



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

Planning and Community Development Department

AGENDA ITEM:

Case No: P 25-03
Proposal: Preliminary plat for a planned unit development (PUD) subdivision
Applicant: Lucas Goddard for Baranof Island Housing Authority
Owner: Baranof Island Housing Authority (BIHA)
Location: 600 Yaw Drive
Legal: Lot 5B, Department of Public Safety Subdivision
Zone: R-2 MHP Multifamily Residential District
Size: 487,051/11.18 Acres
Parcel ID: 1-8560-200
Existing Use: Undeveloped
Adjacent Use: Residential
Utilities: Yaw Drive
Access: Yaw Drive, Herb Didrickson Street

KEY POINTS AND CONCERNS:

- The PUD process involves three reviews by the Commission: conceptual, preliminary, and final. This is the preliminary plat review in which final details/conditions should be agreed upon by the Commission and applicant. The last review step will be Assembly approval.
- Conceptual plat approval took place on April 16, 2025, minutes are attached.
- Property is undeveloped.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Aerial
Attachment B: Current Plat
Attachment C: Preliminary Plat
Attachment D: 35% Design Drawings and Design Narrative
Attachment E: Wetlands Map
Attachment F: Setback Reduction Map
Attachment G: Trail Easement Agreement
Attachment H: Planning Commission Minutes Excerpt 4.16.25
Attachment I: Photos
Attachment J: Applicant Materials
Attachment K: Public Comment

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant proposes to subdivide the approximately 11.18-acre, undeveloped parcel at 600 Yaw Drive in the R-2 MHP multifamily district as a planned unit development subdivision to result in 47 lots. The conceptual plat which had 53 lots was approved on April 16, 2025.

The primary change in the preliminary plat from the conceptual is the elimination of the road connection for the Herb Didrickson Street extension to Street 1. The applicant made this change for several reasons; in response to CBS comment regarding concern about the road grade in this section, public comment concerning potential for increased traffic along Herb Didrickson and the connecting Gil Truitt Ct., and because eliminating this connector enabled the sanitary sewer to be entirely gravity flow which eliminated the need for a costly lift station. The preliminary plat also removed a small street with cul-de-sac in the northeast corner of the property which would have necessitated a costly stream crossing.

Guidance on PUD Purpose from (SGC 21.35.010)

The PUD subdivision designation exists to “encourage imaginative and innovative design in the application of subdivision and improvement standards for subdivision developments proposed as planned unit cluster development projects, commercial centers, industrial parks, and shopping areas.” PUDs seek to encourage enhancement and conservation of lands with scenic, environmental, cultural, and/or historical significance, enable development of property other than by the strict application of subdivision standards, provide for more efficient use of land, and encourage harmonious/coordinated development of a site.

The easing/alleviation of subdivision regulations and standards are allowed through the PUD process, and require that demonstration that provisions will be made for sufficient light and air, density of development is compatible with surrounding land uses, pedestrian and vehicular traffic circulation systems are safe and efficient, development will progress in orderly phases, and public health, safety, and welfare will be protected.

ANALYSIS:

Site: The proposed 11.18-acre parcel is currently undeveloped, featuring a mix of dense forest and open, sparsely vegetated muskeg. The parcel for the proposed subdivision is bordered by Yaw Drive to the west, the Kaasda Heen Shaak subdivision to the south, and undeveloped state and city land to the north and east. The western half of the site is gently sloping muskeg that generally drains towards an unnamed stream flowing to the east. Site topography on the eastern half of the site includes a steep slope that descends roughly 30’ in elevation to a flat, thickly vegetated marsh adjacent to the Indian River drainage basin. The Cross Trail runs along the northern edge of the property via a 20-foot-wide easement.

PND conducted two geotechnical investigations in September and October of 2023, which included test pits and probing on the subdivision site and laydown yard. Test pits along the southern boundary and Yaw Drive hit presumed bedrock at an average depth of 9 feet below ground surface (bgs), ranging from 6 to 12 feet. The peat probe found organic material about 3-4 feet deep in the wooded area on the eastern side and 6-11 feet deep in the muskeg area on the western side. Below the peat was a layer of brown/orange volcanic ash, which crumbled easily

when dry. Beneath the ash, there were layers of blue-gray silt and sand, suggesting glacial drift. All test pits hit refusal at presumed bedrock.

An area approximately north of the intersection of Yaw Drive is proposed for the laydown yard. This undeveloped area contains densely wooded forest, and slopes down in the southwest direction. Test pits completed along Yaw Dr. near the proposed laydown yard reached refusal at minimum depth of 4.5 feet and a maximum depth of 7 feet. The overburden soil profile generally consisted of a 1.5 to 2-foot layer of peat organics underlain by a layer of brown/orange volcanic ash that extended to the bedrock surface. No groundwater seepage was noted during the test pit investigation, but more saturated soil and standing water was observed on the northwest boundary of the site. A grading permit has been applied for but not yet issued.

The National Wetlands Inventory Map shows the entire property covered by wetlands, a US Army Corps of Engineers permit will be required. Staff is recommending the following plat note be added to the final plat stating; "Owners of lots containing wetlands and waters of the United States shall contact the Department of the Army, US Army Corps of Engineers, to determine any necessary permitting for development of these properties."

Departures from Subdivision Regulations & Development Standards Proposed

Minimum lot size: In the R-2 MHP zone, the minimum lot size is 6,000 net of access easements and a minimum lot width of 80 ft. Smaller lots are proposed to fit more homes on the buildable portion of the land. These are the approximate proposed sizes for the lots:

Parcel	Area (SF)	Lot Width	Parcel	Area (SF)	Lot Width
1	5,596	69.52	26	6,098	50
2	5,570	54.40	27	4,920	47.40
3	5,637	53.87	28	5,423	49.21
4	5,675	53.85	29	5,266	65.81
5	5,611	43.60	30	5,265	63.22
6	7,504	30.73	31	5,265	54.80
7	7,038	31.10	32	4,703	52.98
8	5,179	65.38	33	5,017	72.34
9	5,229	50.04	34	5,883	72.34
10	5,256	50.20	35	5,118	49.32
11	5,252	50.16	36	4,983	59.65
12	5,268	50.32	37	12,069	52.44
13	5,238	56.07	38	132,528	No access
14	5,239	66.52	39	14,397	53.70
15	9,197	53.22	40	7,748	75.21
16	6,678	75.58	41	5,331	69.12
20	7,764	77.43	42	5,330	70.46
21	7,908	79.23	43	5,313	63.93
22	10,525	52.40	44	5,332	54.98
23	16,459	52.55	45	5,331	51.66
24	11,449	108.41	46	5,329	48.05
25	4,527	60.37	47	5,401	61.49

Existing Parcels to be Adjusted		
Parcel	Area (SF)	Lot Width
17 (Former Lot 13)	7,996	80.00
18 (Former Lot 4)	18,709	57.00
19 (Former Lot 24)	7,106	71.06

Note on lot width: SGC 22.05.970 defines lot width as the horizontal distance separating side lot lines of an individual lot. However, no provisions are made for measuring minimum lot width for irregular (i.e. non-rectangular) lot shapes. Lot widths on the above table are the dimension of the front property line.

Thirty of the proposed lots are substandard in terms of square footage, and forty-four are substandard in terms of lot width (Lots 5, 6, 7, 27, 28, 46 have lot widths less than 50 feet). All lots on the preliminary plat are within one block. Staff suggest that Lots 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 which have access from Herb Didrickson Street be in a second block and renumbered as Lots 1-9, and that the lot numbers for Lots 29 and 30 should be swapped. The applicant has agreed to make those changes on the final plat.

The commission should also discuss any deviation from the development standards on the substandard lots, particularly setbacks. SGC 22.20-1 lists the following development standards in the R-2 MHP zone: minimum setbacks front 14 feet, rear 8 feet, side 5/9 feet, and maximum building coverage 50%.

Setbacks:

- Reduce minimum side setbacks to 5' for substandard, non-corner lots (Lots 2-5, 8-14, 25, 27-29, 32-36, and 41-46).
- Reduce minimum rear setbacks on corner lots to 5' (Lots 1, 30, 31, and 47).
- Reduce minimum front setback along Yaw Drive frontage for Lots 1-6 and 47 from 14' to 8' with a plat note restricting driveway use or placement from Yaw Drive. The applicant has indicated that there will be a 15' drainage and utility easement along all lot frontages; clarification as to whether this setback reduction is necessary in light of the proposed easement is needed.

A map demonstrating these setback reductions is included as Attachment F.

The applicant has not asked for any deviations for maximum building lot coverage, building heights, or off-street parking requirements. However, if Commissioners feel any particular lots warrant additional deviations, this should be discussed with the applicant.

Access to Lot 38:

There is currently no identified means of vehicular or utility access to Lot 38 from any street in the subdivision. Per SGC 21.55.090.B; "All lots in major subdivisions shall have direct access to dedicated public roads." The applicant has stated that this lot will be preserved for wetlands mitigation and therefore not be developed. The applicant is still in the process of obtaining their permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Staff recommends that a development restriction plat note, conservation easement, or some other durable instrument be identified on the final plat for this lot if a means of vehicular and utility access is not created.

Proposed Design, Construction Requirements and Monumentation

Utilities: Both Yaw Drive and Herb Didrickson Street have existing utilities that are located at the south side of the proposed subdivision. CBS will require all utilities mains including water, sanitary sewer and electrical power shall be constructed, inspected, approved, receive any required approvals from the State, and be accepted for maintenance by the municipality either before final plat approval, or the final plat will carry a Development Plat Restriction (restricting conveyance of lots in the subdivision until road and utility infrastructure is inspected, approved, and accepted by CBS for maintenance) in accordance with SGC 21.45.030.B, and 21.55.130.G-H .

Electric: No updated electrical designs were provided in time for preliminary plat review. The Electric Department provided comments to the applicant in March in conjunction with conceptual plat review; primary noted items included identification of power lines within typical road sections and clearance from other utility mains, identification of potential conflicts with power lines and utility service lines, additional specification for street lighting, eliminating certain single phase 12KV lines, and relocating certain transformers. A condition of approval has requires Electric Department review and approval of the electrical design prior to construction and/or final plat approval.

Water: The project ties into the existing water system, which currently ends with a 12-inch ductile iron (DI) main at the intersection of Yaw Drive and Thomas Young Sr. Circle and an 8-inch DI main at the north end of Herb Didrickson Street. Fire flow testing shows adequate pressures, with nearby hydrants providing calculated flows of 4,643 gallons per minute (gpm) and 3,005 gpm at 20 psi. The new system will include a 12-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) main along Yaw Drive and 8-inch HDPE mains connecting to Herb Didrickson Street to form a looped network. Each lot will receive a 1-inch HDPE service line. Estimated materials include 540 feet of 12-inch main, 1,380 feet of 8-inch main, and 1,300 feet of 1-inch service pipe.

Sanitary Sewer System: The existing sewer system includes a 12-inch DI main on Yaw Drive and an 8-inch DI main on Herb Didrickson Street. Topographic review shows the new subdivision sewer can flow by gravity into these existing systems, except for some lots on the Herb Didrickson Street extension, which will require individual grinder pumps. No new municipal lift stations are needed. Each lot will receive a 4-inch polyvinyl chloride (PVC) service line. Estimated materials include 1,900 feet of 8-inch PVC gravity main and 1,310 feet of 4-inch PVC service pipe.

Stormwater & Drainage: Yaw Drive will use a crowned roadway that sheds runoff into an eastern ditch or adjacent soils. Street 1 will also be crowned, with a rolled curb and gutter on the north side and a ditch on the south; catch basins will collect runoff and convey it through culverts to the south-side ditch. Streets 2 and 3 will have ditches on both sides, and their runoff will be directed to the southwest corner of their intersection, then through an easement to a ditch on Yaw Drive. A full stormwater analysis (i.e. drainage study and plan) will be performed in accordance with CBS standards and is included as a condition of approval.

All lots have a proposed 15' drainage/utility easement across their frontages design drawings. Again, clarification as to whether this will be applied along Yaw Drive frontages is needed. These easements will need to be identified/depicted on the final plat. Staff has also identified a drainage easement that will need to be added between Lots 22- 29 and 31-38 where there is an existing stream between these properties.

There is a 50' setback depicted around the stream that bisects Lot 38. Staff found that this stream is identified as anadromous (i.e. fish bearing) on the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's (ADF&G) Alaska Fish Resource Monitor. A minor stream was also identified on the southern boundary of Lot 38 and crossing Lots 22- 29 and 31-38; while ADF&G's available mapping does not identify this stream as anadromous, the mapping also states that not all anadromous streams may be identified, and that consultation with ADF&G is needed to determine permitting activities related to development.

SGC 21.55.030 D.1 states, "Ten-foot-wide easements, or wider, may be required on both sides of any year-round creek or stream. The planning commission may require wider easements if the stream is anadromous as determined by the board after consultation with Alaska Department of Fish and Game." Staff is recommending a plat note be added to reference the anadromous stream and to notify and receive permit approval from Alaska Department of Fish and Game before altering or affecting the natural flow or bed of the anadromous waterbody to comply with state code. Staff is also recommending that a condition of approval be added requiring that review by ADF&G to identify/confirm appropriate easement widths for anadromous streams be submitted before review of the final plat. Additionally, the drainage study and plan must identify an appropriately sized easement for other year-round creeks or streams.

Access, Roads, Transportation, and Mobility: The main access to the subdivision will be from Yaw Drive. Three new roads will be built within the subdivision ending in cul-de-sacs. Street 1 will be 485.99 feet, Street 2 will be 264.17 feet, and Street 3 will be 276.12 feet. A cul-de-sac will be added to Herb Didrickson Street which is platted as 640.89, on plat 2003-13 Kaasda Heen Shaak Subdivision, extending it by an additional 112.73 feet.

Per Appendix D of the 2021 IFC the minimum radius for a dead-end fire apparatus access road longer than 150' is required to have a 96-foot diameter of drivable surface making the minimum radius 48'. Cul-de-sacs at the ends of Street 1, Street 3, and the Herb Didrickson extension are identified with 45' radii on the preliminary plat. The applicant has indicated that they will be enlarging these cul-de-sacs to 50' radii on the final plat.

Also per Appendix D of the 2021 IFC, the minimum drivable surface width for dead-end fire apparatus access roads is 26', exclusive of shoulders, when street lengths exceed 500'. Typical road sections in the designs indicate 24' drivable surface width and are therefore undersized for the Herb Didrickson Street extension and potentially Street 1. Staff will continue working with the applicant on design review prior to final plat approval.

Staff has added a conditional of approval stating that the applicant (i.e. BIHA) shall install "No Parking" signs along rights-of-way that do not have adequate space for on-street parking as determined by the municipal engineer and chief of police. For reference, SGC 11.45.040 states

that no parking signs may be erected on either or both sides of a street when the roadway width does not exceed 26 feet.

Streets will need to be named before final plat submission. Names shall not duplicate existing street names unless a new street is a continuation of or in alignment with the existing street. Street names for dedicated rights-of-way may be recommended by the Sitka Historic Preservation Commission and approved by the municipality.

Cross Trail Easement: In 1998, the then owner of the property (Sheldon Jackson College) granted an easement for a section of the Cross Trail to segment the northern portion of the property to CBS. However, the easement agreement:

- Acknowledged the owner's intent to eventually develop some or all of the land through which the easement passes
- Gave the owner the right, at its sole discretion, to relocate the easement to facilitate said development
- Specifically stated, that CBS, "...as the jurisdiction that which would be involved in development decisions affecting [the property], agrees that it shall not impose conditions on the Grantor's development because of the existence of the Easement, so long as Grantor provides for a reasonable alternate route for such trail Easement consistent with [the easement] agreement."

The applicant has indicated that the section of the Cross Trail along the north property line will be partially vacated, they will construct a sidewalk along the northern side of Street 1 which will connect to the Cross Trail segment on the opposite side of Yaw Drive via crosswalk, and will construct a new access connector along the northwestern boundary of Lot 39. Staff will work with the applicant and the Legal Department to determine whether the easement agreement needs to be amended and approved by the Assembly, or whether a plat note will suffice.

Monumentation and Flagging:

The applicant will be required to flag the perimeter of the subdivision with readily viewable marking, and mark interior subdivision lot corners with two-inch square wooden hubs at least 10 days prior to the planning commission hearing for final plat approval per SGC 21.20.040.D.

Public Health, Safety and Welfare: The pedestrian and vehicular traffic circulation systems will be safe and efficient. Lots are accessible to emergency services. The development will proceed in orderly phases, while protecting public health, safety, and general welfare.

In development review with other municipal departments, the Police Department raised the issue of bear frequency in the surrounding area and the potential for that problem to be exacerbated by increased development. The applicant has completed a pilot project with CBS using a large roll-off container at the end of Andrew Hope Street and are discussing funding options with CBS, STA, and Defenders of Wildlife for a similar model in this subdivision.

Orderly and Efficient Layout and Development: This proposed development ensures sufficient light and air, with a density that is compatible with surrounding land uses.

Comprehensive Plan: This subdivision action supports the Comprehensive Plan Housing goal: *Expand the range, affordability, and quality of housing in Sitka while maintaining attractive, livable neighborhoods*; by enabling development of land in a residentially zoned area. The requested deviations from development standards, particularly for substandard sized lots is supported by Housing Action H1.1e, “Encourage higher density development.” Of particular note is that this area was identified in the Comprehensive Plan as a “High Priority Residential Development Area”, and specifically noted that we should use tools such as PUDs and smaller lot sizes to allow higher residential densities that also preserve/cluster open space.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary planned unit development to result in 47 lots subject to the attached conditions of approval.

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

1) “I move to approve the preliminary plat for a planned unit development to result in 47 lots at 600 Yaw Drive in the R-2 MHP multifamily residential district subject to the attached conditions of approval. The property is also known as Lot 5B, Department of Public Safety Subdivision. The request is filed by Lucas Goddard for Baranof Island Housing Authority. The owner of record is Baranof Island Housing Authority.”

Conditions of Approval

- 1) Designs for all roads, utilities (including water, sanitary sewer, and electrical power), and stormwater conveyance shall be approved by the municipality prior to final plat approval and/or prior to construction. Roads, utility mains, and stormwater conveyances shall either be constructed, inspected, approved, receive a Final Approval to Operate from AK DEC, and be accepted for maintenance by the municipality prior to final plat approval or, the final plat shall carry a Development Plat Restriction in accordance with SGC 21.45.030.B and SGC 21.55.130.G-H.
- 2) A comprehensive drainage study and plan prepared by an Alaska licensed professional engineer shall be developed in accordance with CBS stormwater standards and accepted by the municipal engineer prior to final plat approval. Any easements or necessary plat restrictions resulting from the approved drainage plan shall be incorporated on the plat prior to submission of the final plat to the Planning Commission. The drainage study and plan shall also address easements for any year-round creeks or streams.
- 3) The 15’ drainage/utility easement across the frontage of the parcels shall be identified and depicted on the final plat.
- 4) A plat note shall be added to final plat which reads, “Owners of lots containing wetlands and waters of the United States shall contact the Department of the Army, US Army Corps of Engineers, to determine any necessary permitting for development of these properties.”
- 5) Any conditions of the US Army Corps of Engineers permit related to development of this property such as easements, reserves, or other durable mitigations shall be identified and noted on the final plat.

- 6) A plat note shall be added to the final plat referencing any anadromous streams and that property owners must notify and receive permit approval from Alaska Department of Fish and Game before altering or affecting the natural flow or bed of the anadromous waterbody.
- 7) Review by Alaska Department of Fish and Game to identify/confirm appropriate easement widths for any anadromous streams shall submitted before Planning Commission review of the final plat.
- 8) The final plat shall include a plat note which states that construction of driveways shall not be permitted along the frontage of Yaw Drive.
- 9) The applicant shall install “No Parking” signs along rights-of-way that do not have adequate space for on-street parking as determined by the municipal engineer and chief of police chief.
- 10) All utilities, including water, sewer, and electricity shall be required to have an approved permit from the municipality; and all utility permits and design shall comply with all applicable code and design polices including, but not limited to 15.04.100, 15.04.110, 15.04.240, and 15.04.250.
- 11) This subdivision development and the plat, prior to recording, shall comply with all applicable Sitka General Code.
- 12) All applicable state, federal, and tribal permits, licenses, regulations, and statutes shall be followed in subdividing this land.
- 13) Easement maintenance agreements for any access and utility easements added prior to final plat review shall be developed and recorded before final plat recording.
- 14) All easement agreements will be cited via plat notes. The City and Borough of Sitka is a party to all easements.

2) “I move to adopt the following findings as listed in the staff report:”

- a. The preliminary plat meets its burden of proof as to access, utilities, and dimensions as proposed *through submission of a plat prepared by a licensed surveyor and information regarding access and utilities provided in the application;*
- b. The proposed planned unit development subdivision preliminary plat complies with the Comprehensive Plan *by advancing development in an area identified as a Residential High Priority Development Area in the plan and following plan guidance to achieve higher density residential development;*
- c. The proposed planned unit development subdivision preliminary plat complies with the subdivision code; and
- d. The planned unit development subdivision preliminary plat is not injurious to the public health, safety, and welfare and further that the proposed plat notes and conditions of approval protect the harmony of use and the public’s health, safety, and welfare *because the subdivision promotes development in-line with existing uses in the surrounding neighborhoods and allowable using in the zoning district; additionally, the conditions of approval protect the public’s health, safety, and welfare by requiring compliance with health and safety regulations.*