and direction on the framework for process, analysis, and

conditions regarding short-term rentals on boats in municipal harbors.

Bosak gave an overview of the history of short-term rentals on boats. Bosak outlined the review process that has been approved by the Port and Harbors Commission. Bosak stated that applicants would meet with USCG to meet their requirements before coming to the municipality. Port and Harbors Commission would hear the request before it comes to the Planning Commission. Notice will be expanded to nearby slip renters and will include on-site notice. Windsor stated that he felt comfortable with applicants beginning with Coast Guard review. Spivey stated that the applicants would have all their ducks in a row at that point. Bosak stated satisfaction at the collaboration between Port and Harbors Commission and Planning Commission.

Hughey/Windsor moved to **APPROVE** the review process for short-term rentals on boats.

Motion **PASSED** 4-0.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Spivey stepped down to make a public comment. Spivey stated that he manages a property in the Central Business District, and stated support for a joint municipal/state/private venture to build a parking garage behind the judicial building. Spivey stated that the municipality does not have adequate impound space. Perhaps a Rasmusson grant or other funding sources could be utilized. Building on this lot would not impact green space or views when compared with other possible locations. Spivey asked staff to consider and review the possibility of a joint parking structure project.

Bosak reminded the commission that another meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 27th at 7 PM.

Chair Spivey adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

ATTEST: _____
Samantha Pierson, Planner I



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Legislation Details

File #: 16-00 **Version:** 1 **Name:**
Type: P&Z Miscellaneous **Status:** AGENDA READY
File created: 3/22/2016 **In control:** Planning Commission
On agenda: 4/19/2016 **Final action:**
Title: Planning Regulations and Procedures.
Sponsors:
Indexes:
Code sections:
Attachments: [Planning Regulations and Procedures 2.23.17](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
------	------	-----------	--------	--------

Planning Regulations and Procedures

2007 Comprehensive Plan

Contains goals and policies in ten chapters
Land use goals and policies are sections 2.4 through 2.8

Sitka General Code

Title 21 consists of Subdivision Regulations (subdivision code)
Title 22 is the zoning code

Creators of the Subdivision Code

Boundary Line Adjustments – formal subdivision plat required – approved in house

Minor Subdivision – create up to four lots from one parcel

- Concept plat
- Final plat

Approved by the Planning Commission except PUD or if subd. appealed (then goes to the Assembly)

Major Subdivision – five or more lots from one parcel with roads and utilities built to Municipal standards

Planning Commission Approvals

- Concept plan
- Preliminary plat
- Final plat

Assembly review of final plat

Zero Lot Lines – two units attached to each other with each one on its own lot and the lot line going through the center of connecting wall

- Concept plan
- Preliminary plat
- Final plat

Approved by the Planning Commission unless appealed to the Assembly

Planned Unit Developments

Creators of the Zoning Code

Zoning ordinance text amendments

Recommendation by the Planning Commission with approval by the Assembly

Zoning ordinance map amendments

Recommendation by the Planning Commission with approval by the Assembly

Variances to allow for reductions of setbacks

Approved by the Planning Commission unless appealed to the Assembly

Administrative approvals for two foot setback reductions

Conditional Use Permits

Approval by the Planning Commission with appeal to the Assembly

Examples: Bed and Breakfasts

Short-term rentals (rental of an apartment for less than 14 days)

Other aspects of the zoning code:

Land use district shown on zoning map

Regulations for each zone such as uses, building height, setbacks, lot size

Sign ordinance

Parking regulations

Other Approvals

Street Vacations – Planning Commission and Assembly review (by ordinance)

Covered by SGC 18.12.015

Tidelands Leases – Covered by Sitka General Code Title 18 – Assembly review only

Land Sales – Covered by SGC Title 18 – Assembly review only

Floodplain Regulations – SGC Title 20

Planning Commission:

Chris Spivey
Darrell Windsor
Debra Pohlman
Randy Hughey
Richard Parmelee

Staff :

Maegan Bosak
747-1824 (office)
Michael Scarcelli, J.D.
747-1815 (office)
Samantha Pierson
747-1814 (office)



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Legislation Details

File #: MISC 17-08 **Version:** 1 **Name:**
Type: P&Z Miscellaneous **Status:** AGENDA READY
File created: 2/23/2017 **In control:** Planning Commission
On agenda: 3/7/2017 **Final action:**
Title: Discussion and direction on the Parks and Recreation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.
Sponsors:
Indexes:
Code sections:
Attachments: [Agenda - March 7 Planning Commission Comp Plan Meeting](#)
[Draft Parks Recreation Trails Chapter March 3](#)
[For Reference Only - 2007 Sitka Comp Plan Recreation, Historic, Cultural, Arts -Goals & Policies](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
------	------	-----------	--------	--------



Sitka 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



City and Borough of Sitka Planning Commission Meeting Comprehensive Plan

WHEN: Tuesday, March 7, 2017, 7:00-9:00 pm

WHERE: Harrigan Centennial Hall, Meeting Room 1

7:00 pm	Call to Order and Attendance, Update - Meetings in a Box
7:05 pm	Overview - Draft Parks, Trails, and Recreation Chapter
7:30 pm	Public & Commission Exercise - Design an "8 to 80" Park
8:00 pm	Break
8:10 pm	Overview – Draft Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources Chapter
8:35 pm	Public & Commission Exercise – Identify 10-15 Year Opportunities & Challenges for Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources
9:00 pm	Adjourn



Parks, Trails, and Recreation

GOAL

Maintain and expand a diversity of recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors to Sitka.

1 Sitka Values Recreation

Sitkans value and work to maintain and improve their parks, trails, and recreation system. Evidence of this is everywhere –

“Quality and easy access to outdoor activities including walking, hiking, kayaking, beaches, parks, playgrounds, camping, hot springs, etc. is a strength.”

“I think that the community has a high value for recreation and quality of life and has provided for these ideals well. These are also Sitka’s key assets.”

“Our outdoor recreation opportunities (trails, fishing, boating) are a secure, long-term asset.”

“We are a Tree City and our beautiful downtown with trees and landscaping, greenspace and parks is important.”

“Recreational use areas in town (and out of town, accessible by boat) are an asset.”

“Quality of life includes access to subsistence resources and local foods, culture and art, and a variety of healthy activities.”

These were some of Sitkans’ words and thoughts while ‘visioning’ during development of the Sitka 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

These are not new values; it is no surprise that surveys as long ago as the 1980s when the Sitka Coastal Management Plan was developed show, “Proximity to scenic and pristine areas where these

forms of recreation [fishing, beachcombing, picnicking, hunting, camping, etc.] can be enjoyed” is one of the principal assets of living in Sitka” (pg. 58 Sitka District Coastal Management Program, May 31, 1989).

The business community recognizes the importance of recreation and its link to a strong local economy. During adoption of the City and Borough of Sitka’s 2012 Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Action Plan, the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce noted that the Plan:

“...addresses two core goals of the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce: economic growth in the community and quality of life in Sitka. The incredible scenery, rich cultural history, abundant wildlife, recreation opportunities, and community of Sitka offer remarkable experiences for residents and visitors. Recreation and tourism are strong segments of the Sitka economy.... Recreation opportunities improve the quality of life and contribute to overall positive community character. The plan’s emphasis on balance contributes to a strong, durable local economy, a vital community, and a healthy natural environment. This plan is right for Sitka because of its attentiveness on building partnerships and setting priorities.”

Less “wild” but equally valued are organized recreation and sports programming and facilities provided by the City and Borough of Sitka, Sitka School District, Community Schools, Sitka Fine Arts Camp and other non-profit organizations, clubs and leagues. This includes two swimming pools, 11 sports fields, and three gyms, with softball, baseball, soccer, basketball, wrestling, gymnastics, dance, volleyball, swimming, martial arts and other programs for youth and adults as well as numerous fitness classes and access to weights and other fitness equipment. In addition, there are public and private playgrounds for children.



Photo from SitkaNature.org

2 Current Status

2.1 Recreation Standards

As far back as 1914 standards have been in use for the number of recreational facilities per 1,000 people¹. Since the 1950’s recreation managers have been using standards of 10 acres per 1,000

¹ American Planning Association, Information Report 194, 1965;

population of combined active (playgrounds, playfields) and passive (open spaces, hiking, nature viewing) facilities (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Type of Recreation Area Standards in Acres Per 1,000 Population	
Type	Acres
(Active rec.)	
Playgrounds	1.25
Playfields	1.25
(Total active rec.)	2.50
(Passive rec.)	
Minor parks	2.50
Major parks	5.00
(Total passive rec.)	7.50
All types of municipal recreation	10.00
<i>Sources: American Planning Association, Information Report 194, 1965; Report on Recreation Standards, 1954, Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission.</i>	

However, because every community is different and successful parks and recreation leaders tailor facilities and services to meet the needs of its community, the National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA) no longer promotes or publishes national standards. Instead, it reviews current practices as a place to begin discussion.

In 2016, the NPRA published a review and field report² with data from more than 950 park and recreation agencies across the United States gathered between the years 2013 and 2015. Their top line findings are on Figure 2, and show today the median is 9.5 acres of parks per 1,000 population.

Figure 2 – 2016 Recreation Field Report Benchmarks

Park Facilities	
Residents per Park	There is typically one park for every 2,277 residents.
Acres of Park Land per 1,000 Residents	The typical park and recreation agency has 9.5 acres of park land for every thousand residents in the jurisdiction.
Outdoor Park & Recreation Facilities — Population per Facility	An overwhelming majority of park and recreation agencies have playgrounds (91 percent) and basketball courts (85 percent) in their portfolio of outdoor assets.
Indoor Park & Recreation Facilities — Population per Facility	A majority of agencies offer recreation centers and gyms, while at least two in five agencies offer community centers, senior centers and fitness centers.
Programming	
Programs Offered by Park & Recreation Agencies	Key programming activities include team sports, fitness enhancement classes, and health and wellness education.
Targeted Programs for Children, Seniors and People with Disabilities	Four in five agencies offer summer camp to their residents.

Responsibilities of Park and Recreation Agencies	
Key Responsibilities of Park & Recreation Agencies	Top roles include operating parks and facilities, providing recreation programming and services, and operating and maintaining indoor facilities.
Staffing	
Park & Recreation Agency Staffing	The typical park and recreation agency is staffed with 33 full-time equivalents (FTEs).
Park & Recreation FTEs per 10,000 Residents	The typical park and recreation agency has 7.4 FTEs on staff for each 10,000 residents in the jurisdiction served by the agency.
Responsibilities of Park and Recreation Workers	Responsibilities split between maintenance, operations, programming and administration.
Budget	
Annual Operating Expenditures	The typical park agency has annual operating expenditures of \$3,459,846.
Operating Expenditures per Capita	The typical park and recreation agency has annual operating expenses of \$76.44 on a per capita basis.
Acre of Park & Non-Park Sites	The median level operating expenditures is \$6,476 per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency.
Operations Expenditures Per FTE	The typical park and recreation agency has \$96,055 in annual operations expenditures for each employee.
Distribution of Operating Expenditures	At the typical park and recreation agency, personnel services represent 55 percent of the operations budget.
Agency Funding	
Sources of Operating Expenditures	Park and recreation agencies derive three-fifths of their operating expenditures from general fund tax support.
Park & Recreation Revenues per Capita	The typical park and recreation agency generates \$18.22 in revenue annually for each resident living in the jurisdiction.
Revenue as a Percentage of Operating Expenditures (Cost Recovery)	The typical agency recovers 29.0 percent of its operating expenditures from non-tax revenues.
5-Year Capital Budget Spending	Park and recreation agencies have a median of \$2.981 million in capital expenditures budgeted over the next five years.
Targets for Capital Expenditures	On average, just over half of the capital budget is designated for renovation while 30 percent is geared toward new development.
<i>Source: 2016 NRPA Field Report: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks, National Park and Recreation Association</i>	

2.2 Sitka Inventory

** = a designated recreation area in the 2006 Sitka Coastal Management Plan

Figures 1A-B shows Sitka's extensive park, trail, and recreation facilities that are on the road system; they are listed on the pages that follow by manager.

City and Borough of Sitka

1. Baranof Elementary School field (0.2 acre)
2. City Cemetery – lawn and trees maintenance
3. Crescent Park (2.9 acres) - tennis courts, basketball court, picnic shelters, walkway, benches, restroom, playground, lawn **

4. Cross Trail (4.2 mile portion from Sitka High School to Kramer Drive owned by CBS; remainder of trail has multiple owners and is managed by CBS and Sitka Trail Works)
5. Granite Creek Recreation Area (7 acres) - 150 ft. x 24 ft. landing strip for remote control planes, golf course on city land but maintained by Sitka Golf Association
6. Herring Cove to Beaver Lake Trail (2.9 miles)
7. Japonski Island Ballfield
8. Kaisei-Marui Interpretative Site - signage, shelter, picnic table
9. Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School ball fields (2.2 acres)
10. Kimsham Recreation Complex and Ballfields (15 acres)
11. Lower Indian River Corridor (borough, state, private ownership) **
12. Medivije Lake (1 mile) - undeveloped
13. Mt. Edgecumbe Field (1 acre)
14. Moller Park and Ballfields (14.86 acres) –turf field, restrooms, parking, playgrounds **
15. Path of Hope (1400 feet)
16. Pioneer Park (3.4 acres) picnic shelters, restroom, trail **
17. Sandy Beach (tidelands are state) **
18. Sitka Seawalk and breakwater spur (3500 ft. with 1,762 ft. addition funded)
19. Swan Lake Park and Area Meriting Special Attention (22 acres with lake), picnic tables, path, fishing dock **
20. Thimbleberry-Heart Lake Trails (1.8 miles), fishing dock
21. Tom Young Cabin (2 acres), pan abode cabin, deck, outhouse, accessible by boat
22. Tony Hrebar Shooting Range (4 acres) – shooting range and shelters, restroom, parking
23. Turnaround Park, Skateboard Park (3 acres) - path, picnic tables, 6800 sf skate park, Rotary Gazebo, fenced dog park
24. Vilandre Ballfields (2 acres)
25. Whale Park (12 acres) – boardwalk trail, gazebos, restroom, parking **
26. Sitka's docks and harbors are used to access water-based recreation, and discussed in the Transportation Chapter.



*TOP: Sitka Swimmers. Picture from Baranof Barracudas website
 BOTTOM: Opening Ceremonies Sitka Little League, 2014. Photo from KCAW website*

Sitka School District

1. Baranof Elementary School Playground
2. Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary School Playground
3. Blatchley Middle School Swimming Pool

Alaska State Parks (no longer in Sitka)

1. Castle Hill State Historical Park (currently being maintained by annual contract with NPS)
2. Halibut Point Recreation Area (no current maintenance) **
3. Old Sitka State Historic Site and boat launch (boat launch currently maintained by annual contract with NPS and a private party) **

State of Alaska

1. Fort Rousseau/Ray Causeway – Makhnati Island **
2. John Brown’s Beach **
3. Totem Square ** (Sitka Tribe of Alaska is manager)

National Park Service

1. Russian Bishop’s House Unit
2. Sitka National Historical Park Visitor Center and Totem Trail **

USDA Forest Service

1. Gavan Hill to Harbor Mountain Trail, Shelter (6.2 miles)
2. Indian River Trail
3. Mt. Verstovia Trail
4. Sandy Beach day use site and tidelands **
5. Sawmill Creek Recreation Area and Campground
6. Starrigavan Recreation Area ** - campground, cabin, interpretative signage, hiking trails and Starrigavan Valley ATV Trails

Other

1. Sitka Fine Arts Camp - Hames Gym & Wellness Center
2. Private - Spruce Glenn Park
3. Private - Sawmill Cove Apartments
4. Mt. Edgecumbe High School Gym
5. Mt. Edgecumbe High School Aquatic Center (construction 2017)



Top: Two Sitka AmeriCorps members join a Southeast Alaska Independent Living's monthly hike. Photo from JVAmeriCorps website. Bottom: One of several access points and maps to the Sitka Cross Trail

Primary Remote Recreation Sites within the City and Borough of Sitka include:

1. USDA Forest Service and State of Alaska's Baranof Warm Springs **
2. City and Borough of Sitka's Goddard Hot Springs (3 acres) - 2 bathhouses & hot tubs, boardwalk trail, outhouse/cistern **
3. USDA Forest Service's Mt. Edgecumbe Trail (7 miles)
4. Sitka Ranger District of the USDA Forest Service manages 24 remote cabins, 9 mooring buoys, several dispersed camping areas, and some remote hiking. See next section and also a list and information here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/tongass/recreation/camping-cabins/recarea/?recid=78620&actid=101>
5. Magoun Islands/Port Krestof State Marine Park
6. Big Bear/Baby Bear Bays State Marine Park
7. Sea Lion Cove State Marine Park

Bike and Walk Friendly Community

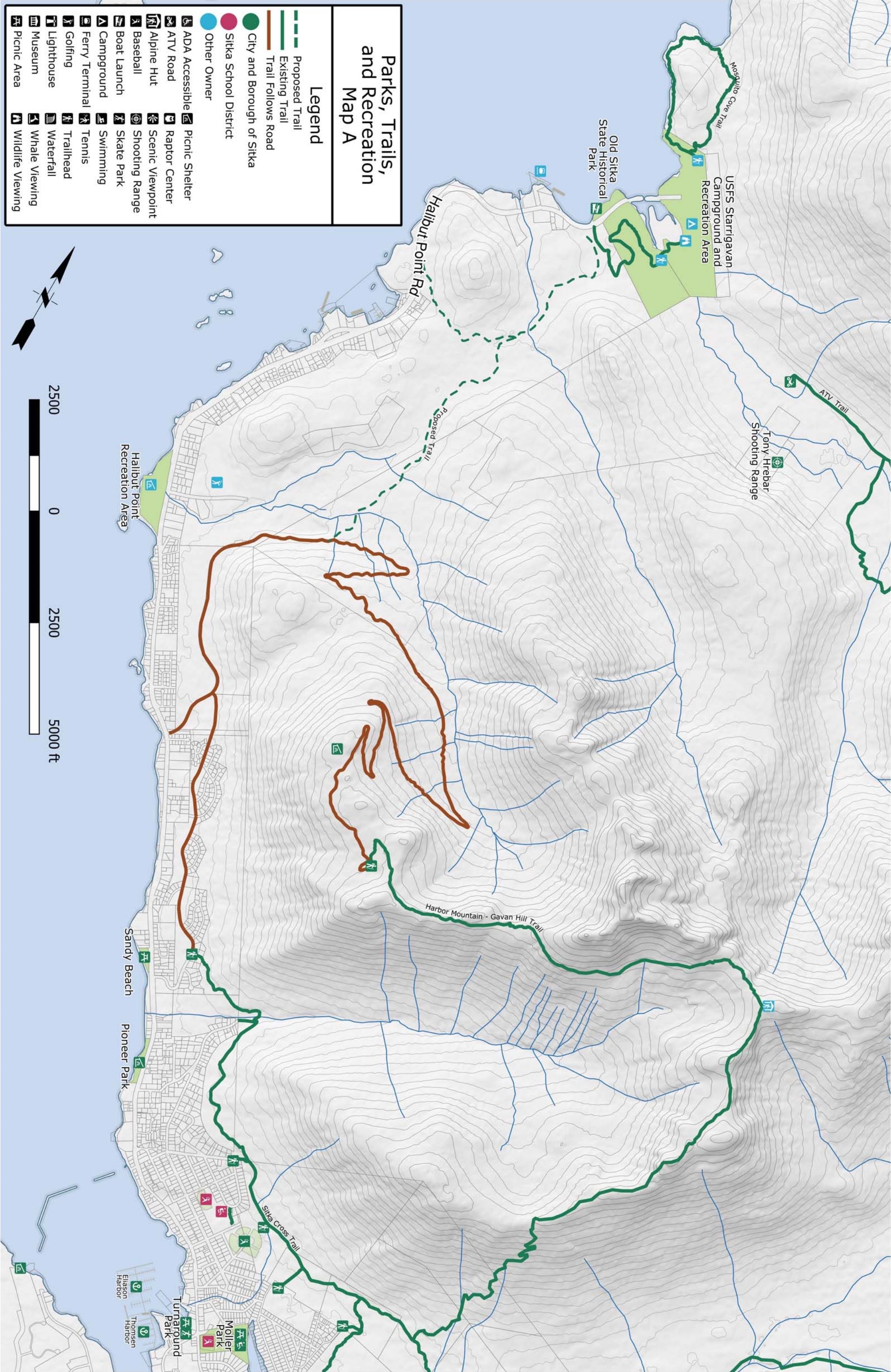
Through the efforts of many citizens and local coalitions, Sitka has achieved status as a national Bike Friendly Community and a Walk Friendly Community.

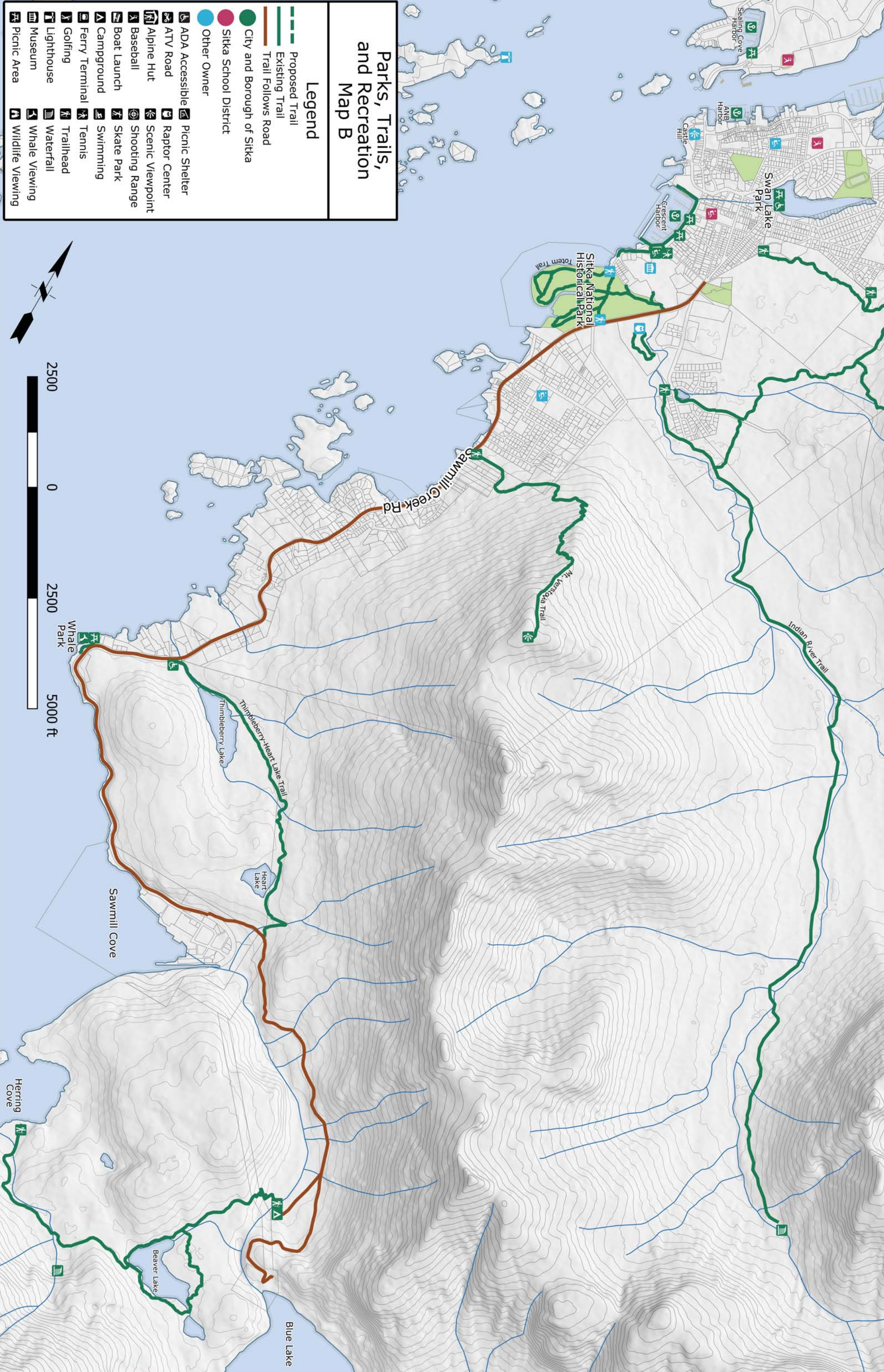
Sitka's sidewalks, bike lanes, and seawalk are used for recreation, access to Sitka's multi-use trail system, and for transportation between destinations. Walking and bicycling can be an important part of a healthy lifestyle. More about Complete Streets policies and Sitka's non-motorized transportation network is found in the Transportation Chapter.



Doug Osborne, front, leads cyclists during the Sitka Winter Cycling Celebration in January 2012.

Photo from SitkaCycling.wordpress.com





2.2 Relevant Management Plans

This chapter builds upon three important recreation documents:

The 2003 Sitka Trail Plan sets clear direction for managing, maintaining, and promoting Sitka trails. Three years in the making, this is the local guide for trail maintenance and development and a key resource for Sitka Trail Works, Inc. Demonstrating the importance of systematic planning and follow-through is the fact that multiple trails identified in this 14 year old plan have been built. Refer to the Sitka Trails Works website for a copy of the Plan at www.SitkaTrailWorks.org or click [HERE](#)

The 2006 Sitka Coastal Management Plan has sections that designate recreation and coastal access areas, and “Special Management Areas and Designated Recreational Use Areas” with maps and management narrative for recreation off the road system. The latter section is based on a comprehensive 1993 Public Management Plan that focused on recreation and subsistence access. While the State no longer has a coastal management program, Sitka strongly felt that the plan’s enforceable policies were important for ongoing management of critical coastal areas and adopted the policies by reference into municipal code (SGC 20.05.010). To see the 2006 Coastal Plan, contact the Sitka Planning & Community Development Department or click [HERE](#)

The 2012 Sitka Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Action Plan uses a “Triple Bottom Line” approach to improve Sitka’s outdoor recreation system, with a focus on filling key gaps in the community’s existing set of trails, parks, day use facilities, maps and other recreation resources. This is the City and Borough of Sitka Parks and Recreation Department and the city’s Parks and Recreation Committee’s guiding plan. To review this Plan contact the Sitka Parks and Recreation Department or click [HERE](#)

2.3 Use of Recreational Facilities

Sitka Community Schools rents classrooms, a six-stove kitchen/classroom, the gym, the Multi-Purpose Room and offers recreation classes. Many other businesses and non-profits also offer local recreation programs. Groups involved in recreation, recent numbers of participants, and City and Borough of Sitka facilities they use are shown on Figure 2.

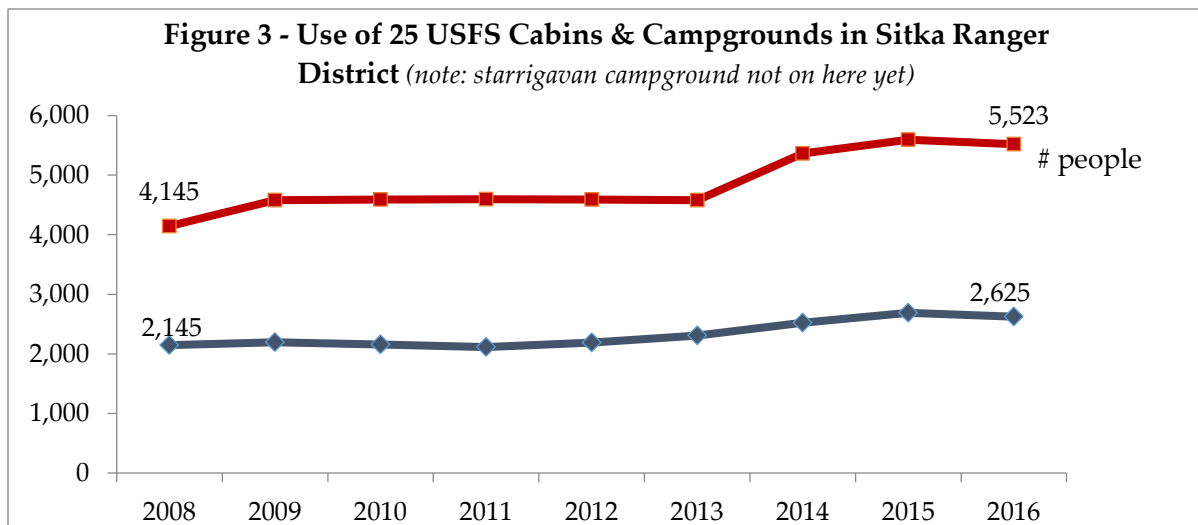
The CBS also keeps track of how many businesses obtain permits to use Sitka trails for tourist purposes. **CHECKING ON THIS**

The USFS keeps track of how many commercial operators obtain permits each year to use recreation and trail assets in the Sitka Ranger District for commercial (tourism) purposes. Figure X lists historical and current data on commercial use. Reviewing this information shows that _____ . Other issues to consider over the next 10-15 years will be _____ . **WAITING FOR USFS DATA**

The USFS also tracks how many non-commercial (recreational) users enjoy hiking on the _____ , _____ and _____ trails in Sitka, as well as rent the 25 cabins and campgrounds. Figure 3 shows

historical and current data. Reviewing this shows that use has been climbing over the last nine years. The most popular sites, with over 300 people using each of them in 2016 are: Starrigavan Creek Cabin and Campground, Allan Point Cabin, Samsing Cove Cabin, Brents Beach Cabin, Piper Island Cabin, and Freds Creek Cabin. _____. Other issues to consider over the next 10-15 years will be _____.

Figure 2 - Use of Sitka Recreation Facilities		
Group	No. of Participants in 2016	City and Borough of Sitka Facilities Used
35+ Basketball		Working to acquire this information for this table
Baranof Barracuda Swimclub	103	
City League Volleyball		
Family Roller Skating		
Get Out Sitka		
Girls on the Run		
Introduction to Sailing		
Saturday Youth Basketball		
Sitka Adventure Racing		
Sitka Cirque		
Sitka Cub Scouts		
Sitka Gymnastics		
Sitka Little League Baseball and Softball		
Sitka Outdoor Kids		
Sitka Softball Association		
Sitka Tsunami Wrestlers		
Southeast Alaska Independent Living Inc. Hiking and other clubs/activities		
UAF 4-H Cooperative Extension Service		
Woodworking		
Youth Outdoor Soccer		
Youth Roller Derby		
List others that use CBS Managed facilities....		



3 Opportunities & Challenges

3.1 Better Link the High Value of Recreation to Funding Support

Section 1 of this chapter highlights the high value Sitka residents place on Sitka's diverse recreational facilities and opportunities and the economic importance of recreation to local tourism and the economy. Despite this recreation is often underfunded. The state recently closed its parks and recreation office in Sitka, the City and Borough of Sitka has reduced parks and recreation staff and funding over the last few years, and federal funding is challenged. Yet, recreation is intrinsically linked to why people want to live and visit Sitka.

Another solution is increased focus on public-private partnerships, particularly those that profit from commercial recreation (tourism). One suggestion is for the borough to hire a fulltime grant writer to enable it to better capture grant funding. In the current era of declining government funding, the local importance of Sitka's diverse recreation opportunities must be considered.

3.2 Maintaining Existing Facilities is Top Priority

Surveys completed during the development of the 2012 Sitka Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Action Plan (SSORAP) made clear that the community wants to see new and improved facilities; however, they also understand that resources are finite and any new projects need to be evaluated for the true need and the availability of resources to maintain facilities. Borough parks and recreation staff comments that its top priority is maintaining existing facilities and preparing a comprehensive list to identify future annual needs. **Known, critical needs over the next 10 years are (to be inserted)....**

Sitka Trail Works, Inc. also comments that maintaining existing trails is its top priority at this time.

3.3 Upgrade Playgrounds to Newer Safety Standards

Related to "maintaining what we've got" are the playgrounds at Moller Field that are now closed because they do not meet current safety standards. Playgrounds are important for all ages of users, and provide free recreation for those without the means to access more expensive off-the-road-system trips.

Crescent Playground would close too but for the community effort now underway to raise funds to improve it. Demonstrating the continuing importance of partnerships, non-profit Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) is coordinating a community-wide effort to raise \$750,000 for safe and accessible upgrades to Sitka's centrally located waterfront playground. Local citizens and businesses have committed to raise \$75,000, and CBS has contributed \$40,000.

3.4 Sitka's Urban Forestry Program

This is also an issue related to "maintaining what we've got." Part of what makes Sitka's downtown so welcoming to residents and visitors alike is the beauty of its landscaping, flowers, and trees. Landscapes with trees, parks and open space, provide a wealth of benefits for CBS. According to the CBS Urban Forest Management Plan (2013), trees boost property values, sustain fisheries, support retail activity, enhance tourism and visitor experiences, improve municipal health, protect water quality, reduce storm water runoff, counter climate change, and ensure roadway safety. The trees, landscapes, and open spaces now enjoyed were preserved or planted by individuals, CBS staff, garden clubs, the city's Tree and Landscape Committee members, and youth groups who worked to enhance the livability of Sitka.

Sitka is one of eight cities in Alaska that have the Tree City USA designation. Sitka has maintained this designation since 2003 by demonstrating commitment to managing urban tree resources. Tree maintenance has always been the responsibility of the municipal Parks and Recreation Division and is funded by the CBS general fund; however, there is no dedicated budget for urban forestry and limited arboriculture equipment. The scope and complexity of arboriculture responsibilities currently exceeds the capacity of resources and staff. Community Forestry Consultants who prepared the 2013 CBS Urban Forest Management Plan noted that Sitka “is critically understaffed with only 3 positions to manage 54 developed sites and 109 acres of developed parks, grounds, and ball fields. Often urban forestry activities must take lower priority in context of all the maintenance demands. This reality illustrates a major limitation to CBS’s overall ability to protect and expand urban tree resources.” (Note: there are now only 2.5 full-time municipal parks and recreation staff.)

3.5 Criteria to Evaluate New Projects and Investments

As Sitka diversifies and improves outdoor recreation opportunities in town and the surrounding region over time, follow the Sitka Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Action Plan’s (SSORAP) direction to focus on projects (facilities, programs, information) that are economically sustainable. The SSORAP gives direction for choosing which new recreation projects to pursue, an important consideration in this era of decline in traditional government funding. It identifies 7 criteria that use a “Triple Bottom Line” approach and are based on community input during the project (Fig 3).

Sitka Trail Works, Inc. current top priorities are trail maintenance, extending the Sitka Cross Trail from Indian River to connect to the Mt. Verstovia Trail then to the Thimbleberry Lake trail, and, to build the Sitka Cross Trail link from Harbor Mountain Trail to Starrigavan.

Figure 3 - 7 Criteria to Evaluate New Recreation Investments

Guide to Sustainability Criteria	Criteria are aspects of the 3 branches of sustainability: Economic, Environmental, Social.
Benefits Residents	Improves quality of life: opportunities for healthy enjoyable activity; chances for interaction with friends and neighbors, contributes to overall positive community character.
Attracts Visitors	Strengthens reasons for visitors - overnight and day visitors - to spend time and money in Sitka; improves Sitka “brand”; this in turn creates local jobs, business opportunities, & revenue for community services.
Diversification	Expands access in underserved portions of town, expand access to diversity of skill levels, to range of income levels).
Community Support)	Based on public input to date, recommendations of previous plans.
“Bang for the Buck”	Significant positive impact, modest price.
Financially Sustainable	Does the project have a plan for funding? What are the cost/benefits? Are project funds leveraged through partners is there a plan for maintenance? Etc.
Minimizes Adverse Impact	Impacts are small, actually positive and/or can be readily mitigated; on community character, natural environment, resident recreational activities.

3.6 Providing Recreation Opportunities for Sitka's Growing Senior Population

As discussed in Chapter X section on demographics, the number of Sitkans age 65 and older, and especially those age 80+, is projected to grow rapidly over the next 25 years. In July 2015 there were 1,248 residents age 65 or older in Sitka, which was 14% of the total population. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development projects that by 2030 there will be over 2,000 older Sitkans in town, a 60% increase³. Those who are age 65 and older will then be 23% of the total population.

Providing opportunities to maintain a healthy senior lifestyle enables Sitkans to stay in their community and with their families. The fitness level of older residents varies; some are able to enjoy trails, while others prefer pool-based exercise like aqua-stretch and aqua-aerobics. As playgrounds and fields in Sitka are updated, consider installing courts for pickleball, cornhole, petanque and bocce and similar games that are easy to learn, growing in popularity and are physically feasible for people of all ages.

3.7 Re-Open Sitka State Parks Office

Budget shortfalls caused Alaska DNR Division of Parks and Outdoors recreation to close its Sitka office and lay off employees in 2015. Yet, Sitka is home to three state parks and three marine state parks. One is not maintained and the others are on annual contracts to other entities for maintenance. State Parks should re-open an office to provide management of these local assets.

3.8 Access to Future Uplands and Alpine for Recreation

As uplands are developed in Sitka it is important for the city and borough to retain, or as needed acquired, rights-of-way or easements to provide future access to the undeveloped alpine and Sitka Cross Trail hiking route.

3.9 Remote Area Recreation and Land/Waters

Many of the outdoor recreational opportunities in the borough, especially off the road system, are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service and are managed under the guidelines of the Tongass Land Management Plan. Therefore, cooperation among governmental agencies is critical to protect areas for dispersed and wilderness recreation, and to develop facilities such as cabins, mooring buoys, and marine parks. In addition, access to off-the-road sites is most often via boat and kayak launches or floatplanes, most of which are City and Borough of Sitka facilities, that require ongoing maintenance.

Under its Coastal Management Program, Sitka designated dozens of Public Use Special Management Areas off the road system on Kruzof, Baranof, and Chichagof Islands. Within these areas, uplands, tideland, and marine uses are to be compatible with the recreational nature of the areas. "Where practicable, all land- and water-based uses that conflict with the recreational use of the Special Management Areas are not allowed within the boundaries of all Special Management Areas as shown in the figures in Chapter V, except for the maintenance or enhancement of the recreation and/or subsistence resources. This policy does not preclude the development of fish

³ *Alaska Population Projections 2015 to 2045, April 2016*. ADOLWD, Division of Research & Analysis

enhancement projects, including remote fish release sites, when a need is shown and proper evaluation, including a formal public process, has been completed.”

3.10 Katlian Bay Road Extension

Construction of a state 9-mile, one-lane gravel road with multiple turnouts from the north end of the Halibut Point Road past Starrigavan will begin in late 2017 or early 2018. The purpose of the road extension is to increase recreational access and uses. This \$17 million state project will likely take two years to complete and will provide access to both Shee Atika Corporation and US Forest Service (USFS) and adjacent to Katlian Bay and then up the Katlian River. Most of the former logging roads and bridges in this area have washed out. Future planning and work among the USFS, Shee Atika Corporation, the City and Borough of Sitka, and other interested parties will be needed to address trail and recreation improvements, parking, solid waste management, and required mitigation.

3.11 Operating Funding for Mt Edgecumbe Aquatic Center

The Mt. Edgecumbe Aquatic Center is being constructed now at Mt. Edgecumbe High School. It will be an approximately 25,000 sf facility with a 25 yard pool and an area for pool therapy. Partner users are planned to include the Sitka Swim Team, medical community, training opportunities for Sitka’s Trooper Academy, and the US Coast Guard station. The issue is that despite obtaining Capital Funding, no source of operating funds has been identified at this time. This points to the importance of using Sustainability Criteria when planning recreation improvements.

4 Recreation Goals, Objectives, and Actions

GOAL

Maintain and expand a diversity of recreational opportunities for all residents and visitors to Sitka.

OBJECTIVES

1 Maintenance is Top Priority, Followed by Sustainable Investment in New Opportunities

Maintenance of existing parks, trails, fields, and recreation facilities and programming is Sitka's top priority. Use triple bottom line (sustainability) criteria (page 9) to guide new investment.

2 Coordinate

Improve coordination among municipal, school district, tribal, state, and federal agencies, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, Community Schools, and other non-profit organization's efforts to maintain existing recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor, and to conduct recreation planning. Maintenance objectives are to keep the sites safe, useable, and well-landscaped.

3 CBS Commitment to Parks, Trails, Recreation and Landscaping

Maintain adequate City and Borough of Sitka Parks and Recreation staff to maintain and manage CBS owned recreation facilities; oversee and be an advocate for recreation matters; and manage, maintain, and preserve public trees and landscaping at public facilities.

4 Access for all Ages, Abilities and Incomes

Recreation programs and facilities should be designed to accommodate the interests of all ages, abilities, and income levels.

5 Public Access to the Water

Support interagency cooperation and provision of funding for maintenance to provide the public with saltwater and freshwater access.

6 Sitka Trail Plan - Hiking

Continue implementing the 2003 Sitka Trail Plan and Memorandum of Understanding. The signing partners – City and Borough of Sitka, Sitka Trail Works Inc., USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation must continue cooperating for efficient and effective maintenance and trail development.

7 Commercial Use of Parks, Trails and Recreation Assets

Collect fees for commercial use of the parks, trails, and recreational facilities and dedicate these fees to maintenance costs.

ACTIONS

Tbd – see handout with Parks and Recreation actions from 2007 Comprehensive Plan

2007 Sitka Comprehensive Plan's

Recreation – Oriented Goals and Policies, organized by topic

General

2.13.1. To preserve and continue to enhance the quality of life by maintaining and expanding recreational opportunities for all residents along the existing road system, along trail systems, and in the outlying areas.

2.13.2 Enhance the attractiveness of Sitka as a visitor destination by providing a broad range of recreational opportunities. Encourage viewing recreational enhancements as economic development for the visitor industry.

2.13.3. Provide better and safer Sitka bicycle facilities for both transportation and recreational riders; to reduce bicycle/pedestrian/motorist conflicts; to remove physical barriers and meet ADA accessibility standards; and to provide a more viable alternative to motorized transportation.

2.13.4. In recognition of the fact that the current parks and recreation plan was drafted in 1991 and that there have been major changes in the municipality, the parks and recreation plan should be updated as resources follow.

2.13.5. The development of parks and recreation facilities should be based on a comprehensive system, which plans for their orderly development.

2.13.6. To improve Municipal, State, and Federal agency efforts to maintain existing recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor and to conduct recreation planning. The objectives of a maintenance program are to keep the sites safe, well landscaped and useable.

2.13.7. To maintain a staff person to oversee and be an advocate for Parks and Recreation matters.

2.13.8. Community schools are outstanding recreation resource and should be supported to insure maximum use, as follows:

- A. School facilities should be open to the public year-around, and funding to do so should be a top priority.
- B. Coordination should continue among Community Schools, University of Alaska Southeast, and Sheldon Jackson College.
- C. Programs should be designed to accommodate the interests of all age levels.

2.13.9.

2.13.10. To utilize reclaimed landfill areas for recreation facilities, and:

- A. Continue to develop additional fields for general recreation use.
- B. Continue to develop the Granite Creek overburden site for recreation and support the existing uses.

2.13.11. New facilities should be developed and existing facilities modified wherever feasible to provide access to persons with disabilities.

Access to Recreational Opportunities

2.13.14. To support interagency cooperation to provide the public with more saltwater and freshwater access, including facilities such as shore-side picnic areas, shelters and parks, especially near harbors and other public facilities; boat launch ramps; and log haul out/cutting sites located away from boat harbors or boat ramps.

- A. Work toward developing additional shore-side recreation facilities and improve access and recreational use of Swan Lake.

2.13.15. To encourage that regional recreation systems be centered around the urban area. Various trails, cabins, shelters and moorings exist within the Borough. The local trail loops, cabins and marine parks should be constructed first and then expanded into a regional recreation system.

2.13.16. To support the maintenance and expansion of recreational opportunities on Harbor Mountain by the U.S. Forest Service.

2.13.17. Work toward providing secure kayak racks, safe and readily accessible saltwater access, and gear storage facilities at key launch/landing sites.

Greenspace and Landscaping

The City & Borough of Sitka is dedicated to managing, maintaining, and preserving public trees by informing the community, protecting and expanding the public tree resource, using proper arboriculture practices, and engaging partners to ensure the long term safety, health, viability, and aesthetic quality of public trees.

2.13.41. To create and maintain a program of urban landscaping which includes:

- A. Landscaping for all public facilities.
- B. A street greenery program, especially in the Central Business District.

2.13.42. Support the Tree and Landscape Committee's implementation of a Community Forestry Program and the Sitka Landscape Plan

2.13.43. Provide information and guidance to the public about the benefits of trees and landscaping, about proper tree selection and pruning.

Maintain cabins

2.13.20 Encourage and assure that cabins and shelters are checked often and maintenance provided if needed, to urge other agencies and groups to cooperate with the Forest Service to help with maintenance; and to provide assistance including funding, materials, transportation and labor.

New cabins

2.13.18. To encourage the U.S. Forest Service to continue to identify needs and locations for future cabins and shelters. Criteria for new cabin construction should include: close proximity to Sitka; accessibility; a variety of recreational opportunities in the area; a nearby water source; with a priority for beach cabins on sites that are easily accessible by boat.

2.13.19. To give high priority to creation of “hike in” cabins or shelters, accessible from the road system.

Trails & Hiking

2.13.26. To vigorously support the implementation of the 10 year 2003 Sitka Trail Plan and Memorandum of Understanding.

2.13.27. To cooperate, to the maximum extent possible, with the signing partners of the 2003 Sitka Trail Plan: Sitka Trail Works, Inc, USDA FS, NPS, Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the AKDPOR, in order to develop the proposed trail system and to achieve the Goals of the 2003 Plan as stated below.

- A. Set a clear direction for maintaining managing and promoting Sitka Trails,
- B. Create a prioritized trail construction and reconstruction plan,
- C. Provide diversified recreational opportunities, for pedestrians, bicyclists, skiers, snowmobile and 4 wheelers, and person with disabilities, throughout the Sitka Trail system,
- D. Pursue trail construction and maintenance coordinated with the local non-profit Sitka Trail Works, Inc., and state and federal agencies,
- E. Develop an annual action plan to accomplish these goals through the 2003 Sitka Trail Plan MOU process
- F. Promote public awareness of the cultural and natural wonders accessible from the Sitka trail system.

2.13.28. To give as much support, and assistance possible to the development and implementation of trail projects on which the City and Borough of Sitka is the lead agency, as listed on pages 6 and 7 of the 2003 Sitka Trail Plan. They are:

- A. Sawmill Creek Road Improvements
- B. Sitka Cross Trail Extensions:
 - Indian River to Starrigavan
 - Indian River to Thimbleberry Lake
- C. Indian River Trail Connection (Sawmill Creek to Indian River Trailhead)
- D. D. Japonski Island Pathway

E. Sitka Harbors Kayak Improvements

2.13.29.To work toward developing an on-going trail maintenance program on Borough lands and public easements to maintain, repair, clean and improve the area trails in cooperation with Sitka Trail Works and the other state, tribal and federal agencies that are partners to the Sitka Trail Plan.

2.13.30.To support the involvement of community volunteers in trail maintenance activities with Sitka Trail Works and the Adopt-A- Trail program.

2.13.31.To participate and support the SEATrails program which promotes and makes trails available region-wide to travelers on the Alaska Marine Highway System and seeks to improve the quality of experience for the hiking visitors.

2.13.32.To support efforts to secure trail funding through resolutions and letters of support to federal, state and private funding entities.

2.13.33.To develop, where appropriate, a system of user fees for commercial operators utilizing the trail system and to dedicate these fees to trail maintenance costs.

2.13.34.To recognize and support the unique role of Sitka Trail Works, Inc, a local non-profit membership organization, acting on behalf of local residents that support of the development of the trail system and dedicated to the implementation of the Sitka Trail Plan.

2.13.16.To support the maintenance and expansion of recreational opportunities on Harbor Mountain by the U.S. Forest Service.

2.13.36. To support the maintenance of the facilities created in Starrigavan Development (STARR) Cooperative Project of the U.S.Forest Service and Alaska State Parks. This trail has significantly increased hiking and other recreational opportunities in the scenic Starrigavan area.

ATVS

2.13.35. Explore the need for one or more trails suitable for ATVs (all terrain off road vehicles). The Forest Service is encouraged to continue its cooperative efforts with ATV riders to develop and to expand the ATV trail in upper Starrigavan Valley.

Road system 1st, then regional

2.13.15.To encourage that regional recreation systems be centered around the urban area. Various trails, cabins, shelters and moorings exist within the Borough. The local trail loops, cabins and marine parks should be constructed first and then expanded into a regional recreation system.

Camping

2.13.22. To establish a fee-based overnight campground within walking distance of downtown Sitka.

2.13.23. To support the Forest Service's maintenance of Starrigavan and the maintenance and renovation of Sawmill Creek Campground.

2.13.24. Identify a site for and support the development of a fee-based, hike-in, tent camping area close to town.

Marine Parks

2.13.25. To encourage that Alaska State Marine parks designated within the City and Borough of Sitka, Magoun Islands/Port Krestof, Sea Lion Cove and Big Bear/Baby Bear Bays, be maintained for future recreational use. Both sites have numerous anchorages and campsite areas and are heavily used for fishing, hiking, hunting, kayaking, camping, beach combing, photography, wildlife viewing, and scuba diving.

Organized Recreation and Team Sports

2.13.48. To support organized sports activities offered through non-profit organizations, parent-run clubs, and Community Schools.

This support can be demonstrated by continuing to maintain and develop ballfields, park areas, and indoor facilities.

2.13.49. Encourage and assist in the development of a broad array of youth recreational activities, programs and facilities.

2.13.50. To identify specific programs in an updated recreation and parks community needs assessment including specific consideration for family activities, and teen and youth activities.

2.13.51. To develop Municipal Park Use policies considering and/or coordinating use of ballfields, tennis courts, golf, parks for picnics, ATVs, etc., to enable better use of existing outdoor facilities and to improve outdoor facility scheduling.

2.13.52. Increase and improve recreational options for youth by constructing a concrete skate park.

2.13.53. To maintain the municipally owned rifle range as well as access to the range by the Nelson Logging Road in recognition of the important role that gun use plays in Sitka for shooting sports, recreation and subsistence hunting, and bear protection. The Sitka Sportsmen's indoor pistol/rifle/archery range and trap shooting facility should also be supported.

Visitor Industry

2.13.54. To enhance the visitor experience in Sitka by providing conveniences and information and by improving the scenic qualities of the townscape, as follows:

- A. Support efforts to clean up and landscape publicly owned portions of the downtown area. This includes lawns, landscaped areas and street trees.
- B.
- C. Mark crosswalks near the bridge and in the Castle Hill area.
- D. Provide additional benches throughout the downtown area, especially in the vicinity of the cruise ship docks.
- E. Landscape the areas along the side and back of the Harrigan Centennial Hall and improve the appearance of the area around the canoe.
- F. Install more signs marking historic sites and public services. An attempt should be made to develop signs using symbols that are internationally recognized.
- G. Encourage the development of recreation facilities, which provide opportunities for older visitors.
- H. Support the development and maintenance of recreation vehicle facilities for visitors, both public (e.g., Sealing Cove) and private (e.g., Sitka Sportsmen RV Park).
- I. Encourage the development and upgrade pedestrian facilities to accommodate potential increase in visitor numbers. Continue to advocate for a pedestrian walkway under the bridge and along the waterfront.
- J. Establish a mechanism for soliciting donations from the visitor industry that would be dedicated to the construction and maintenance of facilities used by visitors.
- K. Support and promote Sitka's Native culture in efforts to market the community.

Winter Sports

2.13.55. To address the unmet need for winter sports opportunities in Sitka. The following are some which should be actively supported and developed where feasible: cross-country skiing trails (including marking existing trails), ice skating (including development of a multipurpose facility), sledding, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling.

2.13.56. Work toward the development of a facility to permit safe enjoyment of sledding and other snow sports.

MULTI-NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS / PARKS AND GREEN SPACE IN MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS

2.13.46. Encourage developers to dedicate land for a local multi-neighborhood play park during the development and planning of major subdivisions if there is an unmet need for this type of park in the vicinity of the major subdivision.

A. The City will, when feasible, take over ownership and management of sites designated for a multi-neighborhood play park if the proposed site meets all criteria for a multi-neighborhood park.

B.

C. Investigate funding mechanisms for the development of a multi-neighborhood play area.

2.13.47. Developers of major subdivisions are strongly urged to dedicate land to green space.

- A. Green space is undeveloped land, unsuitable for use as a multi-neighborhood park. Green space is principally accessible to and used by residents of a major subdivision.
- B. The City, when feasible, will take over ownership of raw land in major subdivisions, but upon conveyance is not obliged to develop it further. If the green space meets the criteria established in section 21.13.44 for use as a multi-neighborhood park, further development by the City will be considered.
- C. Major subdivisions need to show proposed green space for consideration at the time of preliminary plat submission to the Planning Commission.
- D. Options for funding the acquisition and development of green space that serves a single neighborhood or provides restricted access to the general public, needs to be determined but it follows that these costs should be borne by the residents of the major subdivision.
- E. Developers of major subdivisions are strongly encouraged to leave undeveloped green corridors, in particular along major drainages, to ensure continued access to the public uplands.

2007 Sitka Comprehensive Plan's Historical and Cultural Facilities Goals and Policies

2.13.37. To preserve and appreciate Sitka's heritage. Sites or structures having significant historic or cultural value should be preserved.

A. Support the reuse of the Japonski Island Boathouse as a WWII and Maritime History Interpretive Center.

2.13.38. To support the management of the Japonski Island Causeway as follows:

- A. Undertake efforts with the managing agencies to have this area retained in the public domain, the long-term objective being the creation of a WWII Memorial Park.
- B. Work with the appropriate agencies to obtain funding for improved boat access.

2.13.39. To produce a long range and coordinated plan for development of the historic downtown area of Sitka. The Sitka Historic Preservation Commission should be consulted on all issues effecting preservation and enhancement of the unique character of downtown Sitka to the extent feasible.

2.13.40. To exercise additional management responsibility and devote more resources to the upkeep of facilities at Goddard Hot Springs and Baranof Warm Springs.

2007 Sitka Comprehensive Plan's Arts and Culture Goals and Policies

Recognize, respect, and appreciate that Sitka's arts, culture, and history is:

- A. Diverse in its ethnic, religious, and racial makeup
- B. Highly valued and essential to defining Sitka and local quality of life
- C. Integral to the economic base of the community

To preserve and appreciate Sitka's heritage. Sites or structures having significant historic or cultural value should be preserved.

2.12.2. A. To maintain and develop ongoing programs devoted to supporting Sitka's artists, students, educators, historians and Native elders in both the development and preservation of their important work.

B. To maintain and develop ongoing programs in which Sitka's artists and culture bearers are available to teach and share their work with community members of all ages.

2.12.3. To continue support of the Arts in the following ways:

- A. By identifying and creating an active list of programs which enrich the cultural life of Sitka, and making this list available to the public.
- B. In the planning stages of all City projects and projects needing city approval, assure that considerations are given to aesthetics, cultural issues, historic values, landscaping and public art.
- C. Assure protection and enhancement of historic places including, but not limited to, cemeteries, historic buildings, landmarks, and public art.
- D. By supporting the creation of an Arts and Culture coordinator in Sitka, whose job it would be to help develop cultural opportunities as well as assisting with the scheduling of public spaces.

2.12.4. To follow all relevant laws pertaining to:

- A. Art in public places.
- B. Cultural resources and archaeological surveys in response to federal and state.

2.12.5. To provide facilities for arts and culture through:

- A. The development of community buildings which would include facilities for theater, concerts, dance, art exhibition, workshops, classrooms as well as facilities for archiving and storing artifacts and historical documents.
- B. The establishment of an appropriate home for the local history museum. C. To support the maintenance and the staffing of such facilities.

2.12.6. In matters regarding arts and culture issues, the Borough shall consult with appropriate organizations such as:

- A. Sitka Historical Society/Isabelle Miller Museum.
- B. The Greater Sitka Arts Council.
- C. Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center.

- D. Sitka Tribe of Alaska.
- E. Sitka Historic Preservation Commission.
- F. National Park Service.
- G. Sheldon Jackson Museum.
- H. Sitka Community Schools.
- I. Alaska Arts Southeast.

2.12.7. Require that a percentage of each public capital project be set aside for art. (e.g. 1% of the project for artwork)

2.12.8. Sitka Native Education Program



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Legislation Details

File #: MISC 17-09 **Version:** 1 **Name:**

Type: P&Z Miscellaneous **Status:** AGENDA READY

File created: 2/23/2017 **In control:** Planning Commission

On agenda: 3/7/2017 **Final action:**

Title: Discussion and direction on the Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

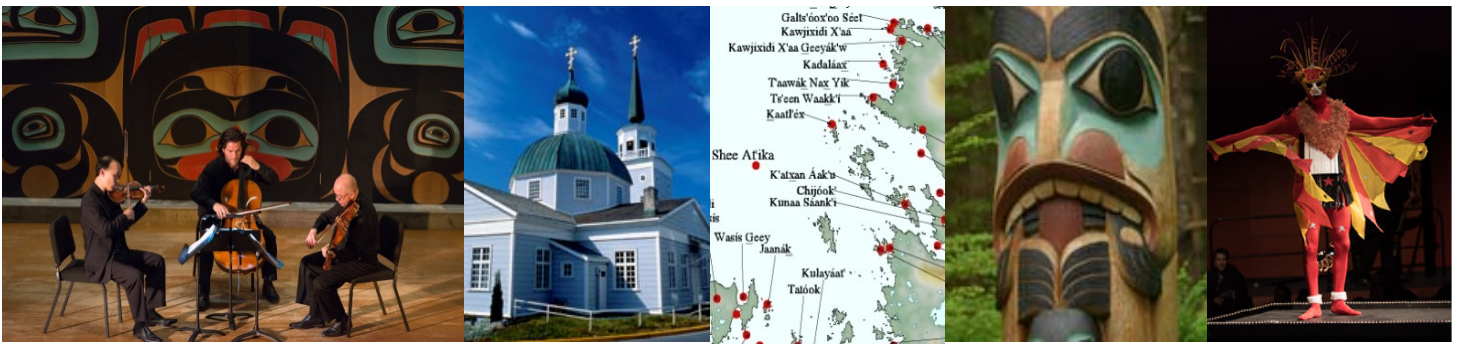
Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: [Draft Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources Chapter March 3](#)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
------	------	-----------	--------	--------



Historic, Cultural, and Arts Resources

GOAL

Continue to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate Sitka's historic, cultural and arts resources, which are:

- Ethnically, religiously, and racially diverse
- Highly valued and essential to defining Sitka and local quality of life
- Integral to the economic base of the community

1 Current Status

1.1 Introduction

Historic, cultural, and arts resources are each unique, but also overlap and strengthen each other. These complementary resources are key assets that help define Sitka and local Quality of Life.

During development of the Sitka 2030 Comprehensive Plan, some of Sitkans' words and thoughts about Sitka's strengths and assets include:

- "Sitka's history and culture"
- "Very strong local arts scene"
- "Rich pre and post contact history"
- "Arts appreciation and instruction"
- "Our creative and resourceful people, our rich cultures and history"
- "It is a culturally and economically diverse community"
- "Quality of life includes access to subsistence resources and local foods, culture and art, and a variety of healthy activities"
- "Sitka Fine Arts Camp"
- "Sitka is an intellectual and artistic outpost"

¹ Photos on top border (L to R): 1-Sitka Music Festival Performance, photo by Clark James Mishler Photography from music festival website; 2-St. Michael's Orthodox Cathedral; 3- Excerpt from Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Place Names Map; 4- Totem Trail detail from NPS Sitka National Historical Park; 5-2016 Sitka Arti Gras Wearable Arts Extravaganza, photo by Xtinepix

1.2 Historic and Cultural Resources

Historic moments deeply impact communities far beyond their scope of time. It is hard to imagine a place anywhere in Alaska with more significant history than Sitka. Just a few highlights (chronologically) are:

- 10,000+ years of Tlingit villages, camps, and culture in Sitka and the Pacific coasts of Baranof and Chichagof Islands and smaller islands, with sophisticated practical and spiritual knowledge, customs, and practices.
- Tlingit-Russian trading, Russian settlement, and fierce Tlingit-Russian battles during the 1700s-1800s.
- Serving as the capital of Russian America beginning in 1808 with Russian forts, buildings, customs, culture, arts, and practices.
- Being the place where the Alaska Treaty of Cession transfer ceremony occurred in October 1867, when the Russians sold the Alaskan Territory to the United States (now Alaska Day).
- Place of Sheldon Jackson College, established in 1878 and the oldest institution of higher learning in Alaska.
- The founding place of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood in 1912, organized to fight discrimination. Construction of the first Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall in 1914.

Evidence of the attention to and passion for Sitka's historic and cultural resources is found in the many people, groups, and achievements that recognize, preserve, and celebrate community history. Entities working on this include but are not limited to (in alphabetical order):

- Alaska Arts Southeast, Inc.
- Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, Camp No 1
- Cape Decision Lighthouse Society
- City and Borough of Sitka Historic Preservation Commission
- National Park Service/Sitka National Historical Park
- Sheldon Jackson Historic Site Preservation Society
- Sheldon Jackson Museum, and Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum
- Sitka Historical Society and Isabel Miller Museum
- Sitka Maritime Heritage Society
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- US Forest Service

The Sitka Tribes of Alaska (STA) has long valued and led the way on historic preservation and related efforts, for example:

1972 Sitka Indian Village Redevelopment Plan, adopted by the Sitka Village Planning Council, details area history, inventory, and many excellent redevelopment and zoning ideas are still relevant today. This document is a good starting place for master planning: "The Village is an area where productive economic activity, history, and a quality residential neighborhood can co-exist" (page 86). This area is home to 14 clan houses and the Alaska

Native Brotherhood (ANB) Hall built in 1918. The ANB Hall is used daily and a National Historic Landmark. It also includes the Russian Orthodox Cathedral, restored Russian Blockhouse, historic Russian and Indian graves, several newly redeveloped homes, the business office for the Baranof Island Housing Authority, and most of Sitka's seafood processors along the water's edge.

1995 Sitka Tribe of Alaska Historic Preservation Plan, was prepared with funding from a Historic Preservation Grant in 1991 to "Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives" and subsequent grants to Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA). The Sitka Tribes of Alaska 1995 Historic Preservation Plan was the first in the US completed by American Indians, Alaska Natives, or Native Hawaiians. "Through this proposal, the Sitka Community Association [Sitka Tribe of Alaska] intends to carry out the formal development of its Tribal Historic and Cultural Preservation Program on behalf of its members and the general public, as a continuing memorial to the Native People of Sitka past, present and future." Anyone interested in Sitka's Tlingit history, culture, and arts should review this STA Plan, which includes a thorough and detailed Tlingit ethnography and ethnohistory with an emphasis on Sitka.

1975-2002 Sheet'Kwaan Aani Aya - Sitka Area Native Place Names. "To our Elders—thank you for thinking of our children. Gunalchéesh!" These maps and place names are an invaluable source of local knowledge about the natural and cultural world of Sitka Tlingits. The information on these maps honors and enriches local understanding of area history and culture; they are reproduced, courtesy of STA, in the appendix to this chapter.

Because the City and Borough of Sitka is one of 13 "Certified Local Governments" in Alaska, it and local entities here are eligible for federal Historic Preservation Grants. Since 1995, there have been 13 federal Historic Preservation Grants (which require a 40% match) awarded to Sitka entities totaling \$158,431. The most recent was awarded in November 2015 to the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society for work on the Japonski Island Boathouse.

The threat of demolition of Sitka's downtown U.S. Post Office built in 1934 led to a grassroots effort to protect Sitka's historic buildings. The City and Borough of Sitka began work and qualified as a Certified Local Government in 1994, then prepared an initial short Sitka Historic Preservation Plan in 1995. A more thorough **2017 draft Sitka Historic Preservation Plan** is out for public review now (February 2017). The draft Plan's goals are to grow a practical and purposeful preservation program in Sitka by:

- Further survey and inventory historic resources,
- Focus on education and outreach,
- Increase funds for historic preservation, and
- Assist the community in land use planning and sustainable economic development.

The draft Plan has a current inventory of Sitka's 13 listed National Historic Places (the official federal government list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed worthy of preservation) and eight National Historic Landmarks (a much smaller group recognized for their outstanding historical significance) (Figure 1).

In addition to historic places and landmarks, the plan lists 19 cemeteries and burial sites within the borough, which are sacred places and sites that represent Sitka’s heritage and continue to tell the story of longevity in the area.

Some building and property owners are eligible for federal tax incentives to encourage historic preservation of their properties if it is a National Historic Place or Landmark. The incentives range from 10-20% tax credits that reduce dollar for dollar the amount owed to the IRS, to easements that can increase tax deductions and decrease estate and property taxes.

Alaska also allows municipalities to exempt historic sites, buildings, and monuments from property tax [AS 29.45.050 (b)(1)(b)]. And, to encourage rehabilitation of all properties, Alaska allows a 4-year reduction in property taxes by the amount of an increased assessment due to completed improvements that enhance the exterior appearance or aesthetic quality of land or a structure [AS 29.45.050(f)] (note that there are many qualifiers to this section). Sitka would need to enact these programs by ordinance if it wished to participate.

Figure 1 – National Register of Historic Places and Landmarks in Sitka				
Site Name	NR Date	AHRS No.	Period of Significance	Comments
HISTORIC PLACES				
Cable House and Station	1977	SIT-00212	1904-1910	Communications Center and Quarters
Emmons House	1977	SIT-00258	1895-1899	601 Lincoln Street
Hanlon-Osbakken House	1992	SIT-00191	1892-1896	419 Lincoln Street
Mills, W. P., House	1977	SIT-00025	1915-1916	1 Maksoutoff Street (Cushing House, Longenbaugh House, Island Home)
Mills House	1978	SIT-00189	1911-1938	315 Seward Street (May Mills House, Rose Hill)
Murray Apartments and Cottages Historic District	1992	SIT-00447	1911	200, 204, & 206 Seward Street
Murray Apartments		SIT-00210	1921-1928	208 Seward Street, contributing to SIT-00447 (Murray Flats, Baranof Apts)
See House	1978	SIT-00195	1905	611 Lincoln Street
St. Peter's By the Sea	1978	SIT-00029	1899	611 Lincoln Street (St. Peter's Episcopal Church)
Sitka Pioneers' Home	1979	SIT-00097	1934-1935	120 Katlian Street, nomination includes Totem Square
Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House	1997	SIT-00313	1938-1946	100 Lincoln Street
US Coast Guard & Geodetic Survey Seismological & Geomagnetic House	1986	SIT-00194	1916, 1929	210 Seward Street (Forest Service House)
Sitka National Historical Park	1966	SIT-00012	1804-1910	Sitka National Monument (1910) and Shiske-Nu

HISTORIC LANDMARKS				
Site Name	NR Date	AHRS No.	Period of Significance	Comments
Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall	1972	SIT-00001	1912, 1914	Katlina Street-ANB Hall, Sitka Camp No. 1
American Flag Raising Site, Castle Hill	1966	SIT-00002	1804, 1806-1867, 1959	Corner of Lincoln & Katlina Streets, (Baranov Castle & Castle Hill, NHL 6/13/62)
Old Sitka Site	1966	SIT-00006	1799-1802	Redoubt St. Archangel Michael (NHL 7/1/61)
Sitka Naval Operating Base and US Army Coastal Defenses	1986	SIT-00079	1939-1943	Japonski Island and series of smaller islands connected to it by the causeway that terminates at Makhnati Island
Russian-American Building No. 29	1987	SIT-00013	1850	202 Lincoln Street (Tilson Building)
Sheldon Jackson School	2001	SIT-00026	1910-1944	801 Lincoln Street (Sitka Industrial Training School; Sheldon Jackson Institute; Sheldon Jackson College)
St. Michael's Archangel Cathedral	1962	SIT-00010	1844-1966	Totally reconstructed per HABS
Russian Bishop's House	1966	SIT-00009	1842-1859	503 Lincoln Street (Russian Mission Orphanage, NHL 6/13/62)
<i>Source: draft Sitka Historic Preservation Plan, February 2017, City and Borough of Sitka Historic Preservation Commission</i>				

Need to add paragraph about local Museums (focus, # visitors, etc.)

1.3 Arts and Cultural Resources

Sitka's vibrant, creative, and diverse arts and cultural organizations and facilities include (cut are not limited to):

- Harrigan Centennial Hall, owned and managed by the City and Borough of Sitka
- Shee't'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Community House, owned and managed by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- Sheldon Jackson Campus, including Stevenson Hall, Allen Hall, and other buildings, owned and managed by Alaska Arts Southeast, Inc.
- Sitka Performing Arts Center, managed by the Sitka School District
- Greater Sitka Arts Council
- Island Institute
- Many, many individual artists
- Sitka Fine Arts Camp
- Sitka Monthly Grind
- Sitka Studio of Dance
- Sitka Summer Music Festival
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- Whale Fest
- Winter Jazz Festival

Arts have had a meaningful role in the Sitka economy for thousands of years. The totems, canoes, masks, regalia, and architecture of Sitka Tlingit reflect area culture, ancestry, and collective histories as much as they are works of art. A 2014 Southeast Conference publication quantifying the contribution of the Arts Economy of Southeast Alaska² also has quotes from two Sitka Native Alaskan artists that show this point well:

Sitka Tlingit Designer & Carver - "We are the Indigenous people and our Art belongs here, the art that is made for our own people. Art is the language that is common to all humankind. We Native artists are capable of not only bridging our own past with the present, but we are capable of bridging cultures with this common language. In addition to making art for ourselves, Native artists become either tourist artists, to satisfy a tourist market; or gallery artists, to satisfy a gallery market. This is my homeland and my art fits all of the above."

Sitka Mask Carver & Cedar Weaver - "The importance of our art and culture is as important now as it was 300 years ago. Seeing the amount of people doing our art – through language, carving, or dance – and keeping our heritage alive and moving is amazing!"

As an umbrella arts organization, the Greater Sitka Arts Council, which was founded in 1973, has helped the year-round, local arts community become visible. The Council's work has helped to change this. It has seen locals and visitors add a downtown gallery walk to their day or evening itinerary; the access and viability of artwork and performance surge; the Sitka community offer arts and cultural classes; bolster performance venues; sponsor public mural projects; support rise of arts nonprofits; and fuel arts integration in the lives of residents.

The Council continues to uplift the cultural life of Sitka, Alaska, through its wealth of arts programming and support services in education, professional development, visual and performing arts, and folk/traditional arts. The Council connects with families, educators, organizations, artists and community groups to foster arts and cultural activities that facilitate learning, personal growth, self-improvement, healing and sense of connectedness. This commitment is reflected in its diversified programming portfolio, some of which are included here:

- Individual artist grant program which awards thousands of dollars each year.
- Gallery exhibitions in partnership with City Hall and Sitka Community Hospital.
- Sitka Folk, a group working to preserve and present folk arts expression through song, dance, material culture and more. Events include monthly 'Open Mic Nights' and bimonthly 'Improv Class'.
- Sitka Community Theatre, a group creating an inclusive, collaborative environment where theatre enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels can discover their strengths. Events include 'Broadway Night' and 'Radio Adventure Hour'.
- Downtown Art Walks: Events uplifting the local community through furthering economic opportunities for artists, galleries, and small businesses.
- The Sitka Wearable Art Show: Creative runway performance that has become a state- and world-wide phenomenon.

² *Arts Economy of Southeast Alaska*, September 2014, Southeast Conference, prepared by Rain Coast Data

- Wait Wait Don't Tell Me: A live staging of the popular, weekly news quiz show.
- Sitka Artisans Market: Where food, art and vintage meet.
- Sitkans Can Dance: Featuring local individual and couples dancing talent.
- Paris of the Pacific Melodrama: Presenting treasured Sitka history in a family-friendly context.

These highly valued [arts] resources enjoyed by residents also directly strengthen the economy. Applied research recently conducted by the American Planning Association demonstrates that arts and culture (which is defined to include historic resources) catalyzes economic vitality³:

“Concentrations of cultural enterprises and creative workers in a geographic area provide a competitive edge, likely by elevating the quality of life, improving a community’s ability to attract economic activity, and creating a climate in which innovation can flourish.”

This finding could well have been written specifically about Sitka. Sitka’s historic, cultural, and arts resources not only help define the community and its “social capital” but create local jobs, boost spending in town, and are top draws for sustainable tourism.

To see this, a simple glance at the Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau website shows that to draw visitors it highlights, “One of Sitka’s strongest distinguishing features is the cultural fusion of the Tlingit intermingled with Russian American influences. This robust duality emanates from the local galleries, art, downtown architecture, dance performances, and local museums.”

In 2014, the previously cited Southeast Conference publication quantifying the contribution of the Arts Economy of Southeast Alaska, noted:

“Artists and arts organizations are a key part of the Southeast Alaska economy. They create products and perform services. They generate spending and attract audiences, who in turn spend money at restaurants, hotels, and other local businesses. Artists impact education, and by positively contributing to the quality of life, they attract young people to the region and help retain those who are here.”

As a local example, Sitka Fine Arts Camp is working to document the social and economic benefits of its programs. In 2016, they had 765 unique registrants paying tuition to attend the Sitka Fine Arts Camp (SFAC). Sitkans take advantage of this resource, with 20% of Sitka School District students attending. In addition, two-thirds traveled to Sitka from other places to attend, including 13% from out of state.

Several foundations support the SFAC, and students pay tuition to attend (20% received over \$90,000 financial aid). Money from tuition goes back into the Sitka economy. The camp’s workforce included 17 full-time employees, 64 local part-time and seasonal employees. Over \$105,000 (self-

³ Economic Vitality: How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality,” American Planning Association Briefing Paper, 2011, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.
www.planning.org/research/arts

reported) was spent in the Sitka community by visiting camp parents. Over 1,200 visitors came to town during SFAC summer programs and as part of year-round rentals and programs. Approximately \$19,400 in sales tax was collected and paid to the City. Capital spending this year totaled \$599,900. These are just some of the quantified economic benefits.

In addition, the social benefits that SFAC brings to the Sitka community include high quality educational opportunities for youth and adults, year-round visitors to the Sitka community, and professional performing artists as part of its Performing Arts Series. All of these opportunities increase residents' quality of life and keeps people in Sitka. NOTE: Before chapter is finalized, will add information from any other arts organizations that have quantified economic and social impact.

Keep this SFAC example in mind and consider how large the combined social and economic benefits in Sitka must be of the many arts and cultural events, performances, and services. As more organizations work to quantify their social and economic impacts the Sitka these documented totals will grow.

2 Opportunities and Challenges

On March 7 during the Planning Commission meeting we will work together to identify Historic, Cultural, and Arts opportunities and challenges to address in next 10-15 years. This will help determine Objectives and Actions. And, we will talk about which opportunities and challenges the City of Borough of Sitka is lead or has a role in accomplishing, and which are other entity's work. Following are a few ideas to consider.

Adopt and keep current a Sitka Historic Preservation Plan.

The Sitka Historic Preservation Commission will increasingly become an entity that looks for ways to invest in heritage assets in order to maintain Sitka's sense of place, its uniqueness as a city, create jobs, and support the visitor industry. A specific list of 10-year priorities is needed.

Strike a balance between old and new.

A recent World Bank Urban Development Series publication⁴ highlights the need for communities to find their own balance between preserving the old and making way for the new. Their topline advice:

- ***Balance conservation with an acceptable degree of change.*** Stakeholders should weigh the different values and trade-offs between conservation and development, identifying the acceptable level of change and the extent of adaptive reuse.
- ***Promote a blend of regulation and incentives.*** Measures to conserve historic city cores and heritage assets are not limited to rules and regulation that restrict activities. Incentives are also essential for achieving "integrated conservation."

⁴ *The Economics of Uniqueness: Investing in Historic City Cores and Cultural Heritage Assets for Sustainable Development*, 2012. US World Bank Urban Development Series. Editors: Licciardi, Guido and Amiratahmasebi, Rana.

- *Ensure a dialogue between public and private sectors.* Heritage is a public good and the economic justification for public sector investment is well established. But, it is unreasonable to expect the public sector to be the sole investor, and the solution is to have a combination of public and private investment, with a balance between the two, varying depending on the project scheme and context.

Protect sacred sites and resources

Support heritage and cultural tourism

Increase public awareness of historic preservation opportunities, tax incentives, and grants available to rehabilitate properties.

Continued return of tribal cultural properties to Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Obtain National Register Historic District status for Sitka Indian Village

Rehabilitate as needed, celebrate, and honor clan houses

Integrate Sitka Tlingit place names into community facilities, services and places.

Support development of a Sitka Tribal Museum.

Its purpose will be to emphasize cultural viability through time. Exhibits and interpretation would focus on tribal choices and efforts at cultural maintenance (e.g., potlatches, funerary customs, clan houses, oral histories) showing the dynamic of Sitka Tlingit culture, accenting the adaptability and strength of Tlingit people and culture through time.

Diversify funding streams for the historic, cultural, and arts organizations.

Provide training and support to allow historic, cultural, and arts organizations to better document their social and economic contributions to Sitka.

3 Objectives and Actions

GOAL

Continue to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate Sitka's historic, cultural, and arts resources, which are:

- Ethnically, religiously, and racially diverse
- Highly valued and essential to defining Sitka and local quality of life
- Integral to the economic base of the community

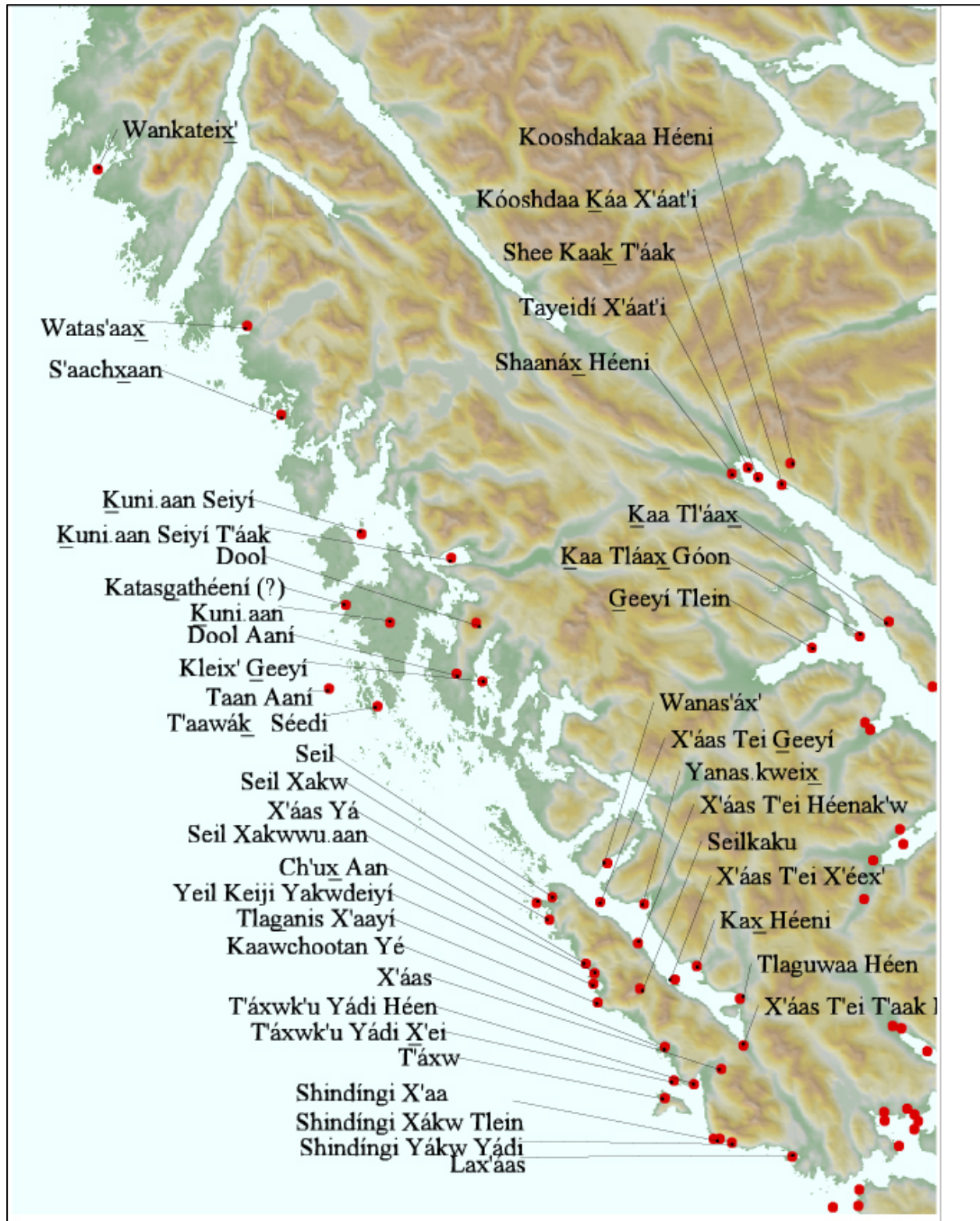
OBJECTIVES

To be determined

ACTIONS

To be determined

West Chichagof Area



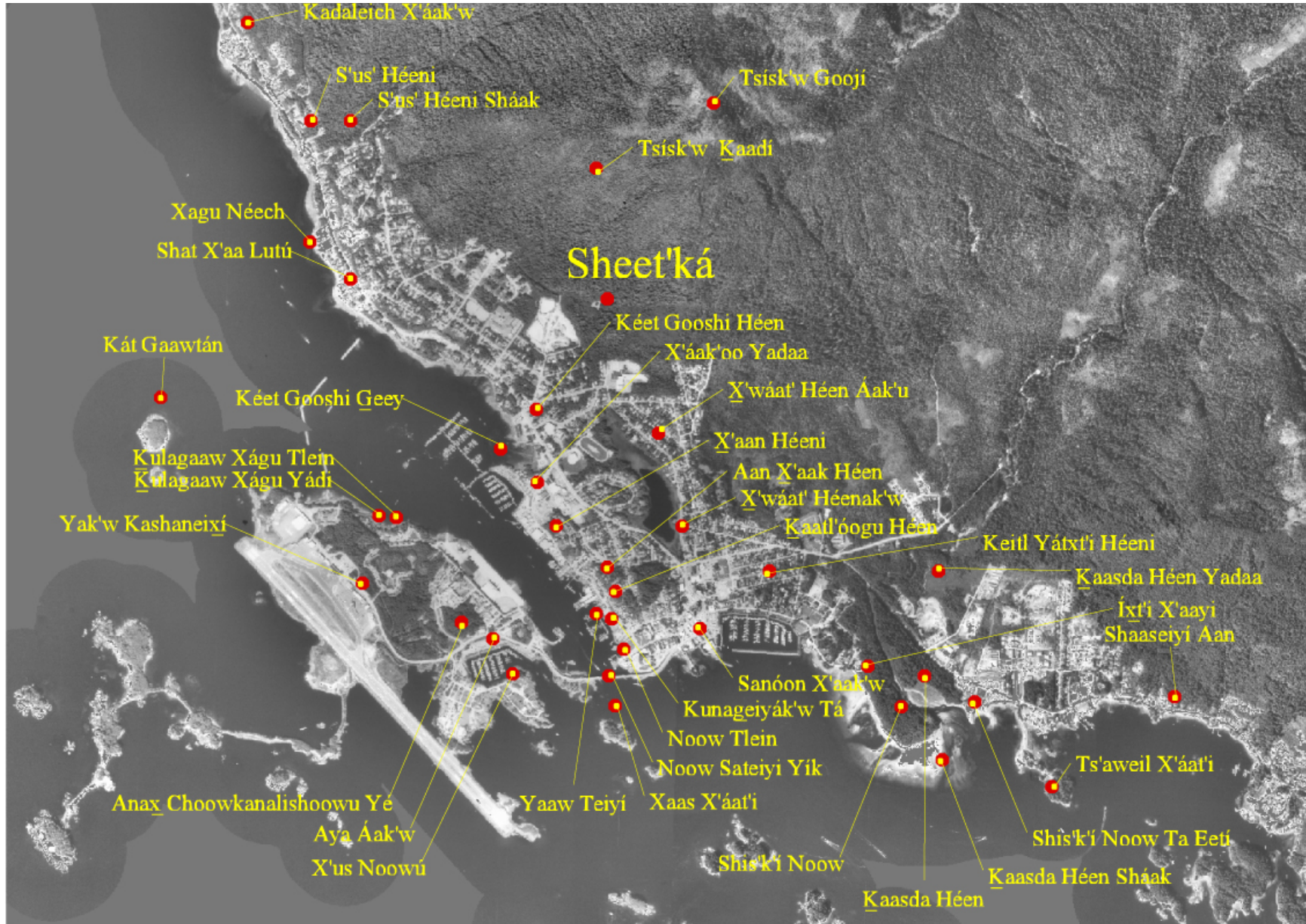
Kruzof Area



Sitka Sound Area



Sitka Town



Nakwasina Area

