

Sitka Community Playground VOLUNTEER GROUP

The Sitka Community Playground volunteer group envisions an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible, low-maintenance, safe, vibrant community space at Crescent Harbor Park that honors Sitka's natural surroundings and cultural diversity while inspiring multi-generational play.

WHO is building the playground?

The playground project is led by the Sitka Community Playground volunteer group in partnership with the [City and Borough of Sitka](#) Parks Division, the Parks and Recreation Committee, the [Sitka Health Summit](#), and [Southeast Alaska Independent Living](#) (SAIL).

WHY are you building a playground?

We have playgrounds in Sitka, but the schools' playgrounds are closed to public use during the day and none of the playgrounds meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessibility and safety standards. Sitka needs a 21st-century playground that promotes healthy, creative play.

HOW much is the playground going to cost?

The budget to design and build an ADA-accessible, low-maintenance, safe and vibrant community playground is \$450,000-\$500,000.

WHO is paying for the playground?

The Sitka Community Playground volunteer group will raise funds through grants, awards,

and donations and solicit in-kind contributions. Volunteers are expected to provide much of the labor and provide support during the build. The City Parks Division would continue to maintain the playground.

WHEN will the playground be ready?

Once the design process is done, we'll start major fundraising efforts and plan to have the playground built for summer 2017.

WHERE is the playground going to be built?

Community support was strongest to use the existing Crescent Harbor Park playground site plus one of the three adjacent tennis courts (approximately 12,000 square feet total). The site is at the heart of the Sea Walk, which draws residents and visitors to the area, and is within walking distance of at least four preschools. Some parking is available adjacent to the site, while a large parking lot at Harrigan Centennial Hall and the Sitka Public Library is just a short walk away via the Sea Walk. The City Parks and Recreation Committee, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission and neighbors voiced support for the site. In January 2015, the Assembly passed [Resolution 2015-02](#) supporting the Crescent Harbor Park site.



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WHAT is the history of the project?

The last upgrade to the Crescent Harbor Park playground was in 2000. The City Parks Division and Parks and Recreation Committee have listed playground upgrades as a deferred maintenance priority since 2006. The Assembly has listed the playground project as a State Legislative priority for three years. This project would expand the footprint of an existing playground at Crescent Harbor Park to allow accessibility and safe spacing around play structures, which will require less maintenance and reduce liability.

In 2011, creating a community playground was selected as a [Sitka Health Summit](#) goal. Guided by a playground consultant, the community developed a potential design. Unfortunately, the group lost momentum when the leader had to leave town.

In May 2014, the unexpected death of Sitkan Sandra Gelber, a physical therapist who was passionate about health and helping children with special needs, helped energize efforts to once again build an accessible and safe community playground. The group plans to honor her memory at the site.

This second group reviewed previous work, researched other Alaskan community playgrounds, and hosted public meetings to get community feedback on possible sites. Additionally, the playground group garnered support from neighbors, nearby preschools, and secured the Crescent Harbor Park site with Assembly approval.

In October 2015, [Sitka Health Summit](#) attendees selected the playground project as one of three community wellness priorities and awarded the project \$2,000. In late 2015, the [SouthEast Regional Health Consortium](#) (SEARHC) awarded the project a \$10,000 grant to assist with the design process.

With the City's support, grant funding, private donations, and community and volunteer enthusiasm, the Sitka Community Playground volunteer group is ready to move forward!

HOW can I volunteer?

Come join us! The Sitka Community Playground project group meets monthly. Like us on Facebook ("[Sitka Community Playground](#)") to find out about meetings and check out our [website](#) for more information. To volunteer, visit our website at www.sitkacommunityplay.wix.com/home.



A big **THANK YOU** to everyone at **SAIL** for inviting the volunteer group to come under your umbrella!
SAIL is providing financial accounting services for the project.
We couldn't do this without you!



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