



Sitka 2022-2027 Strategic Plan

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SSW CONSULTING



A Message From the Steering Committee

In Sitka, we value community and quality of life. We are known for our natural beauty, rich history, and cultural heritage. We have a small-town atmosphere where neighbors know each other and are willing to lend a helping hand. Over the past several decades, Sitka has grown from a quiet logging and fishing town to a bustling tourism destination and a thriving maritime industry. This growth has given way to additional developments, such as a vibrant downtown showcasing locally owned businesses, growing regional community healthcare system, and expanded government services to support the community.

With growth comes change, but also the opportunity to chart our own course for the future. Our community has weathered a lot over the past few years – a global pandemic, record-high inflation, and political polarization, to name a few. Additionally, we are facing complex challenges, such as increased demand for housing options, record levels of tourism, food security, rising costs and demands for infrastructure maintenance, and changing needs to support today's workforce.

While we have a lot of priorities in our community, the reality is we, as the local government entity, cannot focus on everything at the same time. As we look ahead to the future of our community, we have the opportunity to collectively decide the direction in which we want to go. Equally important, we must be strategic about our resources and the decisions we make to ensure we arrive at our desired destination.

Our core purpose is to provide public services that support a livable community for all. For this reason, we pursued the development of a strategic plan in early 2022. This plan is a five-year road map to guide our organization in achieving our shared vision. Rooted in a substantial outreach effort to gather input from the Assembly, community members, local partner organizations, and the CBS organization, the strategic plan is focused on goals and tactical actions for the CBS to achieve the community's highest priorities over the next five years. The planning process also accounts for the significant input gathered during the recent Comprehensive Plan update process as well as an analysis of current community conditions and trends.

Over the past year, we have engaged hundreds of community members and collected thousands of comments to make Sitka a sustainable and livable community for all. We are grateful to everyone who shared their ideas through the community survey, interviews, and focus groups. Thank you for your investment in the future of Sitka!

We will use this plan to chart the course for the CBS organization and seek out the partnerships that will bring this vision to life. We will regularly communicate our progress and keep this plan updated to maintain its responsiveness and relevance to our community. Our team looks forward to growing the future together.



Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.

- Helen Keller



Acknowledgments

ASSEMBLY

Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor
Kevin Knox, Deputy Mayor
Kevin Mosher, Vice Deputy Mayor
Thor Christianson
Crystal Duncan
Rebecca Himschoot
David Miller

STEERING COMMITTEE

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In the face of uncertainties, planning defines the particular place you want to be and how you intend to get there.

- Peter Drucker

“

Introduction

WE ARE GROWING THE FUTURE TOGETHER!

Sitka is known for its small-town friendly atmosphere, vibrant local economy, and stunning natural beauty. We want to preserve what residents love about Sitka while ensuring our community is a livable place for all Sitkans for years to come.

The CBS Strategic Plan is our five-year road map to guide the organization as we pursue the vision and goals reflective of the current community and organizational needs.

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PLAN?

The Strategic Plan is an opportunity for the community to reflect on the current state of our community and organization, determine what we want Sitka to be in the future, and ultimately define how the organization will drive this vision forward in alignment with our mission and values.

A strategic plan acts as a compass. It helps our organization focus on a set of shared goals and guide it toward achieving them. The strategic plan provides defined goals and actions, rooted in community-identified priorities and informed by an understanding of current trends, along with an action plan and key performance indicators to measure progress over time. Furthermore, it fosters a culture of strategic management for the organization by serving as a resource to guide both long-term planning as well as daily decisions concerning the organization's delivery of services and the community's future.

The Strategic Plan will guide the work of the CBS organization over the next five years through the development of a mission, vision,

values, goals, and actions that will help improve the services we provide to our community. The plan includes an implementation structure to promote accountability and transparency as we pursue our goals and actions. Additionally, the implementation structure supports regular updates to keep the plan relevant and responsive to community and organizational needs. The process builds on the input collected from the comprehensive planning effort in 2018 and includes a significant outreach effort in 2022 to gather input from the community, its partners, and the organization.

WHY NOW?

The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) organization has weathered many changes over the last few years. This period of transition is a great opportunity to refocus with the development of a mission, vision, goals, and how to strategically align the resources to best serve our community over the next five years. Our community is facing complex challenges, such as housing needs, growth in tourism, cost of living affordability, infrastructure, food security, and supporting our local economy. To address these issues, it will require focused efforts, collaboration with community and regional partners, and strategically aligning our community resources to create positive change.

We highly value our community and want CBS services to be responsive to the needs of all Sitkans. The strategic planning effort has been an opportunity to come together to decide the future direction of our community. While we can't focus on every issue simultaneously, this is a way to understand the community's highest priorities for the next five years and guide the organization in addressing those needs.

Strategic Plan

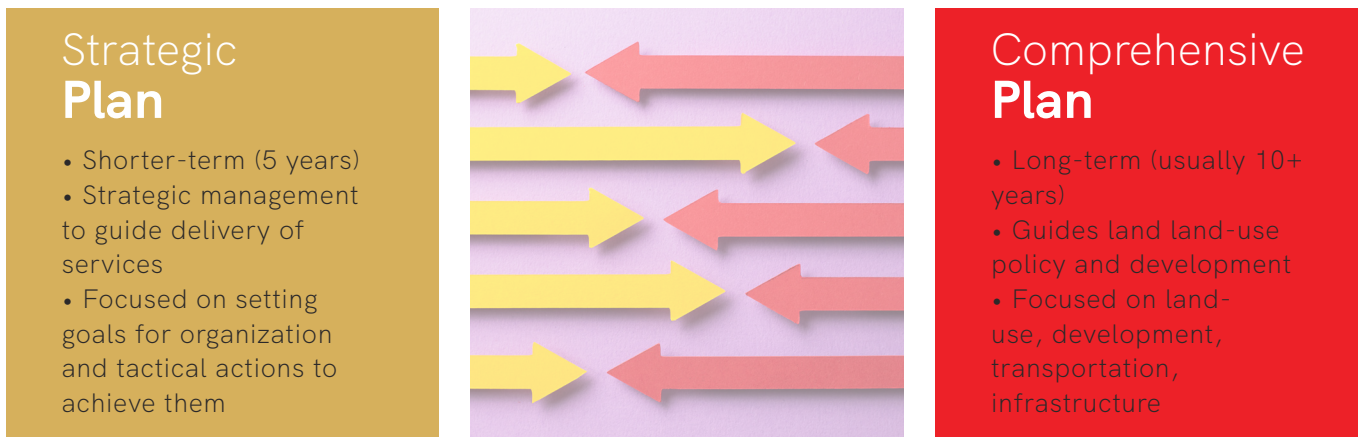
Goals + Process

We set out to achieve the following goals during this process:

- » Build a plan to guide Sitka over the next five years
- » Develop a plan informed by the public engagement gathered through the Comprehensive Plan update and through additional targeted outreach
- » Identify CBS’s vision and values, critical strategic initiatives, high-level goals, and a reporting framework to guide the City’s work

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND A STRATEGIC PLAN?

Sitka’s Comprehensive Plan is a long-term (10+ years) guide for policy decisions related to community land use and development. The City and Borough of Sitka’s Comprehensive Plan has been in existence since 1976 with regular reviews and updates, the most recent being May 2018. In contrast, the Strategic Plan takes a shorter-term look (5 years) and is focused on the delivery of services to the Sitka community. The strategic plan will help us focus on our goals and guide us toward achieving them with tactical action items.



STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

Community and organizational engagement is the foundation of the strategic planning process. Building on the results of the large-scale community engagement conducted during the Comprehensive Plan update process in 2015-2018, the strategic plan community engagement focused on facilitating inclusive opportunities to ensure the vision and values are reflective of all people in Sitka. CBS staff was also engaged in the process to provide input and direction on operational improvements for the organization.

GROWING THE FUTURE TOGETHER WAS ORGANIZED INTO THREE PHASES



PHASE 1: GATHERING COMMUNITY IDEAS

After kicking off the project in February 2022, the Steering Committee, comprised of 12 representatives from CBS Departments and the Assembly, developed a plan a Communications and Engagement Plan to assist with gathering ideas. The Steering Committee committed to an inclusive process that sought to include the input of all voices, whether through previous engagement in the Comprehensive Plan update process or through new outreach opportunities for the strategic plan. Additionally, the Steering Committee prioritized process integrity throughout the outreach efforts to build relationships and create trust that enables reliable government activity in a transparent environment.

The Steering Committee guided the process and designed multiple opportunities and tools to engage the community and organization in the Strategic Plan

- » Strategic planning workshop
- » Community survey
- » Presentations and outreach to Boards, Commissions, + Community Groups
- » Community leader interviews
- » CBS staff survey
- » Focus groups
- » Utility bill insert
- » Fact sheet
- » Social media, media release, and radio
- » Project website

development, including:

Communication + Engagement Goals

The following goals and values guided the team’s engagement efforts:

- » Engage targeted stakeholders to develop a five-year strategic plan that will guide CBS
- » Build on the results of the broad community engagement conducted for the comprehensive planning process

- » Create project awareness across the community and organization and facilitate inclusive outreach opportunities to ensure the vision and values are reflective of Sitka

Communication + Engagement Values

INCLUSIVE: this will be an inclusive process that seeks to include the input of all voices - whether through their previous engagement in the comprehensive plan process or through new outreach opportunities for the strategic plan. The process will seek to be inclusive and accessible to foster trust and build relationships to help achieve the resulting goals and actions.

INTEGRITY: We will ensure process integrity through our outreach efforts. Process integrity is the ability to build relationships and create trust that enable reliable government activity in a transparent environment.



STRATEGIC PLAN Engagement Calendar



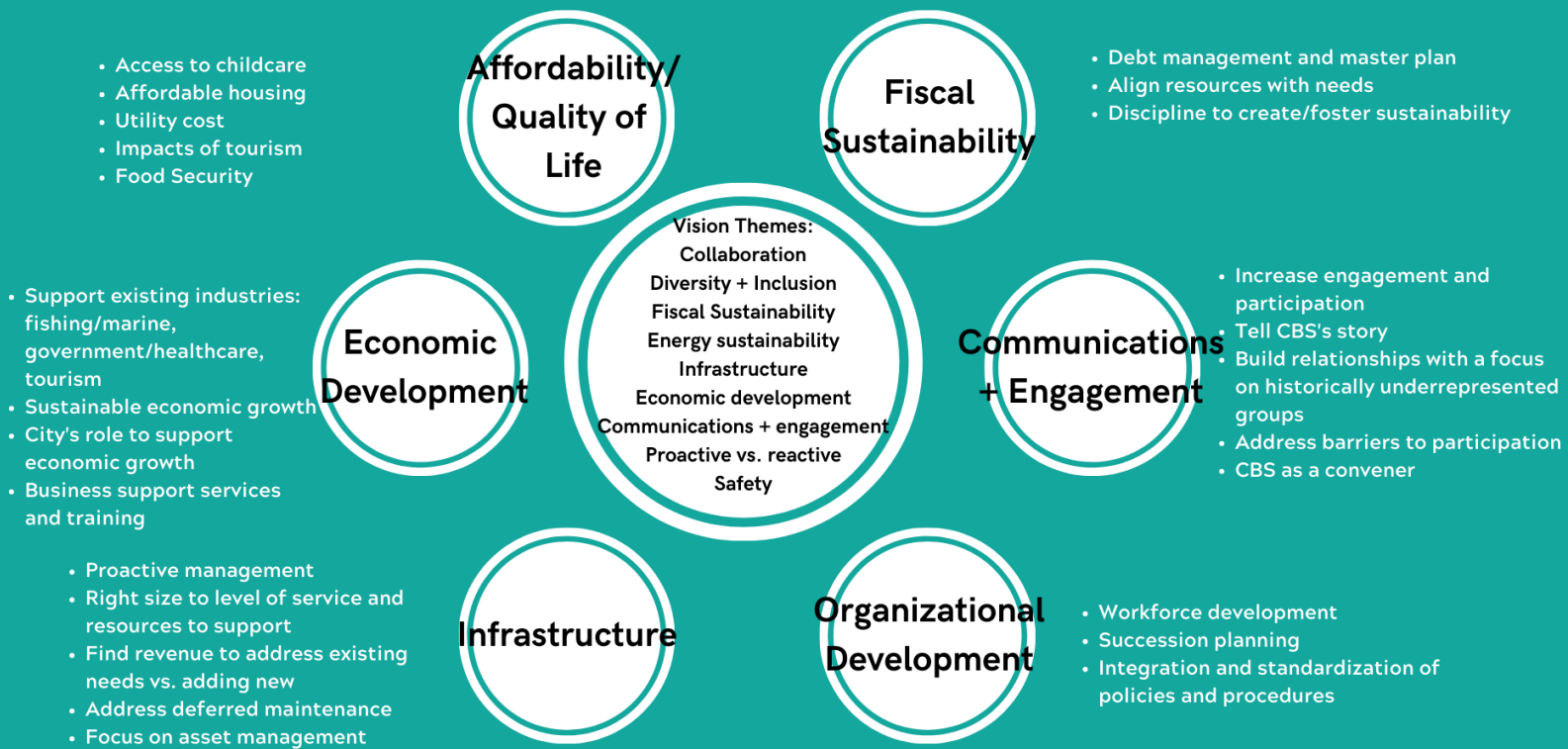
sitkagrowingthefuturetogether.org



PHASE 2: DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The project team carefully analyzed the thousands of community comments gathered through the outreach activities to identify common ideas, comments, and trends. Following the analysis, the project

Strategic Planning Outreach Themes



team organized the information into six outreach themes representing community priorities as shown below.

PHASE 3: ADOPTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The project team presented the draft strategic plan to the Sitka Assembly on September 1st to gather feedback. The project team incorporated the Assembly's comments into the revised draft strategic plan and invited community members to review the revised draft online and provide comments between September 5th-19th. The project team incorporated the community comments to develop a final version of the strategic plan, which was presented to the Assembly for adoption on September 27th.

Mission, Vision Values + Goals



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Mission

WHY WE EXIST

Provide public services for Sitka that support a livable community for all.

Vision

OUR DESIRED FUTURE STATE

CBS is an organization that values everyone and proactively works together to serve the community. We are fiscally sustainable supporting a diverse economy and well-managed infrastructure. We are innovative in seeking ways to protect and preserve Sitka's natural environment. We are a respected employer where people enjoy their work and provide valued public services.

Values

WHAT GUIDES US



PEOPLE

People are our greatest asset. We value all people including our community, employees, and visitors. We appreciate the diversity of Sitka, and we respect and celebrate all people. We foster a safe and welcoming environment for all.



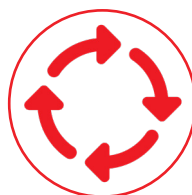
INNOVATION

Innovation supports a proactive approach to fulfilling our mission. We are forward thinking and continuously working to improve our processes and our people to provide efficient and effective services to our community.



INTEGRITY

Integrity guides our service delivery, processes, and communication. We are accountable to the Sitka community, and we provide services in a transparent, honest, and ethical manner.



SUSTAINABLE

Sustainability ensures we plan and deliver services with the future in mind. We are good stewards of taxpayer resources as well as our natural environment.



SERVICE

Serving the community is our job. We provide service with compassion, kindness, and excellence. We care about our community and organization, and this is reflected in our service levels.

Goals

WHAT ARE OUR DESIRED OUTCOMES FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND ORGANIZATION?



Quality of Life

Preserve the quality of life and affordability for all Sitkans

Communication

Improve communications and strengthen relationships within the community and organization



Sustainable

Align resources and financial and economic policies with CBS' goals for a sustainable community

Infrastructure

Plan and invest in sustainable infrastructure for future generations



Service

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

Action Plan

The Action Plan contains the policies, programs, and projects CBS will implement to fulfill the organization's mission and achieve the five-year vision and supporting goals.

WHAT IS AN ACTION?

The actions represent a policy, program, or project. The actions are organized by goal areas and support the overall organization mission and vision. The actions were informed directly by the ideas and priorities shared by community members and CBS employees during the strategic plan outreach process.

The scope and timeline of the actions vary. Some actions are significant undertakings and will require multiple years to achieve, while others are smaller in nature and can be achieved in a shorter time frame. Regardless of size and scope, all actions play a critical role in improving the delivery of services to the community.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THESE ACTIONS?

The actions of the Strategic plan are internally focused with the CBS organization responsible for implementing these actions. Each action will be assigned to a project lead and team of CBS employees. While CBS plays a critical role in achieving these actions, the organization, and ultimately the community, will be most successful through working together with community partners to implement the plan.

"Execution is the ability to mesh strategy with reality, align people with goals, and achieve the promised results."

-Larry Bossidy

Goal 1:

Preserve the quality of life for all Sitkans

1.1 Convene community partners to develop a community-wide strategy to improve access to childcare

1.2 Develop a plan to improve housing options for all in Sitka

1.3 Identify opportunities to relieve the burden of utility costs

1.4 Review the impacts and benefits of tourism, and develop policies that prioritize the quality of life for all Sitkans

1.5 Convene community partners to develop an action plan that will address the challenges of food security



Goal 2:

Improve communications and strengthen relationships within the community and organization

2.1 Develop a communication and engagement plan to increase engagement and participation through storytelling and enhancing Sitka's communication tools and networks

2.2 Identify opportunities to foster relationships with underrepresented groups/populations in the community and implement findings to improve service delivery to these groups

2.3 Annually convene non-profits, CBS boards and commissions, and other community groups for a summit to discuss community challenges, updates, and opportunities for collaboration

Goal 3:

Align resources and financial and economic policies for a sustainable community

3.1 Develop a fiscal policy that includes guidelines for areas of fiscal operations such as debt management, infrastructure replacement, metrics for fiscal health of funds, reserves, and other areas.

3.2 Prepare financial forecasts and life cycle models for all assets to bring resources in alignment with the City's top priority needs

3.3 Convene economic partners to explore the addition of business support services and employment training programs

3.4 Identify and implement policies that will balance the economic benefits of tourism with the impacts on Sitkan's quality of life

Goal 4:

Plan and invest in sustainable infrastructure for future generations

4.1 Identify and pursue funding to address existing capital needs and deferred maintenance



4.2 Develop asset management plans for future capital investments

4.3 Identify the levels of service for CBS's infrastructure and identify the resources needed to support these levels

Goal 5:

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

5.1 Develop a workforce development plan that outlines clear policies for staff training and professional development

5.2 Prepare a succession plan that addresses development of the current workforce and future workforce recruitment and retention strategies

5.3 Improve customer service levels and evaluate process improvements for service delivery

5.4 Identify and develop necessary standard policies and procedures to promote organization-wide stability and service-level consistency

5.5 Develop an internal communication and engagement plan and policies to improve the flow of information in the organization and increase employee engagement

Plan Implementation

STRATEGIC PLAN NEXT STEPS

Following the Assembly's adoption of the strategic plan, CBS staff will use input and direction from the Assembly to prioritize the actions for implementation based on staff capacity and available resources. CBS staff will identify leads for each action. These leads will be responsible for the following:

- » Overseeing the implementation of the action
- » Developing a project charter (will identify the project team, stakeholders, timeline, key performance indicators, etc.)
- » Identifying resources for implementation
- » Engaging and updating the Assembly, Boards/Commissions, Organization, and the Community as needed
- » Reporting progress, challenges, and opportunities to consider during implementation
- » Recommending updates to the action if needed

Once the action leads have been assigned and the work has been prioritized, the actions prioritized for implementation will be considered in the budget development process. This will help in identifying resources for the action implementation if needed.

At the end of 2023, CBS staff will coordinate an annual progress report for the strategic plan. The progress report will document progress, challenges, opportunities, and potential updates to the actions as needed. This report will serve as a communication tool back to the Assembly and the community to maintain accountability in implementing the vision and goals.

FOSTERING A CULTURE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

While this is the first iteration of this strategic plan, it is intended to foster a culture of strategic management and guide the organization in developing a more efficient, effective, and transparent system of providing public services. The process below describes the recommended system for implementing the plan and making regular annual updates to it to ensure it remains relevant in meeting current community and organizational needs.

Regular engagement from the community, the Assembly, Boards/Commissions, and the organization are essential to fostering a system that is responsive and accountable. The graphic below illustrates what the annual process will look like going forward to maintain alignment between the strategic plan, the budget, and the departments' work plans. It also highlights where the engagement will take place, so the community, elected officials, and staff understand when and how to participate and get involved in this process.

It is recommended the strategic plan undergo a complete update every five years to conduct more comprehensive engagement, review the mission, vision, and values, and examine the broader community context. These major updates will ensure the five-year vision continues to serve as a North Star in guiding the community and organization. These community engagement efforts also help to foster strong relationships with Sitka's community and its partners and build support for implementing the goals.

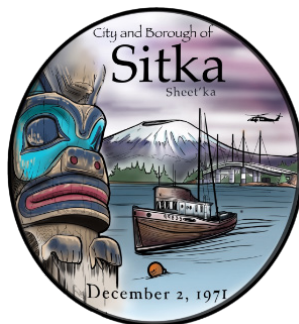
Strategic Plan Road Map

This road map shows how the Assembly, community, and organization can get involved in identifying goals for CBS. The process repeats each year with the destination being continuous community and organizational improvement.



Appendix

The appendix materials will be added for the community review process and will include engagement details



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