



# CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Chair Windsor and Planning Commission Members

**From:** Amy Ainslie, Planning & Community Development Director *AA*

**Date:** May 16, 2025

**Subject:** Prioritization of Pending Zoning Code Changes

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At the May 7<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting, commissioners discussed potential code changes related to both short-term rentals as well as cruise-related docks. There was a broader discussion about all pending zoning code changes, and an interest in reviewing and prioritizing those efforts. Commissioners were provided with a survey link to give staff their prioritization rankings for these efforts, the results of which will be reviewed at the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. This memo provides information on each of those efforts including a brief overview, status, and an estimated time for completion.

## I. TOURISM RELATED TOPICS

### Cruise Docks

- Overview
  - Priority action item from the Tourism Task Force Recommendations & Action Plan
  - Add cruise-related docks as a use to the zoning code, and regulate their placement/development through the conditional use permit process
- Status
  - Completed: Definition drafted, zones for permitted/conditional/prohibited determined, review/approval authority determined
  - Pending: Additions to permit application and submittal requirements are being incorporated, staff working on evaluation/decision criteria to include community-wide impacts and capacity for additional cruise visitation for future commission review
  - Other considerations: Review by Tourism Commission, Assembly adoption via ordinance
- Estimated time for completion: Approximately 3-4 months

## **Zoning Katlian Bay**

- Overview
  - Priority action item from the Tourism Task Force Recommendations & Action Plan
  - Give uplands in Katlian Bay a zoning designation (currently unzoned) – likely Open Space (OS) or R-1 in its function as a holding district
- Status: Preliminary communications with property owner
- Estimated time for completion: Approximately 2-3 months

## **Food Truck & Food Cart Regulations**

- Overview
  - Priority action item from the Tourism Task Force Recommendations & Action Plan
  - Changes include reassignment of permitting for food carts from Police Department to other municipal department and a review of the regulations for both food trucks and food carts (easing barriers, providing additional location options, provisions for noise/congestion concerns, etc.).
- Status: Not initiated. Additional consideration is review by Tourism Commission
- Estimated time for completion: 3-4 months

## **II. HOUSING TOPICS**

### **Boarding, Rooming, and Bunkhouses**

- Overview
  - Boardinghouse has a definition in the zoning code (22.05.200), but does not appear in the use tables.
  - “Bunkhouse for transient workers” and “Rooming house” are listed in the use tables, but:
    - Do not have definitions
    - Are inconsistently treated (in terms of what zones they are permitted/conditional/prohibited) between each other and in comparison to other high-density residential options (multi-family, hotels, lodges, etc.).
    - Lack density specifications/limits
- Status
  - Has briefly been discussed in the context of updating the Residential Land Uses table
  - Discussion at Commission and Sitka Housing Summit with regards to the need to promote housing options for seasonal workers
- Estimated time for completion: Approximately 3-4 months

## **ADUs**

- Overview
  - Outstanding Comprehensive Plan Action H 1.1a, “Allow, encourage, and promote ADUs by right in more zones.”
  - Make ADUs allowed by right in R-1 & related zones if in conjunction with a single-family home?
  - Make ADUs a conditional use in SF or SFLD zone?
  - Address inconsistency of ADU treatment for R-2 & R-2 MHP (code regulates/limits ADUs in this zone, but multifamily zones can have three principal uses – so are detached single family homes on R-2 lots ADUs, or another single-family home?)
  - Consider allowances/other clarifications for other ADUs – first placement manufactured homes as ADUs? Tiny homes on chassis as ADUs? ADUs as short-term rentals/clarifying whether the primary residence can be used as a short-term rental and occupy ADU?
- Status: Preliminary conversations at commission level, more discussion/direction needed.
- Estimated time for completion: 3-4 months

## **Short-Term Rentals**

- Overview
  - Taxation
    - Consider changes in incentives/taxation to make long-term rentals a more attractive option
    - Outstanding Comprehensive Plan actions:
      - H 1.2e: Create an affordable housing fund to offer development incentives.
      - H 1.2g: Increase tax on short-term rentals.
  - Administrative permitting requirements for short-term rentals in zones that allow them outright
  - Consider “inclusionary zoning” type options for short-term rentals (allowing short-term rentals as incentives for higher density development and/or in conjunction with affordable housing)
- Status: Preliminary conversations at commission level, more discussion/direction needed.
- Estimated time for completion
  - For zoning-only changes: 3-4 months
  - For taxation changes: 15-18 months (if changes require voter approval at 2026 regular election)

### **III. TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

#### **Cell & Telecommunications Towers**

- Overview
  - Making zoning code provisions for telecommunications towers clearer and more robust – current treatment through variance process alone inadequate
  - Incorporate FCC regulations/limits to appropriately regulate at municipal level
- Status: Reviewing code examples from other communities
- Estimated time for completion: 4-6 months