



March 27, 2024
City & Borough of Sitka – Planning Commission
100 Lincoln St.
Sitka, AK 99835

Letter of Intent for Parking Setback Variance for:
NHN Sawmill Creek Rd
US Survey 3695 Lot 3
Parcel #: 3-0290-000
Sitka, AK 99835

Dear Commissioners:

We would like to make a formal request for a variance for the otherwise required number of parking spaces for the Sitka Homeless Coalition's Hitx'i Sáani 'Little Houses' Community Project. Sitka Homeless Coalition (SHC) plans to construct a permanent supportive housing project that will have 12 residential units, a caretaker unit, and a services building. The project will provide affordable housing for the chronically homeless as well as essential services, such as behavioral health services, employment services, and individualized support on-site.

Parking:

In an effort to maximize open space in the area around the buildings and minimize overall site impact, we would like to formally request a variance to allow the project to have 7 total parking spaces. We arrived at this number after reviewing the proposed program, target population and established precedent in other communities in Alaska.

The specific use of this development is fairly unique in Alaska and rather ill-fitting within the Sitka Municipal Code. A strict 'closest fit' parking calculation in terms of the listed uses and their parking requirements in the zoning code would result in at least 27 parking spaces: (13 Residential Units x 1.5) + (2000 GSF Service Building (Business) / 300).

Looking at similar projects across the state for precedent projects with similar typologies and targeting chronically homeless populations:

- Winter House in Bethel: A 24-unit, 8700 sf supportive housing project: 8 parking spaces.
- Home Plate Apartments in Nome: A 15-unit studio apartment building for single occupancy with an on-site property manager's unit, onsite medical and mental health clinic with space for individual counseling: 9 parking spaces.

Sitka Homeless Coalition's (SHC) target population for the project is the chronically homeless. Based on SHC's experience, we believe that most of the possible clients that will occupy units in the project will not have vehicles. We recognize that SHC staff, service providers and visitors will need access to off-street parking. We feel that 7 parking spaces will be more than ample for the program and occupants, allocating: 1 Caretaker space, 2 Staff spaces, 1 Service Provider space and 3 Resident/Visitor spaces.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

E. David Hurley, AIA
Principal Architect
NorthWind Architects, LLC

Andew Hinton
Executive Director
Sitka Homeless Coalition

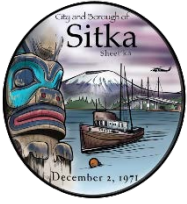
Sean M Boily AIA
Principal Architect

James Bibb AIA
Principal Architect

David Hurley AIA
Principal Architect

126 Seward Street
Juneau, AK 99801

p.907.586.6150
f.907.586.6181



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
GENERAL APPLICATION

- Applications must be deemed complete at least **TWENTY-ONE (21)** days in advance of next meeting date.
- Review guidelines and procedural information.
- Fill form out **completely**. No request will be considered without a completed form.
- Submit all supporting documents and proof of payment.

APPLICATION FOR:

VARIANCE

CONDITIONAL USE

ZONING AMENDMENT

PLAT/SUBDIVISION

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST: _____

PROPERTY INFORMATION:

CURRENT ZONING: _____ PROPOSED ZONING (if applicable): _____

CURRENT LAND USE(S): _____ PROPOSED LAND USES (if changing): _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

PROPERTY OWNER: _____

PROPERTY OWNER ADDRESS: _____

STREET ADDRESS OF PROPERTY: _____

APPLICANT'S NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ DAYTIME PHONE: _____

Last Name

Date Submitted

Project Address

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

For All Applications:

- Completed General Application form
- Supplemental Application (Variance, CUP, Plat, Zoning Amendment)
- Site Plan showing all existing and proposed structures with dimensions and location of utilities
- Floor Plan for all structures and showing use of those structures
- Proof of filing fee payment
- Other: _____

For Marijuana Enterprise Conditional Use Permits Only:

- AMCO Application

For Short-Term Rentals and B&Bs:

- Renter Informational Handout (directions to rental, garbage instructions, etc.)
- Documentation establishing property as primary residence (motor vehicle registration, voter registration, etc.)
- Signed Affidavit of Primary Residence for Short-term Rental Conditional Use Permit

CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property described above and that I desire a planning action in conformance with Sitka General Code and hereby state that all of the above statements are true. I certify that this application meets SCG requirements to the best of my knowledge, belief, and professional ability. I acknowledge that payment of the review fee is non-refundable, is to cover costs associated with the processing of this application and does not ensure approval of the request. I understand that public notice will be mailed to neighboring property owners and published in the Daily Sitka Sentinel. I understand that attendance at the Planning Commission meeting is required for the application to be considered for approval. I further authorize municipal staff to access the property to conduct site visits as necessary. I authorize the applicant listed on this application to conduct business on my behalf.

Owner

Date

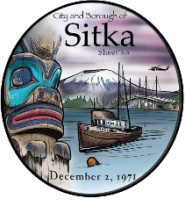
Owner

Date

I certify that I desire a planning action in conformance with Sitka General Code and hereby state that all of the above statements are true. I certify that this application meets SCG requirements to the best of my knowledge, belief, and professional ability. I acknowledge that payment of the review fee is non-refundable, is to cover costs associated with the processing of this application and does not ensure approval of the request.

Applicant (If different than owner)

Date



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA
 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
 SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION FORM
 VARIANCE

APPLICATION FOR

- ZONING VARIANCE – MINOR EXPANSIONS, SMALL STRUCTURES, FENCES, SIGNS
- ZONING VARIANCE – MAJOR STRUCTURES OR EXPANSIONS
- PLATTING VARIANCE – WHEN SUBDIVIDING

RATIONALE - Alaska Statute 29.40.040(b)3 states that a variance may not be granted solely to relieve financial hardship or inconvenience. Explain why a variance is required for your project.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS (Please address each item in regard to your proposal)

- **TRAFFIC** _____

- **PARKING** _____

- **NOISE** _____

- **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY** _____

- **HABITAT** _____

- **PROPERTY VALUE/NEIGHBORHOOD HARMONY** _____

- **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** _____

REQUIRED FINDINGS (Choose **ONE** applicable type and explain how your project meets these criterion):

Major Zoning Variance (Sitka General Code 22.30.160(D)1)

Required Findings for Variances Involving Major Structures or Expansions. Before any variance is granted, it shall be shown:

a. *That there are special circumstances to the intended use that do not apply generally to the other properties. Special circumstances may include the shape of the parcel, the topography of the lot, the size or dimensions of the parcels, the orientation or placement of existing structures, or other circumstances that are outside the control of the property owner. Explain the special circumstances:*

b. *The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use possessed by other properties but are denied to this parcel; such uses may include the placement of garages or the expansion of structures that are commonly constructed on other parcels in the vicinity. Explain the use/ enjoyment this variance enables:* _____

c. *The granting of such a variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property, nearby parcels or public infrastructure. Initial Here* _____

Minor Zoning Variance (Sitka General Code 22.30.160(D)2)

Required Findings for Minor Expansions, Small Structures, Fences, and Signs.

a. *The municipality finds that the necessary threshold for granting this variance should be lower than thresholds for variances involving major structures or major expansions. My request should be considered a minor zoning variance because:* _____

b. *The granting of the variance furthers an appropriate use of the property. Explain the use or enjoyment this variance enables:* _____

c. *The granting of the variance is not injurious to nearby properties or improvements. Initial Here* _____

Platting Variance (Sitka General Code 21.48.010)

a. A variance from the requirements of this title may be granted only if the planning commission finds that the tract to be subdivided is of such unusual size and shape or topographical conditions that the strict application of the requirements of this title will result in undue and substantial hardship to the owner of the property. **Explain the conditions of the lot that warrant a variance:** _____

b. The granting of a platting variance will not be detrimental to the public safety, or welfare, or injurious to adjacent property. **Initial Here** _____

ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS _____

Applicant

Date



Nome Community Center, Inc.

Post Office Box 98
Nome, Alaska 99762
Website: www.nomecc.org

Phone: 907-443-5259
Fax: 907-443-2990
rschneider@nomecc.org

January 4, 2022

Nome Planning Commission
City of Nome

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to make a formal request for a variance for the otherwise required number of parking spaces for the housing first project that is planned for lots on the north east side of Nome.

Our target population for the project is chronic homeless. We don't believe any of the possible tenants that will occupy units in the building have driver's licenses or own vehicles. We recognize that service providers and visitors will need access to off-street parking. In an effort to maintain as much open space on the lots around the building, we would like to formally request a variance to allow the project to have eight parking spaces.

The building will be 8700 square feet and will be situated on three city lots. We have incorporated green space in to the plan and do not want unnecessary parking spaces to tie up space on the property that could be used for picnicking, visiting, social calls and outdoor events.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Rhonda M. Schneider

Rhonda Schneider
Executive Director



February 15, 2023

Dena Strait
DD Strait Consulting, LLC
3705 Arctic Boulevard #1348
Anchorage, AK 99503

**Subject: Bethel Permanent Supportive Housing (Bethel Winter House) –
Concurrency on Required Parking Determination**

Dear Ms. Strait:

DOWL, on behalf of the City of Bethel, has reviewed the applicant's request of an updated review and determination of required off-street parking spaces for the Bethel Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) project. DOWL concurs with the applicant's request.

The request to update the determination of parking required is based on two factors. First, the applicant has increased the projected PSH housing unit count from 23 to 47 total occupants. Second, the applicant contends that the proposed supportive housing does not fall under a conventional occupancy type as stipulated in the off-street parking space requirement table in Bethel Municipal Code (BMC) 18.48.160.D. Instead, due to the use, the applicant is requesting a parking determination based on BMC 18.48.160.C, which states, "Parking requirements for types of structures or uses not specifically listed in this section shall be determined by the land use administrator based on comparable uses listed in this chapter or on standards recommended by a professional planning or engineering organization."

Winter House's request for a parking determination is based primarily on the absence of car ownership of tenants in permanent supportive housing. The existing Bethel Winter House (BWH) and the proposed PSH will share on-site parking. Based on the information provided in the letter from MRV Architects, dated January 25, 2023, the applicant has referenced the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual's Senior Housing occupancy data as this is the better representation of a facility that houses residents who generally do not have cars and provided parking is primarily for staff and caregivers. With 47 proposed dwelling units and a ITE Parking Generation Manual requirement of .38 parking spots per dwelling unit for the weekday peak demand, the facility would require 18 parking spaces. The applicant plans to provide 21 spaces total.

Finally, BWH staff monitored use of the current parking area from the end of 2021 to May 2022. On average, the tally found an average of 4.56 vehicles on-site at any one time. These tallies do not exceed the currently provided 17 spaces and the proposed 21 spaces.

DOWL concurs with the findings of the applicant's representative and support the requested parking determination to provide 21 parking spaces, at this project site, for the specifically detailed business operations as detailed in this letter. Any change in the current use will require re-evaluation by the City of Bethel Planning Director and this concurrence letter will no longer apply.

Please note that the issuance of this letter does not preclude the city from requesting additional information, nor does it prevent the applicant from providing more information during the ensuing

Ms. Dena Strait
DD Strait Consulting, LLC
February 15, 2023
Page 2 of 2

application process. Please contact me by phone at (907) 562-2000 or via email at lchmielowski@dowl.com, with any questions.

Sincerely,



LaQuita Chmielowski, P.E., LEED AP
Senior Land Use Planning Manager, DOWL
Consulting Planner for City of Bethel

Fwd: Sitka

Michelle DeWitt <michelle@bcsfoundation.org>

Sun 4/7/2024 9:56 AM

To: Ben Kraft <ben@northwindarch.com>

 2 attachments (3 MB)

COB-Parking-Concurrence Letter_BWH_02-15-23.pdf; MRV Parking Analysis, Rev 1.25.2023-final.pdf;

Per Dena's note below, there are 21 parking spots at BWH.

Attached are the letters between our design firm and the City to confirm that that number would be both adequate for this type of facility and acceptably by the City.

Michelle DeWitt

she/her/hers

Bethel Community Services Foundation

Executive Director

PO Box 2189

Bethel, AK 99559

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Dena Strait** <ddstrait@ddstrait.com>

Date: Sat, Apr 6, 2024 at 9:02 AM

Subject: Re: Sitka

To: Michelle DeWitt <michelle@bcsfoundation.org>

Cc: Jaela Milford <jmilford@bethelwinterhouse.org>

We have 21 spots officially. Attached is MRV's request for the count we have and the city's concurrence with that count.

DD Strait Consulting, LLC

Dena D. Strait, Licensed Architect, Project Manager and Owner's Representative

ddstrait@ddstrait.com

(907) 440-9443

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January 25, 2023

City of Bethel Planning Department
Attn: Ms. LaQuita Chmielowski
204 Chief Eddie Hoffman Hwy.
Bethel, AK 99559

Subject: Bethel Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Project – Required off-street parking

Dear Ms. Chmielowski

We are writing to request an updated review and determination of required off-street parking spaces for the Bethel Permanent Supportive Housing project. Briefly, the PSH project will provide 24 SRO independent apartment rooms serving the vulnerable homeless population in Bethel. The new facility will be built adjoining the existing Bethel Winter House (BWH), sharing parking, and covered entry. The current parking lot is identified as expanded from the current maximum of 17 spaces to 21, infilling an un-vegetated area adjoining the existing parking.

An updated determination of parking requirement is needed for two reasons. First, Bethel Community Services Foundation, as project developer, has been able to increase the new housing unit count from 20 to 24, based on additional fund-raising. This size increase was previously identified as a potential in correspondence submitted to the City of Bethel in May 2022.

Attached is earlier correspondence from Mr. Ted Meyer, City Planner, dated August 2, 2022. His analysis is based on using the parking requirements for boarding and lodging facilities as the most comparable type of use. Although this is a similar occupancy type, the supportive housing to be constructed in Bethel is a very specific and unusual occupancy, justifying a variation from the more conventional occupancy types as allowed under BMC 18.48.160.C, generating parking requirements closer to the actual use patterns anticipated.

The key factor to consider here is that the individuals who will be housed in the new facility -- chronically homeless individuals -- simply do not own vehicles. This means that the functional parking needs for this particular housing category should be focused for staff, care providers, and visitors.

Given the shared parking lot situation with BWH, both facilities must be considered together. Because the City of Bethel municipal code does not have a similar occupancy in the zoning regulations, we propose using the Senior Housing occupancy data as found in the ITE Parking Generation Manual. This is the best representation to the BWH and PSH occupancy where the guests generally do not have cars and the parking lot is primarily for staff and caregivers. Utilizing this manual for the combined facility generates the following counts: Bethel Winter House has a sleeping

occupant load of 23, and the new Supportive Housing will provide 24 single occupant units, for 47 total occupants. At .38 parking spot per dwelling unit, the facility requirement would round up to 10 spots. The parking spot/dwelling unit ratio within the manual appears to include staff. It is important to note that BWH does not have 23 units, but rather 23 individuals can sleep in the open room provided on cots, thus making the parking count of 10 likely higher than needed. The attached BWH parking tally shows less than 10 cars parked over an entire week. Therefore, we believe the current design, with 21 spaces overall, provides an abundance of parking relative to what is needed.

As additional background, MRV Architects has designed and constructed two phases of identical supportive housing in Juneau, with 32 units in both phases. Similar to Bethel, the City of Juneau did not have a parking use category that was specific to supportive housing. A variance was granted to provide parking focused on staff, support, and on-site clinic uses. A total of only three spaces were designated to the 64 housing units themselves. To date after five years of operation, no concerns with parking have arisen and there have been no situations where occupants had cars.

To provide additional context for this important decision, staff at Bethel Winter House monitored the use of the current parking area from the end of 2021 to May of 2022. This tally is attached. Please note that facility renovation was being completed during that time, so some vehicles were those of construction workers.

Per the BWH Executive Director, the greatest count of cars in the parking lot at any one time to date has been six during a board meeting. The average daily count is four cars in the morning, which typically reduces to one after lunch. All of these counts are well under the current 17 spaces available, and the proposed 21 spots to be developed with the project.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at paul@mrvarchitects.com or (907) 586-1371.

Sincerely,



Paul Voelckers, President

MRV Architects



Dena Strait <ddstrait@ddstrait.com>

Information for Planned Bethel Permanent Supportive Housing Project

3 messages

Ted Meyer <tmeyer@cityofbethel.net>

Tue, Aug 2, 2022 at 5:02 PM

To: Dena Strait <ddstrait@ddstrait.com>

Cc: Peter Williams <pwilliams@cityofbethel.net>, Pauline Boratko <pboratko@cityofbethel.net>

Hi Dena,

I'm writing to give you the information you've requested regarding the planned 2023 Bethel Permanent Supportive Housing Project:

1. Need for a Conditional Use Permit?

A Conditional Use Permit was approved by the Planning Commission in October 2020 for use and operation of a homeless shelter, in a structure called the Bethel Winter House, at [127 Atsaq Street](#). According to your recent 2022 plans, the planned 20-unit Bethel Permanent Supportive Housing structure will be an attached addition to the existing Bethel Winter House (homeless shelter), owned by the same entity. Unlike the existing homeless shelter that has one group room for overnight guests, the new Supportive Housing structure will consist of 20 apartment-style units for housing longer term guests. This new attached structure will share the same front entrance with the homeless shelter, and share the same administration and staff, maintenance, laundry facilities, and dining room. As this new wing addition is an expansion of the existing building with the same already-approved use, a Conditional Use Permit is not required.

Additionally, the Winter House Homeless Shelter approved by the Planning Commission in October 2020, included a statement in the CUP application that providing emergency shelter would be followed by transitional housing, giving their clients the tools and skills they need to become self-sufficient.

2. Required Parking Spaces

BMC 18.48.160 (C) provides that parking requirements for types of structures or uses not specifically listed (such as a homeless shelter), shall be determined by the land use administrator based on comparable uses listed in the chapter, or on standards recommended by a professional planning or engineering organization. The type of use found most comparable by this planner, are boarding and lodging facilities. This type of use was also specifically referred to in this planner's 2020 CUP report findings submitted to the Planning Commission for the Bethel Winter House homeless shelter, as well.

BMC 18.48.160 (B) (17) (Boarding and Lodging Facilities), requires one parking space per room. This provision would require 20 parking spaces for the 20 individual guest units in the planned new Supportive Structure wing, and one parking space for the one group room in the existing homeless shelter wing, for a total of 21 parking spaces. As it is anticipated that most guests will not own vehicles, 21 guest parking spaces for the property should be sufficient. Twenty-one parking spaces are shown on the site plan drawing.

Please contact me if you have any question. Thanks.

Ted.

Ted Meyer

City Planner, City of Bethel

[1155 Ridgcrest Drive](#)

PO Box 1388

Bethel, AK 99559

tmeyer@cityofbethel.net

(907) 543-5306

	Parking Pre Week	Guests	BWH	Other	Total count for the entire week	
1	11/21/2021		1	1	3	5
2	11/28/2021		0	1	3	4
3	12/5/2021		1	1	3	5
4	12/12/2021		0	1	3	4
5	12/19/2021		0	2	4	6
6	12/26/2021		0	1	3	4
7	1/2/2022		0	1	4	5
8	1/9/2022		0	2	3	5
9	1/16/2022		0	1	2	3
10	1/23/2022		0	1	3	4
11	1/30/2022		0	1	3	4
12	2/6/2022		0	1	3	4
13	2/13/2022		1	1	3	5
14	2/20/2022		0	1	5	6
15	2/27/2022		0	1	3	4
16	3/6/2022		0	1	4	5
17	3/13/2022		0	1	4	5
18	3/20/2022		0	1	3	4
19	3/27/2022		0	2	3	5
20	4/3/2022		0	1	3	4
21	4/10/2022		0	2	3	5
22	4/17/2022		0	1	3	4
23	4/24/2022		0	1	3	4
24	5/1/2022		0	1	4	5
25	5/8/2022		0	1	4	5
						114
Average per week:						4.56

The total columns above are from Jaela Milford, Bethel Winter House Executive Director, on 5-10-22. They represent the number of different cars that were in the lot over the course of the entire week. They do not represent the total number of cars on the site at any one time.