



# No Name Mountain / Granite Creek

## LAND USE MASTER PLAN

### DRAFT

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA, ALASKA

JUNE 2020



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Land Use Master Plan was initiated by the City and Borough of Sitka to support economic growth in Sitka by considering land use and development opportunities for 830 acres of City-owned property known as the No Name Mountain/Granite Creek Area. The property (hereinafter referred to as “the study area”) currently contains industrial and commercial activity on its southern end at the Granite Creek Industrial Area. However, most of the site remains undeveloped and occupied by extensive wetlands and steep forested terrain. The study area previously has been evaluated for rock quarrying, a by-pass road to the State Ferry Terminal, and further industrial development. This master plan considers Sitka’s needs and the property’s suitability for various uses including housing, recreation, expanded rock quarrying, tourism-related development, light commercial/industrial activity, wetland impacts mitigation, and open space.

The recommendations in this report for land use and development are based on the study area’s existing conditions, Sitka’s economic needs, and the input of project stakeholders and local citizens. Upon talking with stakeholders and conducting a detailed *Site Analysis* and *Market Analysis* contained in this report, the following “key findings” were made:

- Due to anticipated high construction costs associated with challenging site conditions, residential development in the study area is unlikely to contribute to the supply of affordable housing in Sitka in the near future. However, portions of study area possess good potential for high-value residential view lots.
- Existing Sitka quarries can meet foreseeable rock demand, and the Granite Creek Industrial Area is suitable for expanded rock quarrying; however, some in the local construction community are interested in either opening new quarries or modifying the City’s quarry leasing structure to increase rock supply and competition, and reduce rock costs.

- Development in the study area’s extensive wetlands will require costly wetland permitting and mitigation and expensive construction measures, thus putting most wetland areas off-limits to building development. However, it may be possible to put large wetland areas into conservation easements as mitigation for modest development impacts to wetlands outside of the easement area.
- The study area offers an opportunity to meet the demand for outdoor recreational activities sought by cruise ship visitors, independent travelers, and local residents. Recreational activities and facilities for cruise ship visitors could be conveniently located near the Halibut Point Marine Cruise Ship Terminal, thereby reducing tour bus traffic on Halibut Point Road to and from downtown.
- Development of the study area’s waterfront parcel for a new cruise ship dock or for marine-related industry would be inadvisable as the demand for these uses can be met elsewhere for the foreseeable future.
- The Granite Creek Industrial Area can accommodate light commercial/industrial activity along Granite Creek Road and on exhausted quarry sites. Warehousing, light manufacturing, fleet storage, outdoor equipment storage, and other similar uses would be appropriate here.

In preparing this master plan, the study area was divided into seven geographic areas or zones based on the predominant site conditions of each zone, and each zone was given a name. Predicated on economic demand and viability, community input, and site conditions (terrain features, road and utility accessibility, etc.) the following land uses are recommended for the various zones:

- **Harbor Point:** *Residential* – high-end shoreline view homes with perhaps smaller homes and apartments on the site’s interior, OR *Recreational Tourism* – outdoor recreational activities and facilities oriented to cruise ship visitors and others.



- **No Name Mountain:** *Open Space* and *Passive Recreation*, OR *Recreational Tourism* – outdoor recreational activities and facilities oriented to cruise ship visitors and others.
- **No Name Creek Terrace:** *Residential* – single family detached homes.
- **Sound View Ridge:** *Residential* – mix of single-family detached homes and multi-family attached apartments/condominiums.
- **Granite Creek Industrial Area:** *Industrial* and *Commercial* – continued and expanded rock quarrying and light commercial and industrial activity.
- **Muskeg Wetlands:** *Open Space*, *Passive Recreation* and *Wetland Banking* – perpetuation of wetlands which are unsuited for building development, but suited for trails, subsistence gathering, wildlife, nature enjoyment, and mitigation for wetland impacts elsewhere.
- **Saddle Mountain (west side):** *Open Space* and *Passive Recreation* – perpetuation of steep forested terrain which is unsuited for building development, but suitable for trails, subsistence gathering, wildlife, and nature enjoyment.

This master plan provides *choices* and *options* for the *highest and best use* of land in the study area. Land use recommendations herein represent an informed assessment of what seems logical for a large site with conditions challenging to development and a community with challenging economic development needs. The master plan is intended to serve as a “living document” whereby its conclusions remain adaptable to changing conditions and viable for up to 15 years if necessary.

## Next Steps

There are many moving parts to this master plan, and even more moving parts to actually developing portions of the study area. The following actions could be taken by the City in the short term to initiate project development:

- **Residential:** Verify whether the costs of utility infrastructure for new residential development would qualify for the USDA Rural Development Grant and Loan Program. Start with a small residential project with fewer site challenges, such as the area between Granite Creek and Harbor Mountain Road.
- **Recreational Tourism:** Begin negotiations with entities who may be interested in leasing City land on Harbor Point and/or No Name Mountain to develop facilities for outdoor recreational activities oriented to cruise ship visitors and others.
- **Quarrying, Commercial, Industrial:** Begin preparations to expand rock quarrying into Saddle Mountain; modify or restructure the City’s leasing agreement to allow more operators to quarry rock. Promote availability of land at Granite Creek Industrial Area for commercial and industrial uses.
- **Wetland Mitigation:** Begin discussions with permitting agencies to confirm whether large tracts of wetlands in the study area could be placed into permanent conservation easements as mitigation for development impacts to wetlands elsewhere.





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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

## Sitka: Yesterday Today and Tomorrow

Sitka is located on the west side of Baranof Island within the Alexander Archipelago in Southeast Alaska, at the northern end of the Pacific Northwest's famed Inside Passage. Here, land and water are interwoven with thousands of large and small coastal islands, straits, sounds, coves, bays, inlets and interconnecting channels that protect marine travel from the open Pacific Ocean. Southeast Alaska's high coastal mountains push heavy precipitation from the atmosphere, giving rise to lush temperate rainforests dominated by Sitka spruce and western hemlock. The mild oceanic climate, dense forests, profusion of creeks, rivers and wetlands, and nutrient-rich coastal waters contribute to varied coastal and upland ecosystems with abundant marine, aquatic, and terrestrial wildlife.

Ancestors of today's Tlingit People settled Sitka over 10,000 years ago. The ancient Tlingit village Shee At'ika eventually came under Russian control in the early 1800's as a trading and military outpost renamed New Archangel. Preceding and following Alaska's purchase by the U.S. as a territory in 1846, successive waves of Euro-Americans seeking seal and sea otter pelts, whales, gold, timber, fish, and other resources throughout the region transformed Sitka into southeast Alaska's largest settlement populated by people of many different nationalities. As a result, Sitka boasts a colorful history and rich cultural heritage derived from its Tlingit origins (and continued presence) infused with Russian, Swedish, Finnish, Asian, and other influences.

Today, Sitka remains existentially defined by its natural and scenic resources and cultural heritage. Although logging and timber processing have all but ceased around Sitka, the local commercial fishing industry remains strong, and hundreds of thousands of visitors travel annually to Sitka and other southeast Alaska communities to experience the incredible natural splendor, outdoor recreational opportunities, and unique frontier-town history and culture. With much of southeast Alaska managed and protected by federal and state agencies and native corporations, including large areas of Baranof Island in the Tongass National Forest surrounding Sitka, the wild, unspoiled natural beauty of the Sitka area and larger region seems reasonably assured.

With a population of just under 10,000 residents, and accessible only by airplane or boat, Sitka faces challenges not unlike those faced by other small remote communities formerly anchored by a natural resource-based or manufacturing economy that is transitioning to an economy tied to visitation, government, medical care, and other services. The changing economic and environmental climate can be difficult for any community. Sitka, however, will find continued longevity in its citizens' rugged individualism, self-reliance, entrepreneurial spirit, and resiliency coupled with their spirit of community cooperation and common cause. These values and traits have long distinguished Sitka and have enabled it to adapt to change; these values will continue to characterize Sitka's future. Sitka must draw from and bolster its attributes of a beautiful and healthy natural setting, small-town charm and character, cultural diversity and self-sufficiency, and community collaboration.





## Land Use Master Plan Purpose and Goals

This Land Use Master Plan (interchangeably termed “Land Use Master Plan” and “Master Plan” throughout this report) is intended to support economic growth in Sitka by identifying viable land use options and development opportunities for 830 acres of City-owned property located along Halibut Point Road about 4 ½ miles north of the city center. Land use recommendations in this report are based on the property’s conditions and characteristics, Sitka’s economic climate and needs, and community input.

### Development of the property is intended to:

- **Foster economic development and prosperity in Sitka**
- **Fit with site’s existing landscape characteristics**
- **Improve quality of life for Sitka residents**
- **Align with the City’s Comprehensive Plan**

The Master Plan will ideally work as a “living document” whereby its implementation may be carried out over a period of up to 15 years if necessary, with its recommendations remaining viable throughout this time. The plan is intended to remain flexible and responsive to changing conditions and situations. Importantly, the Master Plan provides a long-range blueprint for site development, helping to ensure that what happens on the site in the short term will work with what happens on the site in the future.

## Master Plan Process, Tasks, and Organization

Preparation of this Land Use Master Plan involved both sequential and concurrent tasks over a six-month time frame. Following is a summary of the major tasks and steps in the planning process:

**Data collection and analysis:** Existing data and information were assembled and reviewed about the study area, larger setting, local demographics, and Sitka economy. Some of this information came from local and state agencies and other sources. Previously prepared plans, studies and reports relevant to the study area’s land use are discussed in the Site Analysis and Market Analysis sections of this report. This material informed decisions about appropriate types of development and land uses for the 830-acre study area.

**Stakeholder engagement and input:** Local business owners, building contractors, and staff with various local, state and federal agencies, were interviewed at the outset of the master plan project to gain their perspective on issues and conditions influencing potential use and development of the study area. The insights of several individuals, all of whom could be considered project stakeholders, contributed to determining options for how the study area might be used and developed. A list of interviewed stakeholders is contained in the Appendix of this report.



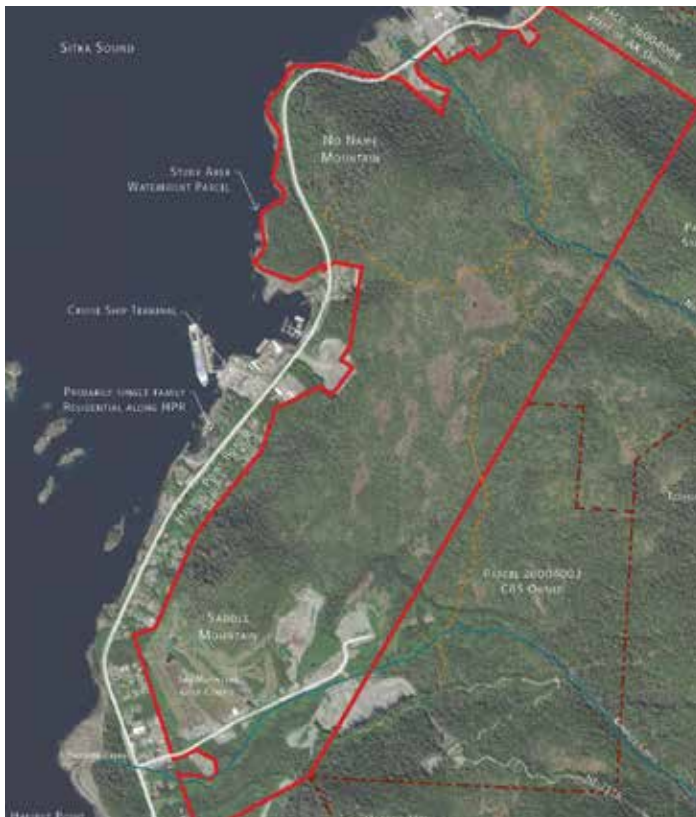
View of Study Area Site





**Alternative land use schemes:** Using information about the site and local economy, and from discussions with stakeholders, a range of potential land uses were identified for the study area. Because the study area is so large and varied, different land uses were attributed to different site zones or areas, with each zone having its own set of conditions and development potentials. The alternative land use schemes therefore show feasible land uses for separate distinct areas within the study area.

**Public review and comment via website:** Public meetings that had been planned to review and discuss the alternative land use schemes with Sitka residents had to be curtailed due to social distancing requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, community ideas and input on how to develop and use the study area were considered crucial to the Master Plan's development. Consequently, a website was created, advertised, and posted to explain the project and obtain public input on land use options for the study area. The website remained active for 2 ½ weeks, and included an opinion survey for website viewers to register their preferences and ideas about site development and land use.



Study Area

## Synthesis of Website Survey and Land Use Recommendations

Public comments and survey results from the project website were tabulated and reviewed to determine survey respondents' preferences on the alternative land use schemes and any other ideas about development in the study area. This information, together with the site analysis and market analysis, stakeholder input, review of previous studies, and the consultant team's best judgment, was used to formulate the recommendations for land use in the last chapter of this report.

## Master Plan Organization

This Master Plan Report is organized by chapters, each dealing with different aspects of data research and findings and the subsequent formulation of land use options and recommendations. The plan's organization aligns with the performance of various tasks carried out in developing the plan. Thus, the second chapter of the Master Plan contains a Site Analysis discussion about the study area's existing conditions and characteristics. This is followed by a Market Analysis of Sitka's economy, including assessment of the site's economic development opportunities, which was performed more-or-less concurrently with the Site Analysis. The Site Analysis and Market Analysis inform the Alternative Land Use Schemes in the next chapter. Upon vetting alternative schemes with the community, specific recommendations for development and land use within the study area are provided in the last chapter. Detailed information from the data research, stakeholder interviews, etc. are contained in the Appendix for reference.

## Review of Other Relevant Plans, Studies and Reports

Several plans and studies, some dating back 20 years, had been previously prepared for all or portions of the study area. These previous studies address rock quarrying, routing and impacts of the Cross Trail, industrial development, utility and road improvements, and other project proposals for the site. Other reports and studies were reviewed that are not specific to the study area; these studies contain information about Sitka's economy, tourism, local and regional land management and planning, etc. These earlier plans and studies were reviewed to glean information that could affect or influence the land use options and recommendations contained in this master plan. A list of these reports, studies, and other reviewed documents is contained in the Appendix.



The **Sitka 2030 Comprehensive Plan** addresses City-wide growth management and urban development. The following goals, objectives, and actions under various sections of the Comprehensive Plan may be relevant to land use and development on the study area site:

- **Economic Development**

- » Support growth in manufacturing and maritime businesses
- » Support growth and diversification of cruise-related and heritage tourism
- » Support public-private partnerships
- » Maintain a healthy natural environment
- » Maintain well-functioning infrastructure

- **Housing**

- » Expand range, affordability and quality of housing
- » Increase supply of affordable housing
- » Reduce allowed lot sizes and encourage higher density development
- » Provide clear standards for PUD's and cluster-home development

- **Historic, Cultural and Arts Resources**

- » Integrate Tlingit place-names into community facilities and places
- » Support visual and performing arts
- » Expand heritage and cultural tourism



- **Borough Facilities**

- » Provide community facilities and services in cost-effective manner
- » Maximize use of existing infrastructure before building new
- » Improve water, wastewater, and electrical systems
- » Implement low impact design, construction and operation techniques
- » Recognize sale of public land for housing will require major road/utility costs

- **Transportation**

- » Maximize use of existing roads before building new
- » Improve land-based transportation infrastructure
- » Implement a Complete Streets Policy and encourage public transit
- » Extend Halibut Point Road to Katlian Bay

- **Parks, Trails and Recreation**

- » Recognize the use and value of trails for recreation and secondary access routes
- » Provide for trails, recreational and open space in new subdivisions
- » Expand community use of parks, trails and recreation
- » Recognize the link between recreation, tourism and a strong economy

- **Land Use**

- » Avoid incompatible mixes of residential, commercial, and industrial uses
- » Consider best ways to address development in high risk areas
- » Address challenges of declining and aging population with residential development
- » Focus on urban infill versus sprawl, making efficient use of underutilized or open land

- **Future Growth and Focus Areas**

- » Granite Creek-No Name Mountain: Develop master plan to determine best uses and development, including utilization of rock resource; commercial/industrial uses will drive area development; between Old Harbor Mountain Road and Granite Creek Road support residential and small scale agricultural uses
- » Starrigavan and North: Work with USFS and State of Alaska to focus on access and recreational improvements
- » Greater Downtown: Focus on residential infill and higher densities
- » Indian River: Encourage residential uses and consider other uses
- » Jarvis/Smith/Price and Jamestown Bay Areas: Maintain/allow heavy commercial & industrial waterfront development
- » Gary Paxton Industrial Park: Continue economic development, capitalizing on deep water, utility, road and land access.





FIGURE 1—PROJECT AREA SETTING



## 2 | SITE ANALYSIS

### Site Analysis Purpose and Objectives

Decisions about what to develop on a site must be informed by the current conditions of the site. The existing conditions and qualities of the No Name Mountain/Granite Creek study area, including its surroundings, are varied and complex. Gaining an understanding of this complexity requires a process of looking at existing conditions as a set of separate but inter-related features and characteristics. Although these conditions and characteristics are evaluated individually in this chapter, it is important to recognize these characteristics are always associated with one other, with certain conditions affecting or affected by others.

This chapter discusses the following existing conditions and characteristics of the study area:

- Study area location and setting
- Adjacent land use and development
- Site Geology and Surface Elevations
- Site Slopes and Gradients
- Site Plant Communities
- Site Wetlands and Creeks
- Site Utility Infrastructure
- Site Rock Quarrying
- Commercial and Industrial Site Uses



*Study Area looking South with No Name Mountain in foreground*



### Study Area Location, Setting, and Land Use

The study area is located just east of Sitka Sound, about 4 ½ miles north of downtown Sitka. Most of the 830-acre site lies on the east side of Halibut Point Road, which travels along Sitka Sound and terminates about a quarter-mile north of the study area at the Starrigavan Recreation Area. A 17-acre portion of the study area occurs on the west side of Halibut Point Road; this parcel, referred to as Harbor Point, offers shoreline frontage on Sitka Sound. Except for active rock quarries, a small golf course, and light industrial activity on its south end, the study area remains undeveloped, and occupied by wetlands, creeks, and forest across rugged terrain.

As shown in Figure 2, land bordering the north and east sides of the site remain undeveloped forest and wetland within the Tongass National Forest or owned by the State. At the north end of the study area, the Starrigavan Recreation Area administered by the U.S. Forest Service offers hiking and nature trails, picnicking, camping, fishing and kayaking associated with Starrigavan Creek, Estuary and Bay. On the north side of Starrigavan Bay, the Old Sitka State Historical Park administered by Alaska State Parks commemorates the location of Sitka's original Russian settlement and fort. The Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Terminal occupies the south side of Starrigavan Bay at the north end of the study area.

A combination of industrial, commercial, and residential waterfront development along Halibut Point Road borders the western edge of the study area south of the above mentioned 17-acre waterfront parcel. Notably,

just south of the waterfront parcel, Halibut Point Marine Services operates a cruise ship terminal adjacent to a barge dock, container yard, and small boat marina. The cruise ship terminal is expanding to accommodate two large cruise ships. Disembarking ship passengers will be bused to downtown Sitka or other destinations via Halibut Point Road. A large exhausted rock quarry referred to as the S&S Pit occurs across the road from the cruise ship terminal.

South of the cruise ship terminal, development along Halibut Point Road consists of a mix single-family homes, mobile homes, and light commercial/industrial buildings either fronting the water or terraced into the lower slopes east of the road. Toward the south end of the study area on the west side of Halibut Point Road, Halibut Point State Recreation Site offers day-use picnicking, forest trails, and beach access on forty acres of State Parks land. Continuing southward, a mix of mostly residential and some light commercial/industrial development flank both sides of Halibut Point Road in a narrow band occupying the shoreline bench between Sitka Sound and the lower slopes of the Tongass National Forest.

As mentioned, the south end of the study area currently hosts commercial and industrial activity. The Granite Creek Industrial Area is accessed by Granite Creek Road off Halibut Point Road. The area includes exhausted and active rock quarries, a small nine-hole golf course, and light commercial/industrial activity.



*Boardwalk at Starrigavan Recreation Area*

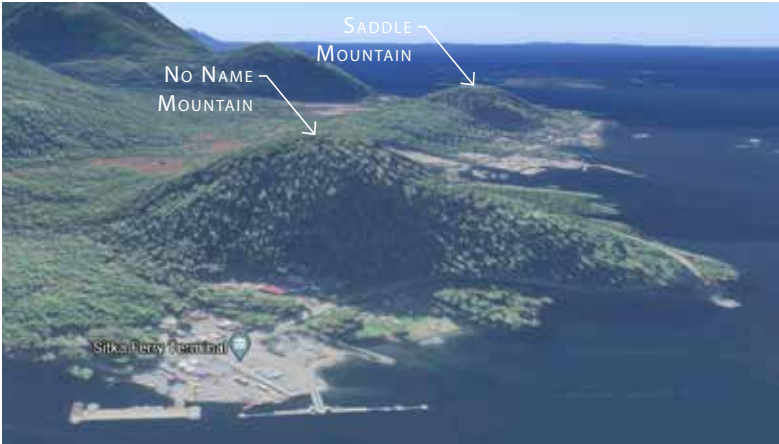


*Halibut Point Marine Cruise Ship Terminal*





FIGURE 2—PROJECT SITE: ADJACENT LAND USES & DEVELOPMENT



View of Study Area looking South

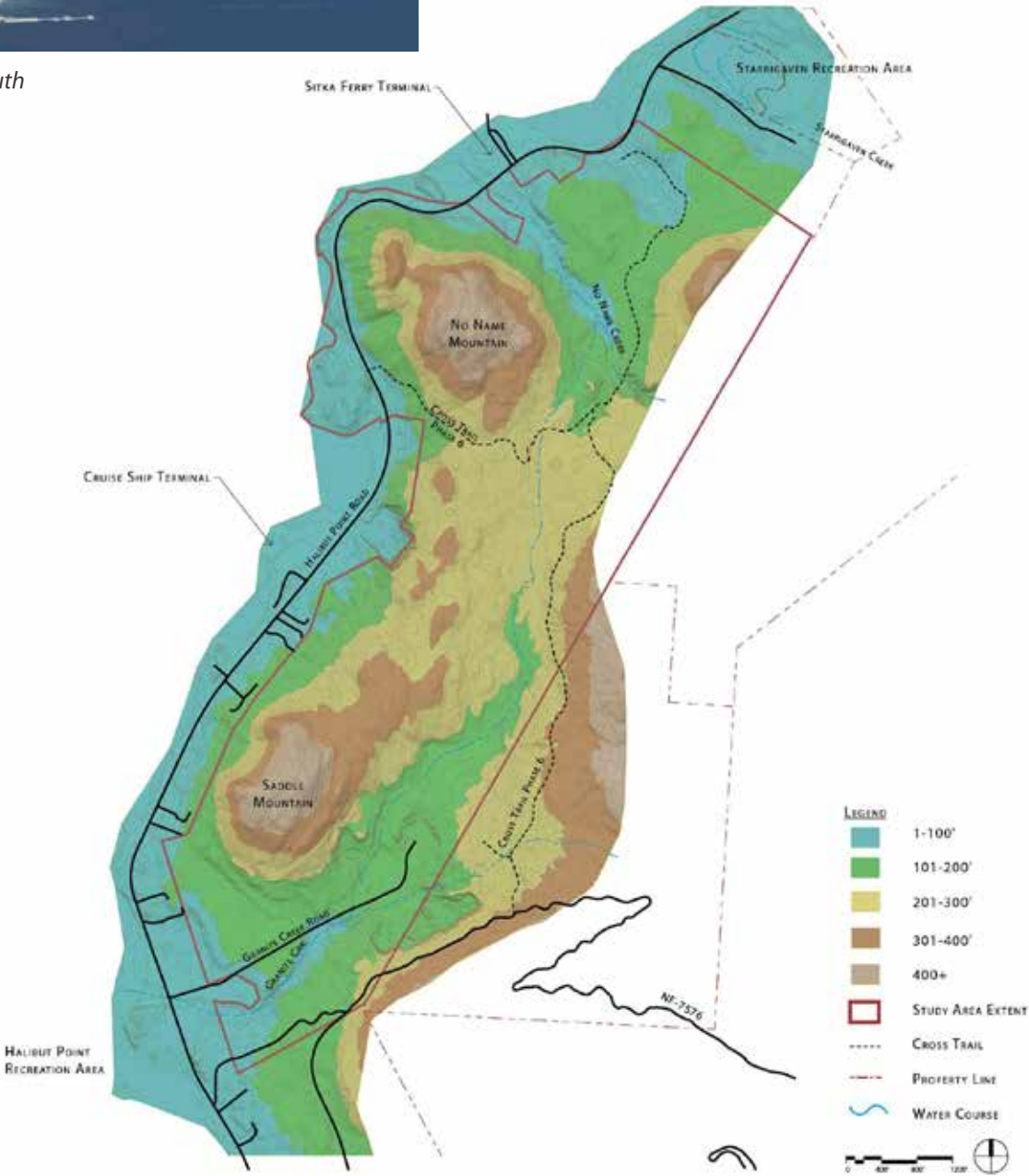


FIGURE 3—SITE ELEVATIONS





## Site Geology and Elevations

The study area's geology is similar to the broader Sitka region. Typical bedrock consists of Sitka greywacke (metamorphosed sandstone), slate, conglomerate, and occasional felsic dikes (granitic intrusions). Bedrock is usually overlain by glacial till, alluvial deposits, volcanic ash, and organic peat. Glacial till deposits consist of mixtures of cobbles, gravel, sand, silt, and occasional boulders from 10 to 15 feet thick. Alluvial deposits (sandy gravel and cobbles) of 10 to 50 feet deep occur along creeks and waterways. Ash deposits, from now dormant Mt. Edgecumbe, can range from 1 to 20 feet deep across hills and knolls. Loamy surface soils overlie the till and/or ash substrata. Peat deposits, comprised of decomposing organic material and soil, can be anywhere from a few feet to 30 feet deep. Any of these soil horizons can be expected in the study area ranging from very thin lenses to thick deposits.

Volcanic ash and peat deposits are frequently found together and often overlie glacial till. Peat and soils with high organic content are considered inadequate foundation material for roads, buildings, or other structures. Sand and gravel deposits (glacial till), and underlying bedrock, are more favorable subgrade conditions for building development. For construction projects, the organic soil and peat layers, if present, usually must be stripped to expose suitable sand and gravel subgrade, or bedrock. Imported structural fill may be required to replace the stripped material. Depending on the depth of the peat layers, their excavation, removal, and replacement for a construction project can become prohibitively expensive.

The study area is characterized by two large steep knolls – No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain – and a lower broad ridge, or “saddle”, running north-south between them. Lower lying wetlands and muskeg traversed by creeks occur on the east side or backside of the knolls and ridge.

As shown in Figure 3, areas along Halibut Point Road lie just a few dozen feet above sea level, while No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain rise to well over 400 feet above sea level. In places where these abrupt elevation changes occur, lower elevation areas are generally easier to access with roads and utilities, while higher elevation areas are usually harder to service with infrastructure. This situation is usually due to the difficulty of construction on steep slopes (as discussed in the next section) and because existing road and utility infrastructure may currently be located in lower elevation areas, as is the case with Halibut Point Road and its associated utilities along the west side of the study area.

The dramatic elevation differences of the study area create compelling views and visual conditions. High elevation areas on No Name Mountain, Saddle Mountain, and the saddle-ridge between them offer panoramic views overlooking Sitka Sound to the west and Harbor Mountain and other Baranof Island mountains to the east. In addition, the high knolls are distinctive features themselves when seen from certain vantage points along Halibut Point Road and from boats on Sitka Sound. High terrain features like No Name Mountain typically command more attention than lower elevation features, thus becoming identifiable landmarks in the landscape.



*Mt. Edgecumbe*



*View from saddle-ridge looking west*



### Site Slopes and Gradients

The study area contains rugged terrain consisting of flat to moderate slopes across uneven ground that transition to extremely steep slopes with widespread surface irregularities. As shown in Figure 4, the site's lower-lying areas, which are associated with wetlands and peat bogs, consist mostly of 0 – 20% slopes. However, upon moving onto the sides of No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain, surface gradients quickly go from 20 – 40% slopes to grades of 40 – 100% or more. For reference, a 30% slope has a 17-degree angle above the horizontal plane, and a 100% grade has a 45-degree angle. An agile human may be able to climb straight up a 100% (45-degree) slope, but a typical car or truck would have difficulty climbing a 30% road gradient for any distance, and traveling a 30% gradient downhill by vehicle can be dangerous. The City of Sitka sets the maximum gradient for a residential access road at 12%.

When factoring only surface grades, the construction of roads and buildings on 0 – 20% slopes is usually straightforward and of average cost if there are no other limiting site conditions and constraints. Construction on 20 – 40% slopes is considered doable but more difficult and costly due to increased earthwork and grade stabilization requirements. Slopes greater than 40% are in many instances prone to soil sloughing, landslide,

and severe erosion. Consequently, construction on slopes greater than 40% becomes difficult and often prohibitively expensive due to requirements for special building foundations, extensive slope stabilization and drainage systems, and significant excavation and earthwork. Most city and county jurisdictions prohibit or sharply limit construction and development on slopes of 40% and greater, and construction of roads and buildings on slopes above 30% often require geotechnical engineering for foundations, roadbeds, retaining walls, and other built elements.

Traversing a 20 – 40% surface gradient with an access road usually requires a road alignment that travels at a skew to the direction of the slope to achieve an acceptable road gradient of no greater than 12 – 15%. This means the road may have to travel quite a distance at an angle across the slope, and even “switchback” up a slope, to reach a higher elevation. Similarly, underground utilities, which are often associated with roads for maintenance access, will require longer runs to reach higher elevations on or above steeper terrain. Longer travel distances for roads and utilities, coupled with the challenges of construction on steeper slopes, always translates into higher site development and construction costs.





View of Study Area looking South

#### NOTE ON LANDSLIDE RISK

- Evaluating landslide risk was not part of the scope of this study
- A site-specific landslide risk analysis will be required before any development project takes place

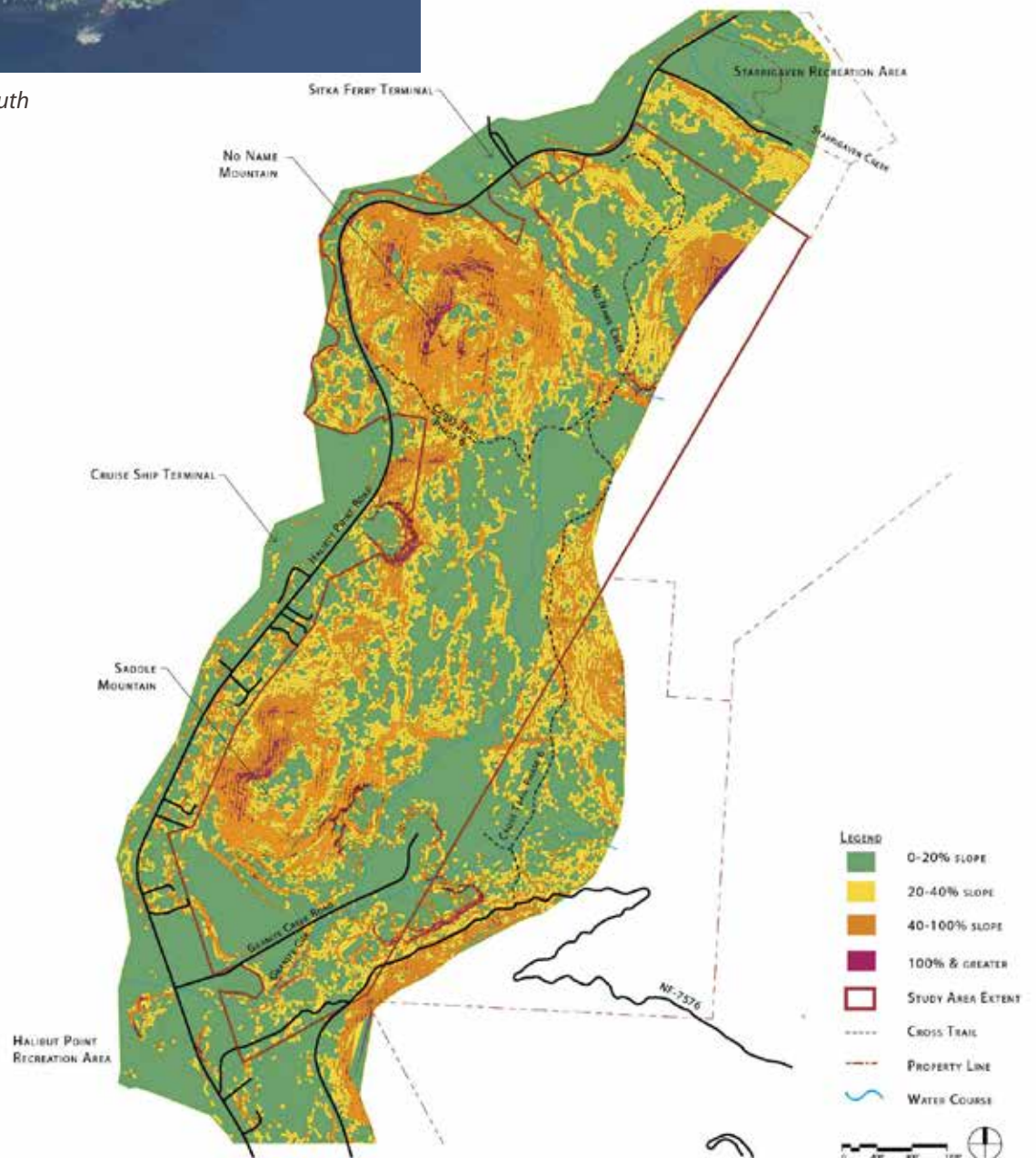


FIGURE 4—SITE SLOPES & GRADIENTS



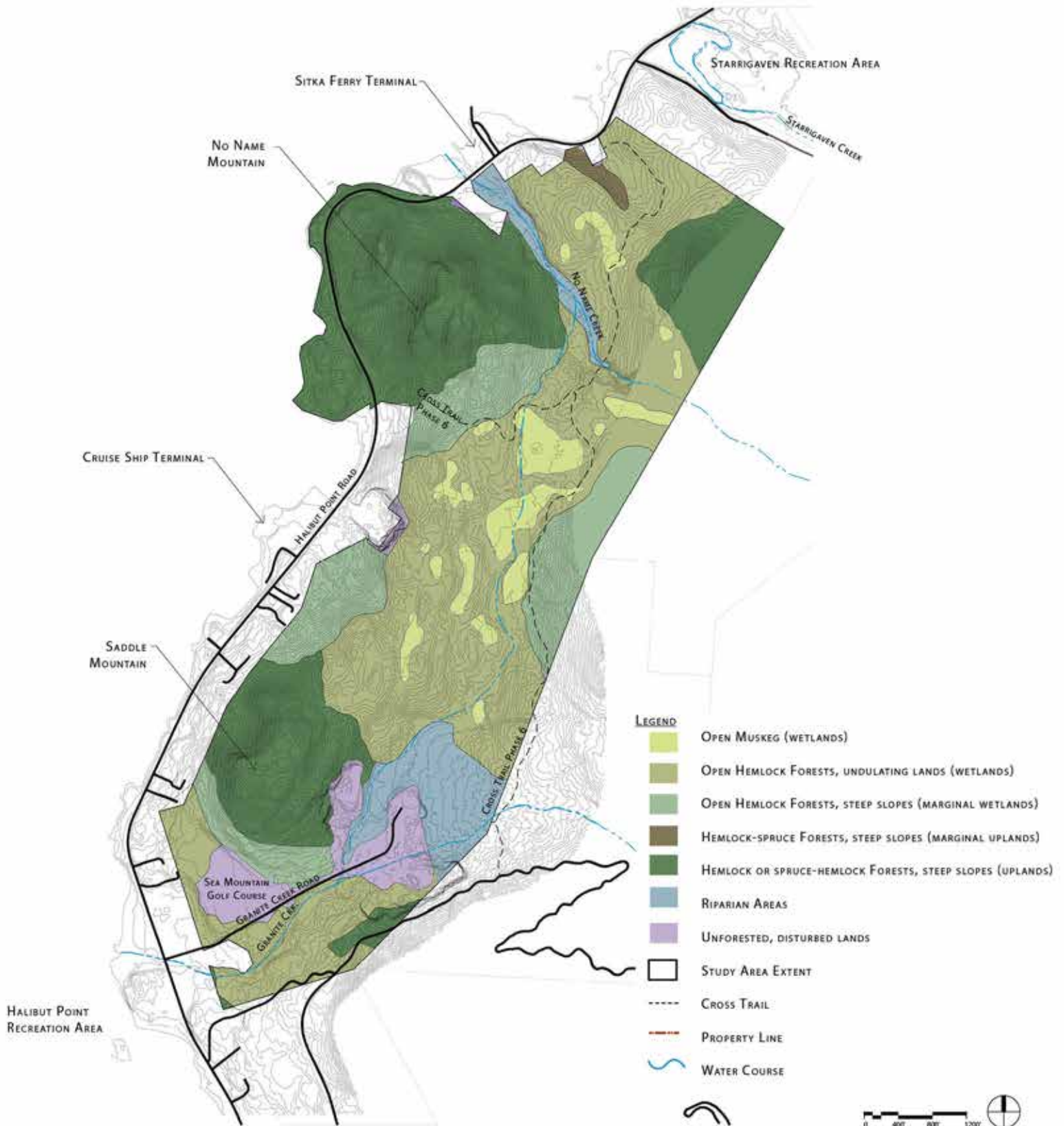


FIGURE 5—PLANT COMMUNITIES

Derived from "Granite Creek Soils Probe & Wetlands Investigation Report" (2000)





## Site Plant Communities

A study conducted in 2000 identified six different biotic communities within the study area (Figure 5). Open muskeg wetlands occupy the lower-lying, flatter interior portions of the site. The larger muskegs are associated with a north-south branch of Granite Creek; however, pockets of muskeg are found on upper slopes. Muskegs are characterized by surface water and small ponds, deep peat and organic soils, sparse tree cover of shore pine, and dense ground cover of sedges and other wetland plants.

The muskegs are surrounded by or transition to open hemlock forest wetlands across undulating land and moderate slopes (of 20 – 45 %). These areas are generally characterized by shallow saturated organic soils and an open tree canopy of 40 to 50 foot tall hemlock (Western or mountain), shore pine, red and yellow cedar, and a dense understory dominated by tall blueberry and rusty menziesia. Open hemlock forest wetlands and muskeg wetlands occupy more than half of the 830-acre study area.

Lower steep slopes associated with No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain support open hemlock forests

considered marginal wetlands. These areas support a vegetation community similar to the preceding open hemlock forest on undulating land, but steeper and higher slopes, less saturated soils, and other minor differences characterize these areas as marginal wetlands.

The high, steep slopes and uplands of No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain are dominated by tall closed canopies of old-growth hemlock and spruce forest, with trees of up to 30 inches in diameter and 130 feet tall. This biotic community does not exhibit wetland hydrology or hydric soils due to higher and drier steep terrain.

Relatively small riparian areas associated with Granite Creek and No Name Creek are characterized by alluvial soils and a tree canopy of alder, hemlock and spruce, abutted by wetlands.

These plant communities provide wildlife habitat, scenery, soil stabilization, and places for subsistence gathering and outdoor recreation. The stability, diversity, and value of these ecosystems require consideration when exploring development options for the study area.





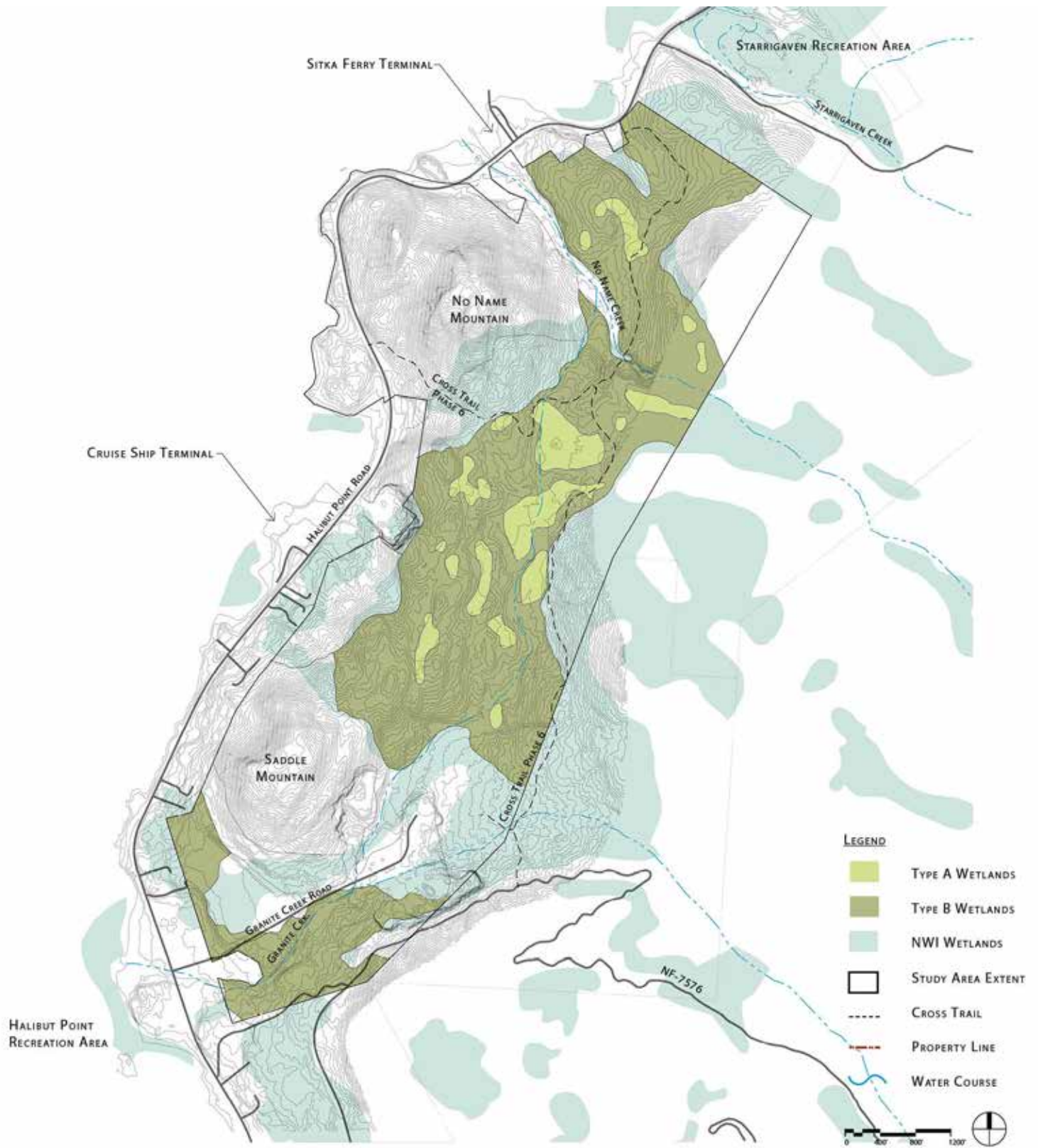


FIGURE 6—SITE WETLANDS

Derived from "Granite Creek Soils Probe & Wetlands Investigation Report" (2000) & USFW National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)

## Site Wetlands and Creeks

A review of earlier wetland analysis and mapping of the study area reveals that a significant portion of the site is comprised of wetlands (Figure 6). Wetlands fall into three general categories: Type A, Open Muskeg; Type B, Forested Wetland on Undulating Land; and Type C, Forested Wetland (Marginal) on Steep Slope. Wetlands tend to occupy lower-elevation, gently to moderately sloping parts of the site. However, wetlands do extend up the lower slopes of No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain, with pockets of muskeg on the broad ridge between these two high knolls.

As the residents of Sitka know, wetlands are vital and productive natural ecosystems, and they contribute to Southeast Alaska's natural beauty. However, wetlands present challenges to development partly because they can be expensive to prepare in the construction of roads and buildings. Soils beneath a wetland's vegetation cover may consist of peat or other similar material with high organic content, which can be many feet deep. These organic "soft" soils are generally unsuitable as a base for buildings and roads, and must be excavated, hauled away, and replaced with good-quality fill material to accommodate structures and streets. One past study used a "peat probe" to estimate soft soil depths across the study area; areas of "deep peat" (or peat deposits greater than 4 feet) should be avoided if possible as they will likely be costly to develop from an earthwork and construction standpoint.

Beyond the physical challenges of building in wetlands, costly permitting and compensatory mitigation efforts are typically required to address development impacts to jurisdictional wetlands. Wetlands and certain other water resources are considered "jurisdictional waters" under the Clean Water Act, and they are therefore subject to federal

oversight and protection, usually by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. State and local agencies also regulate wetland resources.

Development in jurisdictional wetlands often require significant public agency involvement to delineate wetlands, determine wetland function and value, determine the extent and degree of development impacts, establish the level of compensatory mitigation, and settle on the means of compensatory mitigation. All these items are very site- and project-specific, and as such, building development in different wetland areas of the study area would likely have differing permitting and mitigation requirements based on the particular building activity, the wetland type, and the degree of adverse impact. Generally, the mitigation sequence consists of the following steps: avoidance of impacts to wetlands, minimization of unavoidable impacts, and lastly, if required, compensatory mitigation to offset significant unavoidable impacts. If residential, commercial, industrial, or quarry development in the study area's wetlands were to occur, it would likely result in adverse impacts that warrant compensatory mitigation.

Wetland delineations are usually the first step in determining whether a project will have any wetland impacts. Delineations are performed by qualified personnel and involve conducting soil, vegetation, and water observations within the project site along regular transects. Delineations are usually valid for three to five years after they are conducted. If three to five years have lapsed since the delineation and the project has not begun, another delineation may be required. Considering the age of existing wetland information for the study area, updated or new wetland delineations would be required for any development project proposed to occur in or near wetlands.





*Muskeg wetland*

### Site Wetlands (Cont.)

Once the wetland delineation is complete and the project has progressed through the mitigation sequence, the actual project impacts are analyzed and a mitigation ratio is established. The ratio may be determined by the applicant in coordination with the Corps of Engineers or by a mitigation bank, depending on the type of mitigation and how the bank or in-lieu fee programs operate. The ratios are site- and project-specific, based on the existing wetland's type and function, and the project impacts. In Alaska, mitigation ratios typically range from 2:1 to 3:1, which means that for every acre of wetland removed or severely impacted, 2 to 3 acres must be mitigated, or 2 to 3 wetland credits must be purchased as discussed below. There are some instances where these ratios may be higher.

There are different options for compensatory mitigation; however, mitigation is generally required to be in-kind at the required ratio and within the impacted wetland's watershed. One option is applicant-led mitigation. In this scenario the applicant is responsible for developing and implementing a mitigation plan, which might consist of performing restorative activities to other wetland areas impacted by human activities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ultimately makes the determination as to whether or not the applicant's proposed mitigation method is acceptable.

For public projects with wetland impacts on public land, it is often possible to provide mitigation on public land near the project site or on public land elsewhere

within the project watershed. In this scenario, mitigation activities must be based on restoring, enhancing, and/or protecting wetland functions that are over and above the wetland functions being impacted by the public project. For example, compensation credit could be generated by restoring or enhancing wetlands away from the project site where the off-site wetlands have been adversely affected by human activity. Or, this may be accomplished by providing additional levels of protection to publicly held wetland sites, such as by placing wetlands into a permanent conservation easements.

Another mitigation option is to purchase credits from a mitigation bank or to pay into an in-lieu fee program, sometimes administered by a land trust. These programs are implemented differently, but the process for the applicant is generally the same. Basically, the applicant selects a mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program and submits the project details to the mitigation bank or program administrator. This entity then analyzes the impacts of the project on wetlands to determine the cost of a credit. Monies paid into in-lieu fee programs or to purchase mitigation credits go towards other mitigation projects being pursued by the program administrator.

Several different mitigation banks currently operate in Southeast Alaska. Each has its own means of establishing credit cost, which can range from \$35,000 to \$75,000 per credit in the Sitka area. Costs could be significantly higher depending on various factors like wetland type and project impacts. Further, the use of in-lieu fees or mitigation banks is subject to the availability of credits. In some cases, credits may be unavailable, and applicant-sponsored mitigation will be required. The availability of credits fluctuates with the number and scale of project-related wetland impacts in the program's service area.

It is possible that unimpacted wetlands of comparable value and function within the study area could be placed into permanent conservation easements as mitigation for development impacts to other wetlands on the site. There is also the possibility of permanently conserving wetlands in the study area as mitigation for wetland impacts by projects on City-owned lands elsewhere. This approach has stipulations requiring further exploration, but it presents an intriguing way to potentially address both on-site and off-site wetland impacts by City projects.

Finally, two major creeks course through the study area. No Name Creek flows westerly to Sitka Sound across the north end of the site around the north base of No Name Mountain. No Name Creek flows under a bridge in Halibut Point Road before its channel broadens to about 60 feet wide toward its mouth. Granite Creek flows westerly across the south end of the study area through and near the Granite Creek Industrial Area before crossing under Halibut Point Road and emptying into Sitka Sound. Portions of the Granite Creek channel are braided, and it appears that a major branch or tributary of Granite Creek drains south through the site's low-lying muskegs and wetlands to join the main stem of Granite Creek in the industrial area. Granite Creek and its tributary are known to provide habitat for salmon and other fish. Any development affecting these critical areas will need to be considered in tandem with potential wetland impacts.

In summary, given the high costs associated with construction in wetlands coupled with the costs for permitting and mitigating impacts to wetlands, it is advisable to avoid new residential, commercial or industrial development in wetlands in the study area to the greatest extent possible. However, conserving large portions of the study area's extensive wetlands may offer opportunities to mitigate modest development impacts to wetlands both within the study area and at off-site City projects.



*Granite Creek*



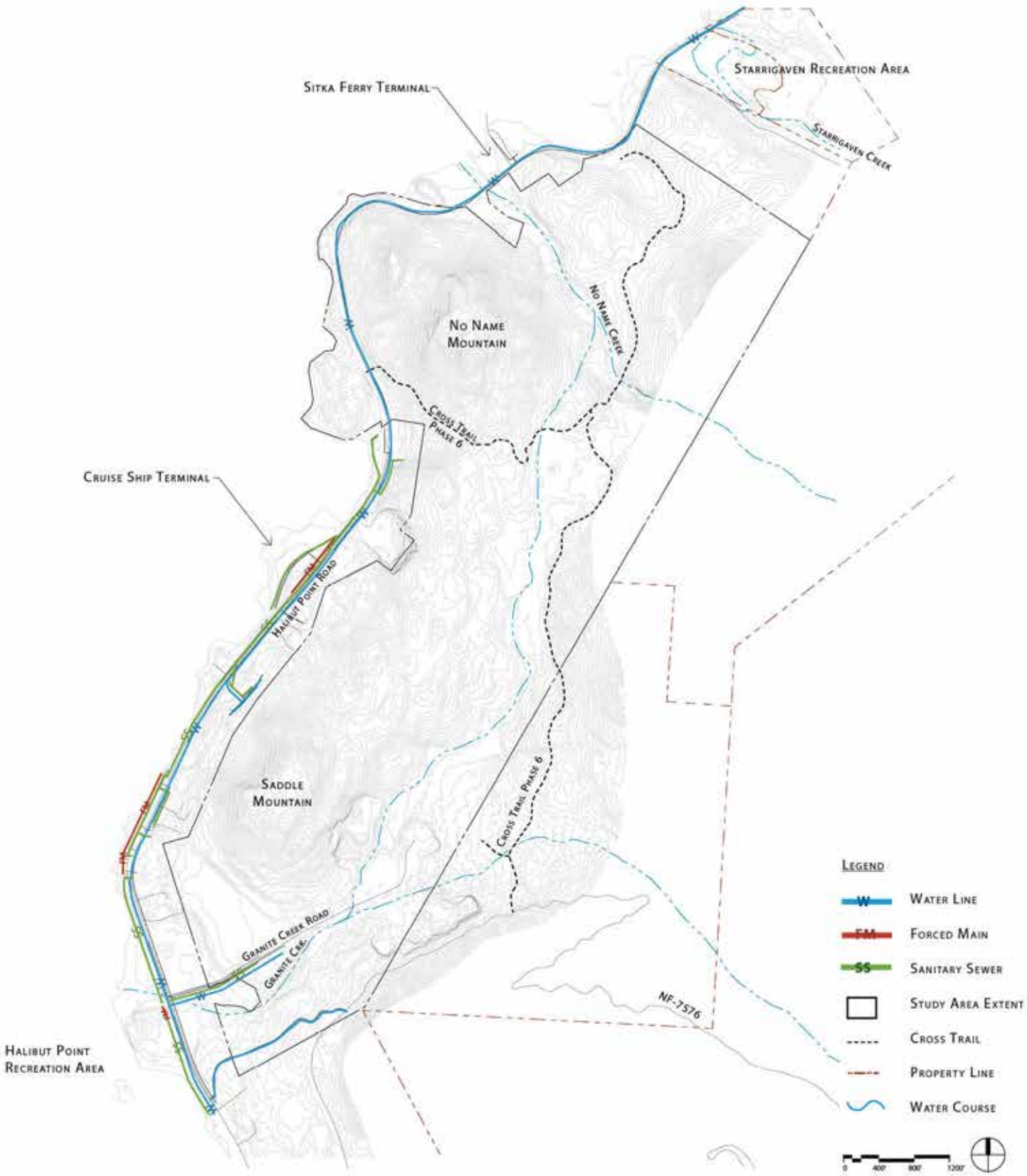


FIGURE 7—EXISTING SITE UTILITIES





## Existing Utility Infrastructure

As shown in Figure 7, existing City-owned utilities occur in the Halibut Point Road corridor along the west side of the study area. Potable water is conveyed in a 12-inch diameter ductile iron pipe that reaches as far north as the State of Alaska Ferry Terminal. Wastewater is transferred in a network of gravity and forced mains generally consisting of 12-inch diameter pipe that only reaches as far north as Cove Marina. Utilities extending up Granite Creek Road consist of 8-inch diameter water and sewer lines. The 12-inch water main and sewer line in Halibut Point Road can support additional development in the study area with certain limitations and restrictions. However, the existing 8" water and sewer lines in Granite Creek Road would likely be undersized to support any significant new development.

Water pressure at a fire hydrant on Granite Creek Road, near the golf course and at about elevation 100 feet above MSL, was measured at 42 pounds per square inch. This is at the lower threshold for normal water pressure, and it would be inadequate for any development requiring a water supply much higher in elevation than 100 feet above MSL.

The capacity of the existing electrical infrastructure along Halibut Point Road just north of Kramer Avenue (roughly 2 miles southeast of the study area) becomes somewhat limited. The Sitka Electric Utility indicated that any more than 50-100 additional homes or any significant commercial development in the study area would put excess demand on the current electrical system that cannot be met, particularly during the winter months.



*Beach at Halibut Point State Recreation Area*

New residential, commercial, or industrial development in the study area will require water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure of some type, either from the City's integrated utility systems or by alternative means.

Extending City water lines for new development on the study area will need to be evaluated for capacity and pressure. As mentioned, running a new water line from the main in Halibut Point Road to any development above 100 feet in elevation (which constitutes much of the study area) will likely require supplemental water pressure. This can be achieved in a couple of ways: a booster pump could be installed at a water main tie-in, either on Granite Creek Road or Halibut Point Road, to boost flow and pressure to new development on the site; alternatively, an elevated high capacity water tank could be constructed at a high point on the site to supply adequate water volume and pressure to new development below it. This tank would need a water supply, presumably from the City water main in HPR via a small pump that keeps the tank filled. Or, there are alternative "decentralized" and less conventional water systems such as individual holding tanks requiring water delivery by truck or filling by an on-site water catchment system.

Wastewater lines will need to be extended into the study area if new development is to be connected to the municipal sewer system. This may require lift stations and forced-mains to transfer waste if the topography does not lend itself to a gravity flow system. A common alternative to a municipal sewer system are on-site septic systems. Soil and groundwater conditions in much of the study area are not favorable to typical buried septic systems; however, mound-type systems may work. An on-site "packaged" treatment plant may also prove a viable option depending on the size of the development. Packaged treatment plants operate very similar to a traditional central sewage treatment plant, albeit on a much smaller scale. Packaged plants typically discharge into a creek, river, or other agency-approved receiving water body. The level of effluent treatment can be tailored to the permitting requirements set by the jurisdictional agency. Waterfront properties have the option of private marine outfalls, a common system employed in Southeast Alaska.

### Utility Infrastructure (Cont.)

Electrical service extensions to new development in the study area would require buried conductors and transformers. To reiterate, the existing municipal electrical system cannot support more than 50-100 new homes, or any significant new commercial development in the study area. If power demand for new development is found to be in excess of available supply, it may be necessary to install a new electrical substation at considerable cost. As an alternative, it may be worth considering supplemental energy options. However, economical detached electrical supply is difficult to implement in Southeast Alaska. Supplemental electric power generation, like solar-charged battery banks, may provide burden relief on the grid but are likely not viable as stand-alone systems since the adequacy of solar powered electrical systems in Southeast Alaska is questionable.

Existing utility infrastructure and methods for providing new utility service must be more thoroughly investigated prior to moving forward with any major development in the study area. There will likely be fairly high costs associated with providing utilities to significant development in the study area.

### Cross Trail Phase 6

Sitka's Cross Trail Extension connects the City's Indian River area to the Starrigavan Recreation Area north of the study area. Phase 6 of this important multi-use trail travels north-south through the east side of the study area. Phase 6 of the Cross Trail is currently under construction.

### Cultural Resources

Based on earlier reports and studies, it is possible that cultural and archeological resources could be present in the study area. These resources could include sites important to Alaska Natives as well as other historically relevant sites. As part of the initial planning of any building development or project in the study area, a thorough cultural resources investigation will need to be conducted to determine the presence of significant archeological or cultural resources.



*Completed section of Sitka Cross Trail*



## Granite Creek Industrial Area

With access from Granite Creek Road, the Granite Creek Industrial Area at the south end of the study area contains the study area's only notable development. The industrial area is occupied by active and exhausted rock quarries owned by the City and leased by operators. One exhausted flat-floored quarry has been turned into a solid waste disposal site, and another is used to store construction materials and equipment. The industrial

area also includes the nine-hole Sea Mountain Golf Course across the lower slopes of Saddle Mountain. Small commercial/industrial facilities occur along Granite Creek Road. Granite Creek winds through the area, traversing forested wetlands between Granite Creek Road and Harbor Mountain Road, which travels along the study area's south boundary.

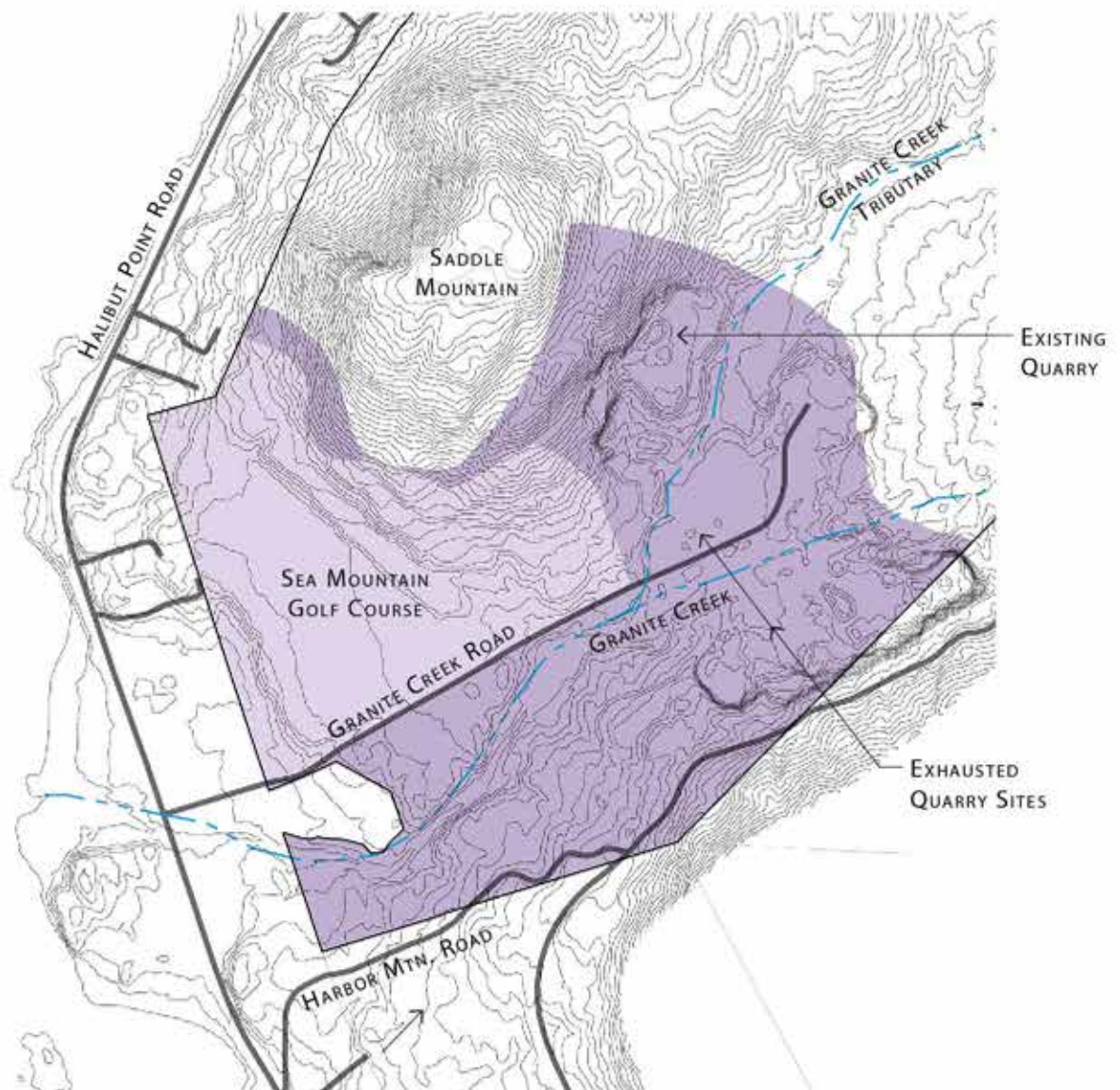


FIGURE 8—GRANITE CREEK INDUSTRIAL AREA



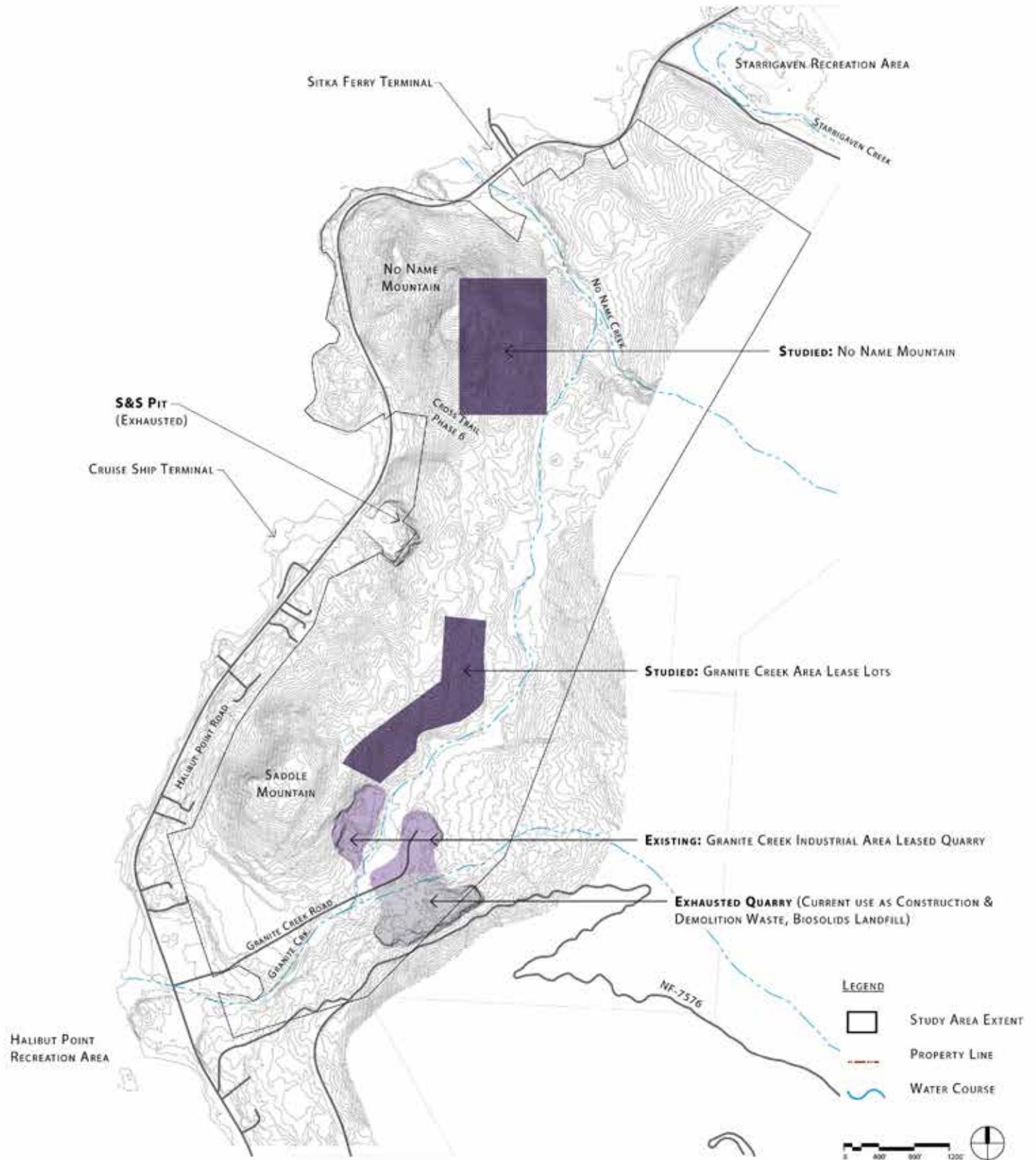


FIGURE 9—EXISTING & STUDIED QUARRY SITES

## Existing and Studied Quarry Sites

The Granite Creek Industrial Area occupying the south end of the study area contains active and exhausted rock quarries that produce or have produced crushed rock for construction projects. Each quarry site is operated by a single user on a lease basis. Rock products sourced from Granite Creek have proven adequate for many construction projects in and around Sitka. However, the rock is not known to meet the criteria for “hard aggregate” as discussed in the Market Analysis. The remaining volume of extractable rock in the Granite Creek area, coupled with the Indian River Quarry owned by BIHA, can be expected to satisfy the general construction needs of Sitka for the foreseeable future.

Expanding the quarrying opportunities in the Granite Creek Industrial Area would seem to be a straightforward and cost-effective way for maintaining and increasing rock production. There appears to be significant remaining room and available rock for quarry expansion on the east and northeast sides of Saddle Mountain. Expanding quarry operations into Saddle Mountain would not impact site wetlands to any great degree based on existing mapping, although this will need to be verified prior to further expansion. Nearby exhausted quarries at Granite Creek could accept overburden stripped from the expanded quarry areas on Saddle Mountain. As discussed in the Market Analysis, alterations to the City’s quarry management and leasing protocol at Granite Creek quarries could spur competition and facilitate the expansion of rock production and supply.

The lease lots immediately north of the Granite Creek area shown in Figure 9 were identified in past studies as potential quarry sites. The cost to access and develop these lots has historically proven prohibitive due to wetland and stream impacts and associated mitigation costs.

No Name Mountain has also been examined for rock extraction in past studies. The studies generally conclude that rock extracted from No Name Mountain would be suitable for many uses on many projects. However, there currently is no road access to the potential quarry areas on the east side of No Name Mountain, nor is there any proximate infrastructure or overburden disposal sites.



*Saddle Mountain rock quarry at Granite Creek Area*

The potential for high-quality rock deposits of hard aggregate production at No Name Mountain, and ensuing region-wide export, was considered in one past study. However, this study did not perform one of the specific tests for hard aggregate determination. While there may be potential for hard aggregate in No Name Mountain, moving forward with quarrying intended to produce profitability from hard aggregate sales would be a significant gamble, particularly if the target is an export market. The data set of No Name Mountain rock samples tested to date is small, and comprehensive testing of these samples to qualify hard aggregate has not been performed. Further, the rock type encountered by prior investigations is not consistent with rock types typically associated with hard aggregate. In addition, a desktop study commissioned by DOT to identify potential hard aggregate sources across southern Alaska did not identify the Sitka area as a potential source based on geologic mapping and reconnaissance. Lastly, the demand for hard aggregate in Southeast Alaska is relatively low.

Quarrying at No Name Mountain may become more viable when other rock sources have been exhausted, or when road access into No Name Mountain is provided for other development discussed in this Master Plan. However, opening up a new quarry on the east side of No Name Mountain is not recommended to address Sitka’s rock material needs at this time.





*Rock quarry at Granite Creek*



*Quarry overburden pile*



*Rock quarry at Granite Creek*

## 3 | MARKET ANALYSIS

### Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this market analysis is to describe local economic and market conditions as related to potential development and use of the study area, with the objective of determining how development would benefit Sitka's business growth, job creation, and City revenues. The analysis focuses on four main areas based on initial input from the City as well as previous research: rock quarrying, housing development, tourism, and commercial/industrial uses.

Data informing this analysis was obtained from several sources:

- Site visit in January 2020, including a Planning Commission meeting
- Frequent discussions with project team and City staff
- Interviews with stakeholders and experts in housing, tourism, construction, quarrying, and Sitka's economy
- Compilation of data on local demographics, employment, housing, and tourism. Sources included the U.S. Census Bureau, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Sitka Assessor's Office, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the Alaska Visitor Statistics Program, among others.

### Rock Quarrying

Local demand for quarry rock in Sitka is driven by various types of public and private construction projects. Currently, the average annual demand for rock in Sitka is estimated to be between 10,000 to 20,000 tons per year. Actual annual rock consumption varies, with some years requiring significantly more rock than others depending on the number and size of construction projects.

There are currently two established, active local rock sources in Sitka: the Granite Creek Industrial Area, and the Indian River area. The Granite Creek Industrial Area, located at the south end of the study area, is City-owned and consists of several active and exhausted quarries. Each quarry is operated by a single user on a lease basis. The Indian River Quarry, located north of downtown Sitka, is owned by the Baranof Island Housing Authority and managed by a single private entity. This quarry is

located outside of the study area, but it was researched to gauge rock supply conditions in Sitka. Between the Granite Creek and Indian River quarry areas, there are likely hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of extractable rock remaining.

Long-term, single-user quarry leases may be hindering competition in Sitka's rock supply market. Alterations to the City's quarry management and leasing protocol at Granite Creek, such as allowing multiple users to operate in designated areas on an as-needed, project-specific basis, could create greater competition and increase rock production and supply. For example, Stabler's Point Quarry, owned and managed by the City and Borough of Juneau, allows multiple operators within the quarry on an as-needed, project-specific basis. Prospective contractors approach the City of Juneau with a project, estimated rock volume, and blast pattern, and are then assigned an area within the quarry to work. The quarry is open to both public and private projects in Juneau. However, even with changes to the City of Sitka's leasing structure at Granite Creek, expansion of the rock supply market in Sitka will still depend on investment by private operators in providing rock producing equipment.

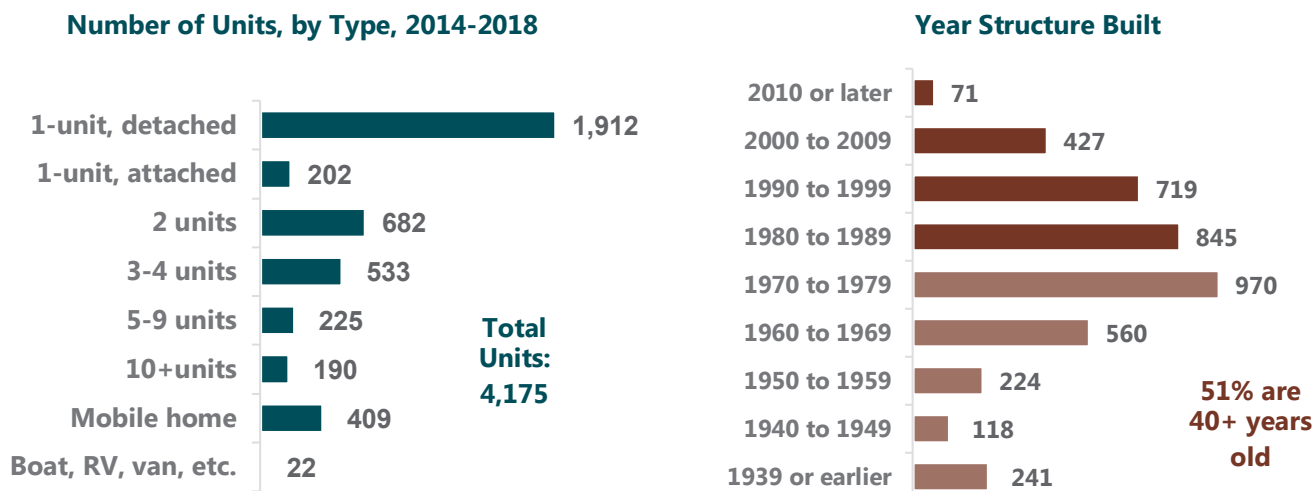
Quarried rock from the Granite Creek Industrial Area and Indian River Quarry is completely satisfactory for the vast majority of construction project around Sitka. However, the rock from these two sources is not known to meet the criteria of hard aggregate. Hard aggregate is a rock material with high durability meeting strict testing requirements specified by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT). DOT typically specifies hard aggregate in the surface course of paving projects on roads with an average daily vehicle count greater than 5,000. Interviewed DOT personnel indicate that average annual demand for hard aggregate on DOT projects in Southeast Alaska totals approximately 2,000 tons per year. Most of the hard aggregate used on projects in Southeast Alaska is sourced from the Pacific Northwest where there is substantial processing and export infrastructure in place for providing a high-quality, reliable, and consistent product. Projects in other parts of Alaska frequently source from Cantwell, in Interior Alaska. The last DOT project in Southeast Alaska that sourced hard aggregate locally from Southeast Alaska had issues with quality and consistency.



## Housing Market

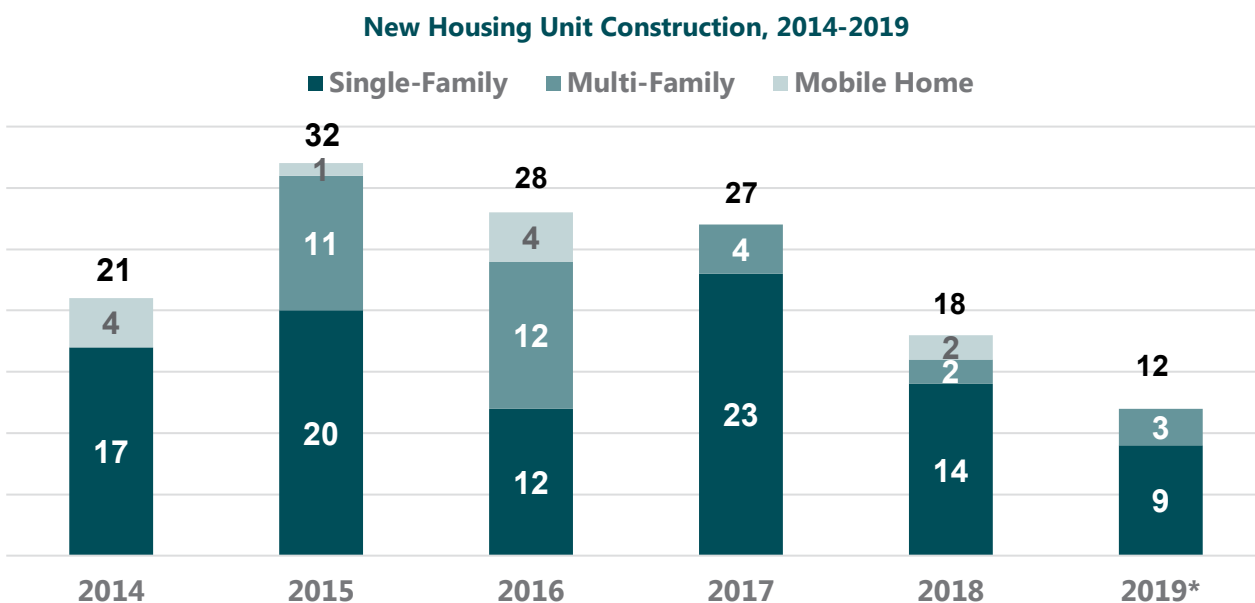
### Housing Indicators

- About one-half of Sitka's housing stock (1,912 out of 4,175 units) is one-unit, detached.
- About one-half of Sitka's housing stock is over 40 years old.



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census.

- Sitka's housing construction has been declining over the last five years. There were 32 units built in 2015, and only 12 in the first three-quarters of 2019. (The fourth quarter typically shows few units.)



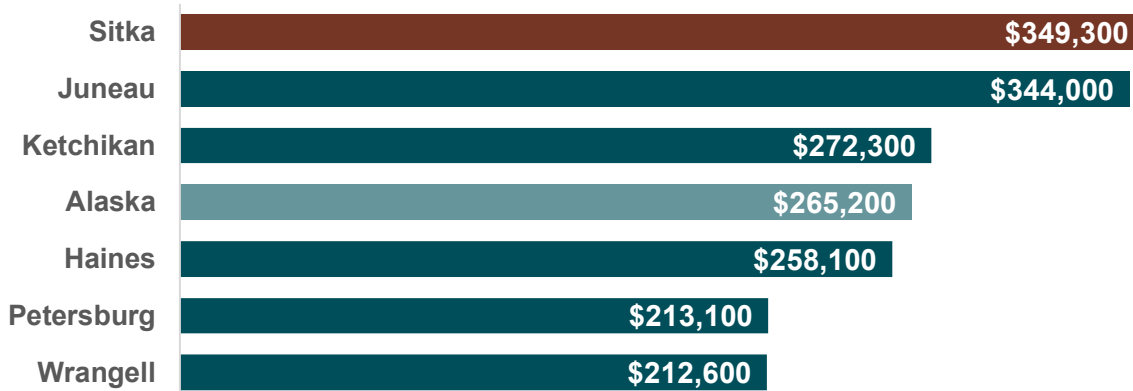
Source: Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

\*First three-quarters only.



- Sitka's average single-family home price in 2018 was \$425,100, up 17% from the 2016 average (\$362,100) (Sitka Assessor's Office).
- Sitka's median owner-occupied home value (\$349,300) is significantly higher than the statewide average (\$265,200), and among the highest in Southeast.
- Sitka's median rental costs were \$1,241 in 2019 (Alaska Housing Finance Corporation).

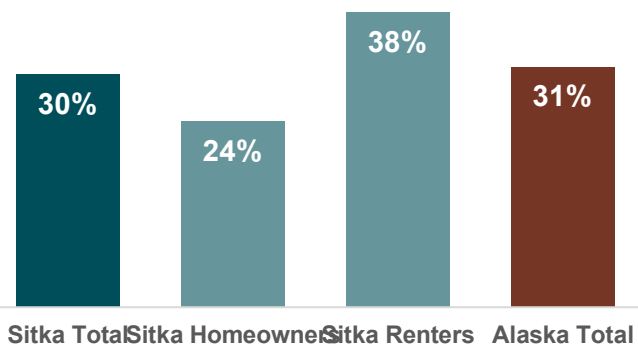
#### Median Owner-Occupied Home Value, 2014-2018



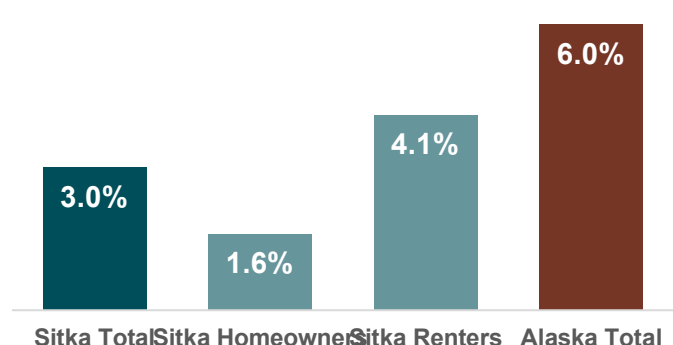
Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census.

- Sitka's cost-burdened rate is about the same as the statewide rate (30% versus 31%). However, renters have a much higher cost-burdened rate than homeowners (38% versus 24%). (A cost-burdened household spends more than 30% of their income on housing.)
- Sitka's over-crowded rate is about half of the statewide rate (3.0% versus 6.0%). The rate among renters is higher than the rate among homeowners (4.1% versus 1.6%). (Over-crowded households have more than one person per room.)

#### Cost-Burdened Rates



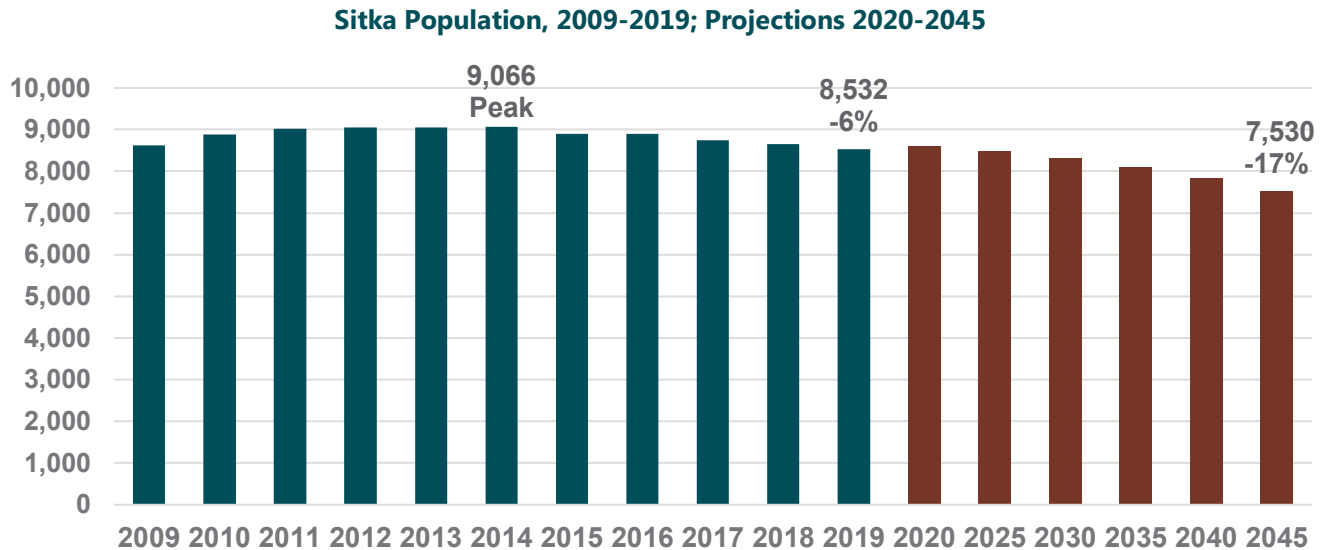
#### Over-Crowded Rates





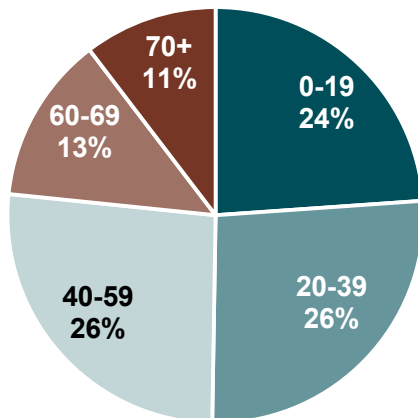
## Demographic Indicators

- Sitka's population has been declining over the last five years, dropping 6% between 2014 and 2019.
- If current trends continue, Sitka's population is projected to decline another 17% between 2019 and 2045.

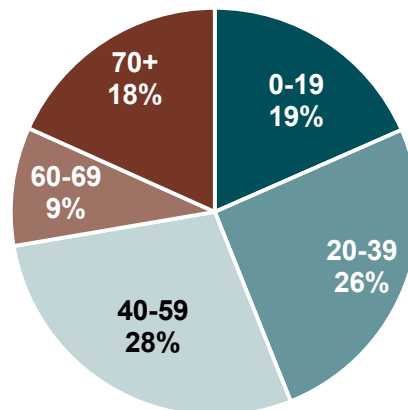


- Sitka's population is projected to age significantly in future years. The percentage of the population 70 and over will increase from 11% to 18% of the population between 2019 and 2035. Over that time period, median age will increase from 40.1 to 44.4. Whether older residents will be able to "age in place" will depend on the availability of appropriate housing. (Older Alaskans often need to move out of the state to find suitable housing as well as health care.)

**Sitka Population by Age, 2019**

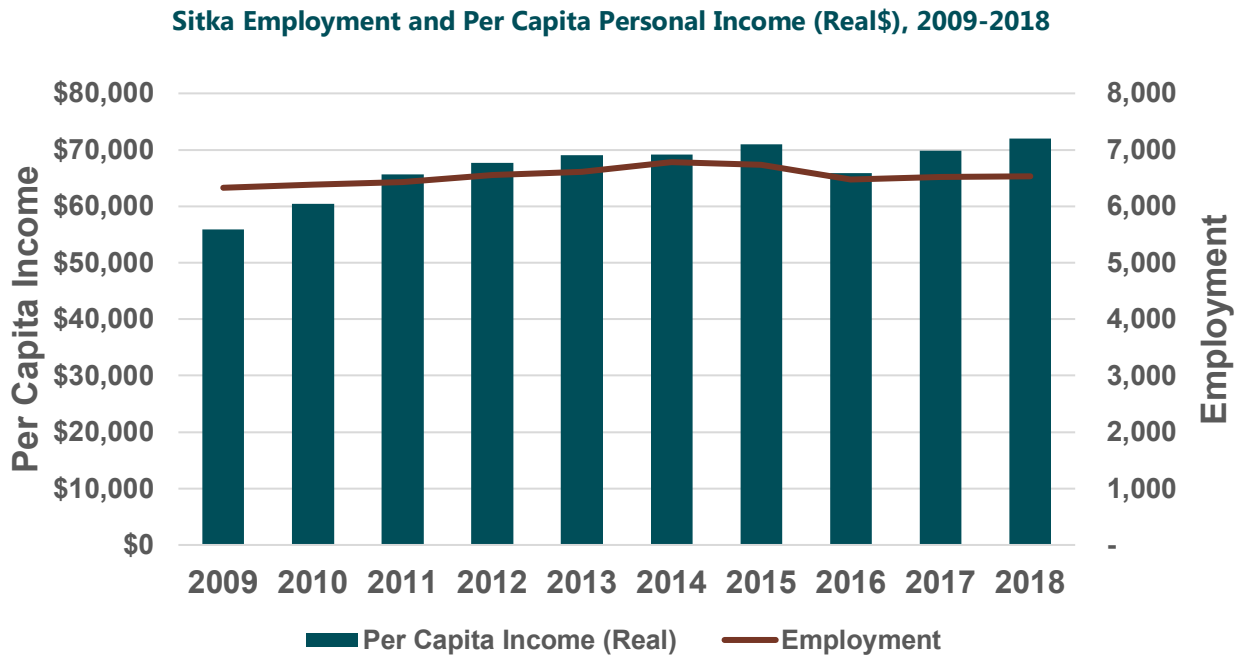


**Sitka Population by Age, 2035**



## Economic Indicators

- Sitka employment has stayed fairly consistent over the last decade, fluctuating between a low of 6,328 in 2009 and a high of 6,782 in 2014. Employment in 2018 (6,530) marked the second consecutive year of growth, but gains were incremental (43 new jobs in 2017 and 14 new jobs in 2018).
- Per capita personal income fluctuated more than employment over the last 10 years, ranging from a low of \$56,000 in 2009 to a high of \$72,000 in 2018. The 2018 average represented an increase of 9% over a two-year period.

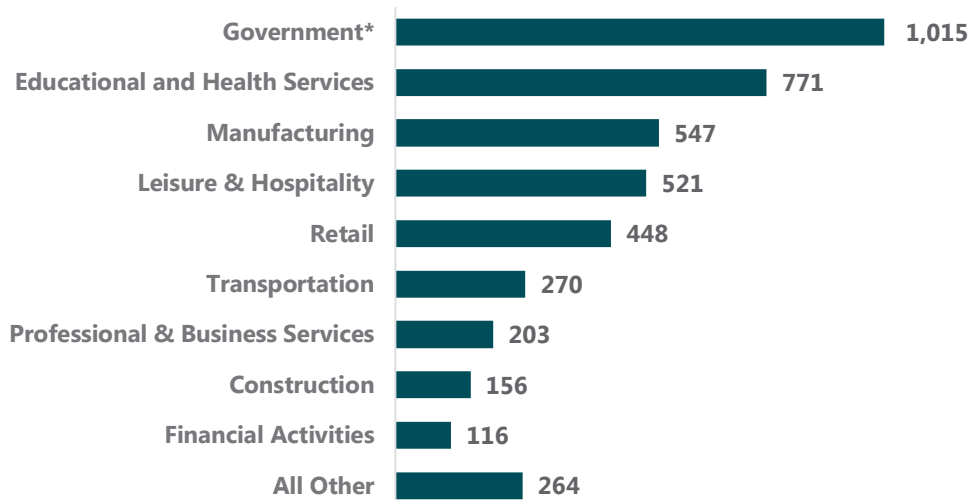


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.



- Nearly one-third of Sitka’s non-agricultural wage and salary employment is attributable to government (1,015 out of 4,311; includes school district employment). Other prominent sectors include education and health services (771), manufacturing (547; includes seafood processing), and leisure and hospitality (521).
- Wage and salary employment data do not include self-employed workers, such as commercial fishermen, or active duty Coast Guard personnel. Both are important sources of jobs and income in Sitka. In 2018, 415 Sitka resident permit holders harvested 23.9 million pounds of fish with a total ex-vessel value of \$41 million, according to Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission data. Approximately 200 active duty Coast Guard personnel are stationed in Sitka.

**Sitka Wage & Salary Employment by Sector, 2019**



\* Includes school district.  
Source: QCEW, AKDOLWD.



- Between 2016 and 2019, Sitka's employment grew by 1.9%. The sectors showing the largest growth over that time period were seafood processing (+27%), and health care and social assistance (+19%). The sectors showing the largest declines were construction (-17%), federal government (-14%), and scenic and sightseeing transportation (-14%).

Sitka Wage &amp; Salary Employment Trends, 2016-2019

Industry	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016 – 2019 Change	2016 – 2019 Change %
<b>Government Sector</b>						
Local Government*	681	692	679	592	-89	-13%
State Government	326	320	323	315	-11	-3%
Federal Government	126	120	113	108	-18	-14%
<b>Private Sector</b>						
Educational and Health Services	664	678	688	771	+107	+16%
Health Care & Social Assistance	581	nd	609	691	+110	+19%
Educational Services	83	nd	78	80	-3	-4%
Manufacturing	445	495	477	547	+102	+23%
Seafood Processing	363	411	393	462	+99	+27%
Leisure & Hospitality	521	522	518	521	0	-%
Restaurants and Bars	357	341	332	343	-14	-4%
Accommodations	138	149	157	148	+10	+7%
Retail	449	449	459	448	-1	-<1%
Transportation	290	293	270	270	-20	-7%
Scenic & Sightseeing	145	140	113	125	-20	-14%
Professional & Business Services	173	177	187	203	+30	+17%
Construction	188	158	154	156	-32	-17%
Financial Activities	125	119	117	116	-9	-7%
All Other	241	260	266	264	+23	+10%
<b>Total employment</b>	<b>4,229</b>	<b>4,283</b>	<b>4,250</b>	<b>4,311</b>	<b>+82</b>	<b>+1.9%</b>

Source: QCEW, AKDOLWD, McDowell Group calculations.

ND: Non-Disclosable

\*Includes school district.



#### Additional Market Considerations

- There are current efforts to address Sitka's high housing costs. The following efforts may play a role in meeting some of Sitka's demand for affordable housing.
  - » BIHA is developing affordable housing on its Indian River Road property. Their current plan is for 14 units, but the site has significant additional capacity.
  - » Sitka Community Land Trust has plans to construct seven homes, with a goal of 14 total.
- SEARHC is applying for funding to construct a new facility on their campus. The scope of the facility, and any potential new residents that could result from new staffing, is uncertain and will not be known until their funding level is determined. Depending on new staffing needs, this development may increase housing demand, although the impact remains unknown at this time.
- The Coast Guard plans to station a new cutter in Sitka with delivery estimated in 2025. They are currently working on the infrastructure to accommodate the vessel. There will be 33 personnel associated with the vessel, with an associated impact on the housing market.



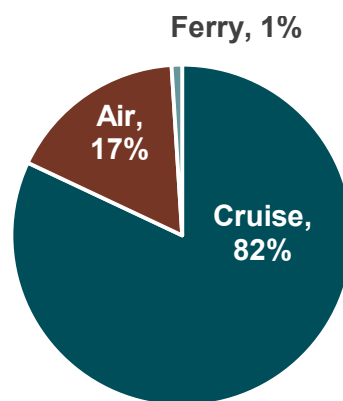
#### Implications for Study Area

- **Sitka's declining population will limit housing demand over the next several years**, if current demographic trends continue.
- **The projected increase in older residents will increase demand for senior housing**, rather than single-family detached housing.
- **There is a need in Sitka for more affordable housing**, and there is interest in the study area providing the opportunity for development of affordable housing. However, the costs for constructing road access, utility infrastructure, and site prep within the study area could place the cost of homes well out of the "affordable" range unless less costly alternative infrastructure systems can be implemented.
- Tax increment financing (TIF) might be a tool that local government could use to support affordable housing development in the study area. This would involve creating a TIF district, issuing bonds to pay for infrastructure improvements, then repaying the bonds with property tax or other revenue derived from within the district.
- In terms of other housing that falls outside of the affordable range, there is potential for "high-end" residential development on the waterfront parcel of the study area. Waterfront, view lots are always going to be desirable and highly valued in Sitka regardless of housing trends, and residential view lots could represent a significant source of property tax revenue for the City.
- Certain upland areas and other small areas within the study area may be suitable for development of more "market-rate" housing to meet longer-term needs.

## Tourism

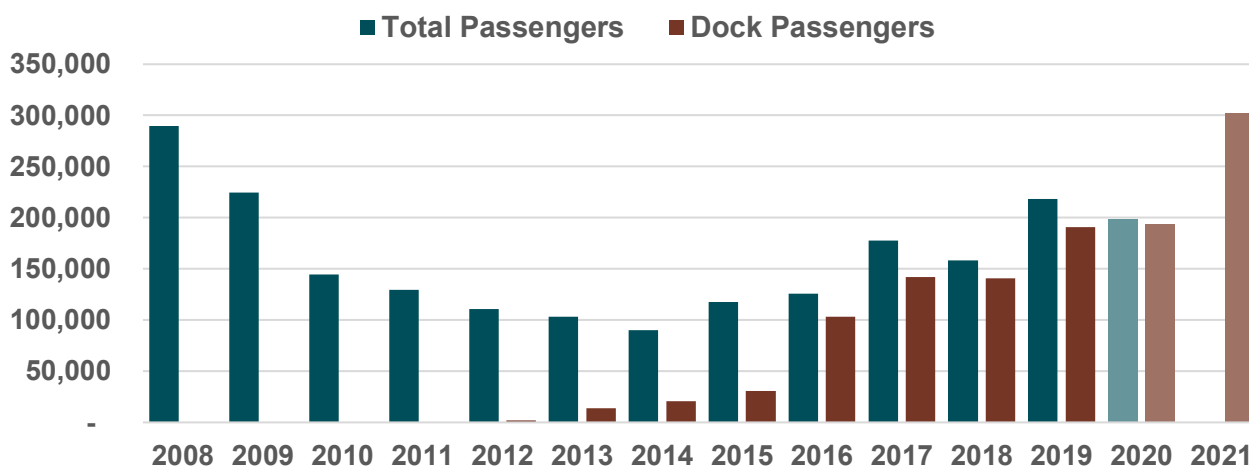
- Sitka welcomed 159,000 out-of-state visitors in summer 2016, the last season measured.
- Of these, 82% were cruise passengers, 17% had traveled to and from Alaska by air, and 1% had used a ferry.
- Among non-cruise visitors, fishing lodge guests represented 82%.
- Sitka visitors reported spending an average of \$353 per person in Sitka. The high average is attributable to the large sportfishing lodge contingent; not counting lodge packages, visitors spent \$137 per person.
- **Cruise passenger volume reached 218,600 in 2019, with 87% (191,000) of passengers disembarking at the Halibut Point Marine Cruise Ship Terminal** near the study area site. The 2019 total volume was more than double the low point of 2014 (90,200).
- Before COVID-19, passenger traffic at the Halibut Point Marine Cruise Ship Terminal was projected to grow to over 300,000 passengers by 2021. The Halibut Point Marine Terminal is being expanded to accommodate up to two large ships or one large ship and two smaller ships at the same time.

**Sitka Visitors by Transportation Mode, Summer 2016**



Source: AVSP 7.

**Sitka Cruise Passenger Volume, 2008-2019; 2020 and 2021 Pre-COVID Projections**



Sources: Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska, Halibut Point Marine.



#### Additional Market Considerations

- Unlike other cruise regions in the world, cruise lines are heavily invested in Alaska. They own hotels, buses, trains, and docks. Dock infrastructure is being expanded and/or upgraded in several Alaska ports (Hoonah/Icy Strait Point, Seward, Ketchikan, Juneau), some of these with direct cruise line investment. While COVID-19 will hit the industry hard this year with perhaps impacts for several more years, cruise lines are expected to return to Alaska at previous levels.
- Sitka's previous peak cruise traffic was in 2008, when nearly 300,000 passengers visited. Passengers were transported from their ship to downtown docks via lightering vessel, allowing them to disperse easily through the downtown area. With most future passengers likely to arrive via the Halibut Point Marine dock, passenger dispersal will present a challenge, as not all passengers can be transported at the same time on Halibut Point Road.
- Alaska cruise passengers have been seeking more outdoor/active experiences, leading to a growth in shore excursions that involve outdoor activities such as zip-lining, biking, kayaking, and rafting.
- While it may be physically feasible to construct a cruise ship dock at the study area's waterfront parcel, there is unlikely to be sufficient demand by cruise lines even in the long-term for this new dock. It will take years for the Halibut Point Marine docks to reach full capacity (particularly in light of COVID-19 impacts), and volume would likely need to double before an additional dock could be justified. In addition, the uplands area and road system may not be able to accommodate a significantly increased volume of passengers. If another cruise dock is needed, it is more likely to be constructed in the downtown area than near the current Halibut Point Marine dock, according to industry experts. Contacts further noted that cruise lines are more likely to increase port calls in communities where they have significant investments, like Ketchikan, Skagway, Icy Strait Point, and Juneau.



*Halibut Point Marine Cruise Ship Terminal*





*Kayakers in Sitka Channel*



*Hoonah at Icy Point Strait*



*Gary Paxton Industrial Park*

### Implications for Study Area

- The waterfront parcel within the study area is well suited for cruise-related development, offering opportunities for passenger dispersal and “recreational tourism” activities such as kayaking, zip-lining, and hiking/trails.
- The type of recreation-related infrastructure on the waterfront parcel could vary in scope and investment level depending on the investor. For example, Icy Strait Point incorporates retail shops, restaurants, performance venue, zip-line, and a gondola at their cruise ship port. However, less intensive development at the waterfront parcel could consist of an “adventure park” with trails, an aerial ropes-course or climbing wall, a kayak launch site, and an outdoor salmon-bake/crab-feed venue.
- Generally, with more intensive development, there will be higher opportunity for local spending, as well as property and sales tax revenues.

### Commercial / Industrial Uses

- With the recent development of the Gary Paxton Industrial Park that appears to have capacity for increased industrial activity, particularly water-related industry, there is no need for another major industrial-park development in Sitka.
- Stakeholders noted some need in Sitka for sites appropriate for light commercial usage (such as sheds and workshops) and fleet storage. It was observed that some of the commercial activity currently occurring in the area near Price Street/Hillside is not compatible with residential uses.
- Some light commercial activity occurs in the Granite Creek industrial area, and it has the capacity for more of this type of activity.
- Some industrial uses may not be compatible with visitor-related development, depending on proximity, noise level, and impacts on scenery.



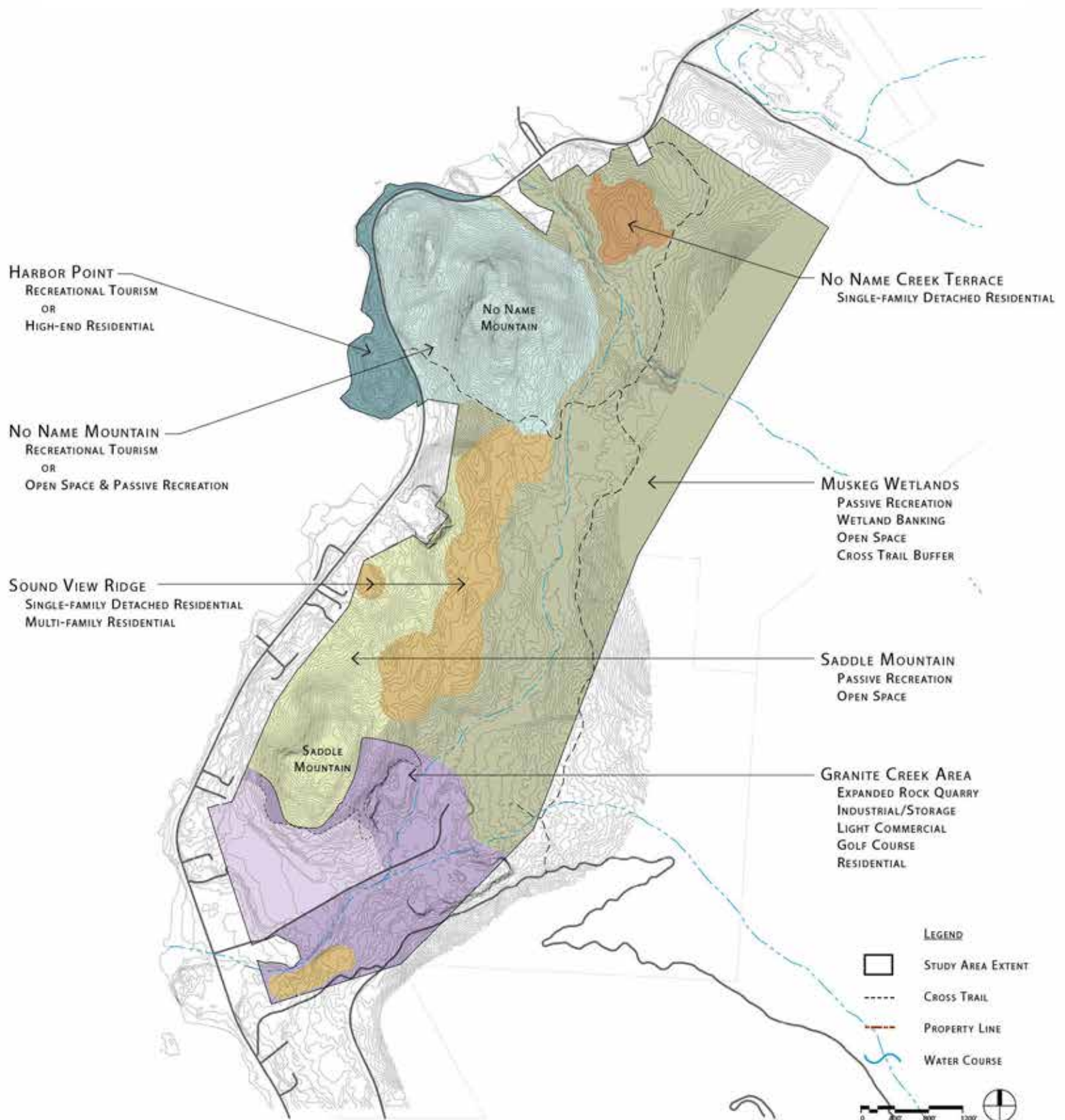


FIGURE 10—DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY / POTENTIAL LAND USE ZONES



## 4 | ALTERNATIVE LAND USE SCHEMES

### Development Suitability and Land Use

As discussed in Chapter 2 *Site Analysis*, large portions of the study area pose challenges to residential, commercial, or industrial development, as well as to opening new rock quarries. Development in the site's extensive wetlands, particularly in muskegs, and in areas along salmon-bearing creeks, will require expensive permitting and mitigation, not to mention costly construction measures to remedy wet, organic soils. Steep slopes on No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain will also be expensive to build on due to soil stabilization, landslide risk, and other factors. In addition, certain steeply sloping areas and wetlands would be difficult to reach by roads and utilities.

However, some portions of the site appear marginally suitable for residential or commercial building development. These development-suitable areas tend to possess moderate to borderline steep slopes (10 – 40%) and fewer muskeg wetlands. The terrain in these areas may be rough, forested, or wet, but existing conditions are not as prohibitive to development as other steeply sloping or wetland areas of the site. Additionally, some development-suitable areas may be less difficult to access with new roads and utilities.

This is not to say areas deemed unsuitable for conventional residential, commercial, or industrial development are without value or use. Wetlands and steeply sloping forest lands provide important wildlife habitat. These places allow opportunities for subsistence gathering and hunting and for passive recreation such as hiking, wildlife viewing, and nature enjoyment. High value wetlands can be conserved as potential mitigation for development impacts to wetlands elsewhere. Some of these areas may also lend themselves to commercialized forms of recreation as discussed later in this chapter.

The Market Analysis in Chapter 3 suggests potential types of development for the study area based on Sitka's economic conditions and needs. Upon looking at areas deemed both suitable and unsuitable for building development, a picture begins to emerge of where the types of development and activities discussed in the Market Analysis could conceivably occur in the study area.

As shown on the plan in Figure 10, the study area has been divided into seven "land use zones", with each zone given a name reflecting its geographic setting or dominant landscape characteristic. The plan identifies the type of development or land use that might be appropriate or suitable for that zone based on its site conditions and the development needs and opportunities discussed in the Market Analysis. Per the plan, certain land use zones are shown to be suitable for two or more different land uses, and other zones can accommodate only one. The following sections of this chapter discuss alternative land uses for each zone, and what this land use might consist of.



*Study area forest*

### Harbor Point

Harbor Point is the 17-acre parcel located along the waterfront side of Halibut Point Road (HPR). Harbor Point has shoreline frontage on its south, west, and north sides, and HPR frontage on its east side. The parcel is characterized by lower elevation, fairly rough terrain, but apart from shoreline areas, it contains no steep slopes. Much of the site is occupied by beautiful mature forest. The site is also close to a sanitary sewer line and water main in the HPR corridor. Harbor Point's shoreline setting, lower elevation, proximity to utilities, direct access from HPR, and great views of Sitka Sound all contribute to a property with relatively high development potential.

Two types of development are suggested for Harbor Point. For land use Option A (shown in Figure 11), the development of high-end, single family detached homes is proposed. The site's water access and views,

proximity to Halibut Point Road and utilities, and lower elevation would promote the development of shoreline and near-shore homes on this parcel. With residential development, City revenues would be increased through outright property sale and on-going property taxes, and new home building would bolster the local construction industry and jobs.

However, costs to develop this property will be moderately high, and local demand for high-end waterfront homes may fluctuate. Also, new high-end housing here will do little to address Sitka's need for affordable housing. One possibility in this respect would be to develop high-end homes along the parcel's shoreline and to build more affordable smaller homes and multi-family apartments or condominiums close to Halibut Point Road and on the property's interior.



*Southeast Alaska waterfront home*



Site Opportunities & Constraints

- + 17 acres with waterfront and beach access
- + Mature vegetation
- + Views to Sitka Sound
- + Water line available in Halibut Pt. Road
- May require sewer main extensions or marine out-falls
- Rugged topography, some steep slopes

**FIGURE 11 — HARBOR POINT: OPTION A**

Potential Land Use: High-End Residential

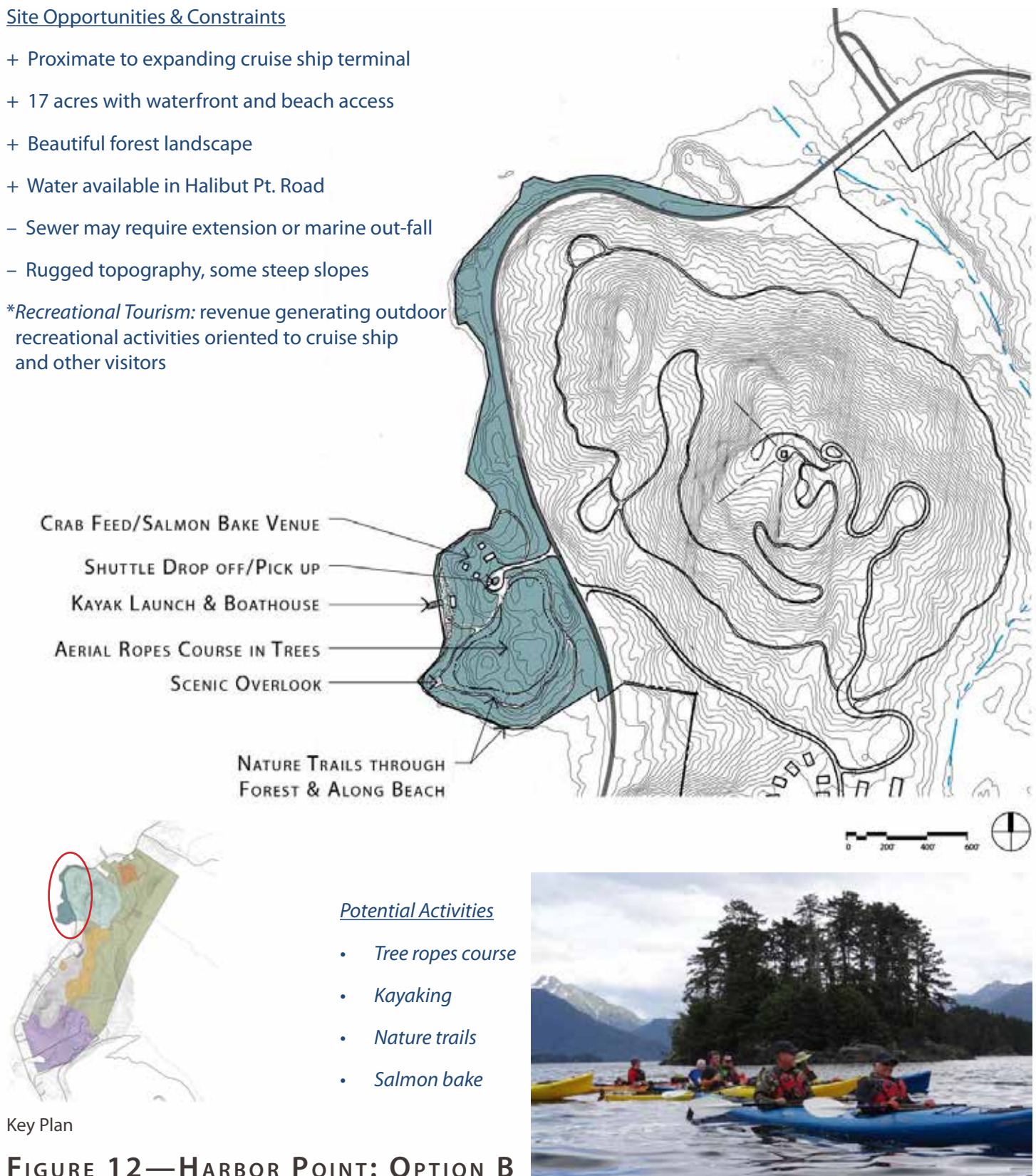


## 4 | ALTERNATIVE LAND USE SCHEMES

### Site Opportunities & Constraints

- + Proximate to expanding cruise ship terminal
- + 17 acres with waterfront and beach access
- + Beautiful forest landscape
- + Water available in Halibut Pt. Road
- Sewer may require extension or marine out-fall
- Rugged topography, some steep slopes

*\*Recreational Tourism:* revenue generating outdoor recreational activities oriented to cruise ship and other visitors





An alternative land use Option B for Harbor Point would be to develop it for recreational tourism. Recreational tourism is defined as revenue-generating outdoor recreational activities oriented to cruise ship visitors and other recreationists. Use of Harbor Point for recreational tourism would compliment the expanding cruise ship terminal nearby. Harbor Point's beautiful forested shoreline setting overlooking Sitka Sound could host a variety of outdoor recreational activities sought by cruise ship operators and visitors. A venue for outdoor activities here would also help to disperse cruise ship visitors to different attractions and destinations, thereby reducing bus traffic on Halibut Point Road to and from downtown. As shown in Figure 12, outdoor recreational

activities might include an aerial ropes course, nature trails, kayaking, salmon bake venue, and so on. These activities would fit with rather than damage the natural landscape. With Option B, the City would maintain ownership of Harbor Point and lease it for recreational tourism development by others.

As mentioned in the Market Analysis, the use of Harbor Point for marine-oriented industry appears inappropriate. Gary Paxton Industrial Park on the south side of Sitka has ample available waterfront area with deep water access. Also, Sawmill Creek Road, which extends from downtown Sitka to the industrial park, was recently improved and can handle increased commercial traffic better than Halibut Point Road.



*Aerial ropes course in trees*



*Salmon bake (above), Mountain bike trail (below)*

## No Name Mountain

No Name Mountain, along the east side of Halibut Point Road just across from Harbor Point, occupies the northwest part of the study area. The rugged forested terrain of this large knoll rises to over 400 feet above sea level, offering sweeping westerly views of Sitka Sound and easterly views into the mountains of Baranof Island. The extremely steep slopes of No Name Mountain would be difficult and expensive to develop for homes, commercial/industrial use, and associated access roads and underground utilities.

However, per land use Option A, No Name Mountain could be used for activities and facilities associated with recreational tourism, such as mountain biking and nature trails, ziplines, scenic overlooks, and perhaps a single-lane tram road, funicular, or aerial cable car to the summit. These facilities and activities would generally require light infrastructure that works with the steep terrain. Recreational tourism activities on No Name Mountain would be near the expanding cruise ship terminal and would increase the range of recreational tourism activities proposed for Harbor Point - Option B, creating a large outdoor venue that offers a variety of recreational activities for cruise ship visitors and others. Essentially, No Name Mountain would allow cruise ship visitors to experience a little bit of wild Alaska upon

disembarking the boat. The land for recreational tourism activities and facilities on No Name Mountain could be leased from the City and developed by others for this use.

An alternative land use (Option B) for No Name Mountain would be to use it for passive recreation and open space, where it would remain largely undisturbed and natural. As such, the only facilities on No Name Mountain would be trails. Views of this impressive high green knoll for visitors arriving by cruise ship would be kept intact and unaltered.

As noted in Chapter 2 *Site Analysis*, a previous study explored the possibility of opening up a new rock quarry on the east side of No Name Mountain. Because foreseeable rock demand can be met by current quarries in Sitka, and the supply of hard aggregate in No Name Mountain is questionable, the costly development of a new rock quarry on the east side of No Name Mountain is not recommended. However, if rock demand in the distant future cannot be met by current quarries, then opening a new quarry on the east side of No Name Mountain could be reconsidered. The use of No Name Mountain for recreational tourism or passive recreation open space would not necessarily prohibit future quarrying.



Aerial cable car



Zipline



### Site Opportunities & Constraints

- + Proximate to expanding cruise ship terminal (short travel distance by shuttle or tram)
- + Beautiful, rugged terrain and forest
- + Western waterfront-facing & Eastern range-facing
- Steep slopes
- No roads or utilities

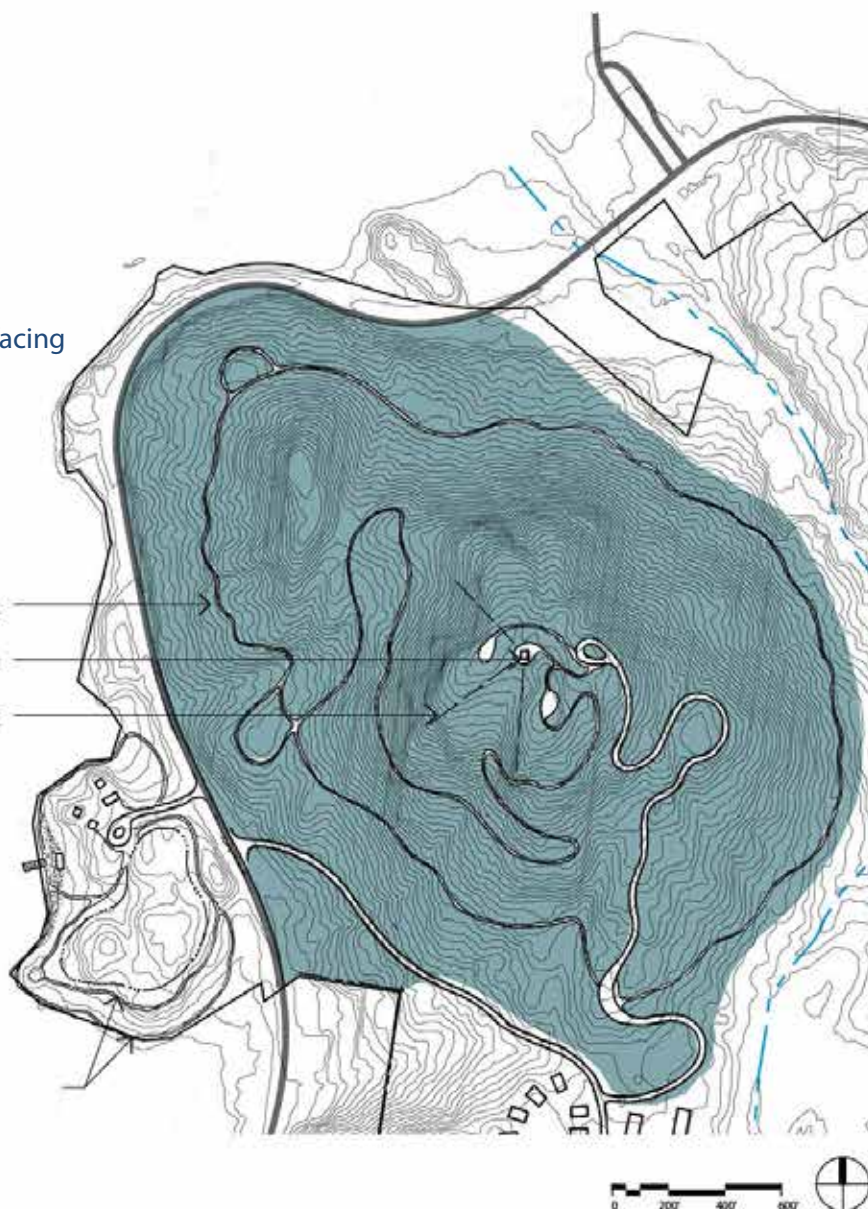
### Potential Activities

- *Mountain biking*
- *Zipline*
- *Nature trails*
- *Scenic overlook*
- *Tram to summit*



Key Plan

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS  
SHUTTLE DROP OFF/PICK UP  
ZIPLINE



**FIGURE 13—NO NAME MOUNTAIN: OPTION A**

Potential Land Use: Recreational Tourism

### Site Opportunities & Constraints

- + Proximate to expanding cruise ship terminal
- + Beautiful, rugged terrain and forest
- + Western waterfront-facing & Eastern range-facing
- + Views of undisturbed land from water
- Steep, unbuildable slopes
- Site interior lacks utility access



Key Plan



**FIGURE 14—NO NAME MOUNTAIN: OPTION B**

Potential Land Use: Recreation & Open Space

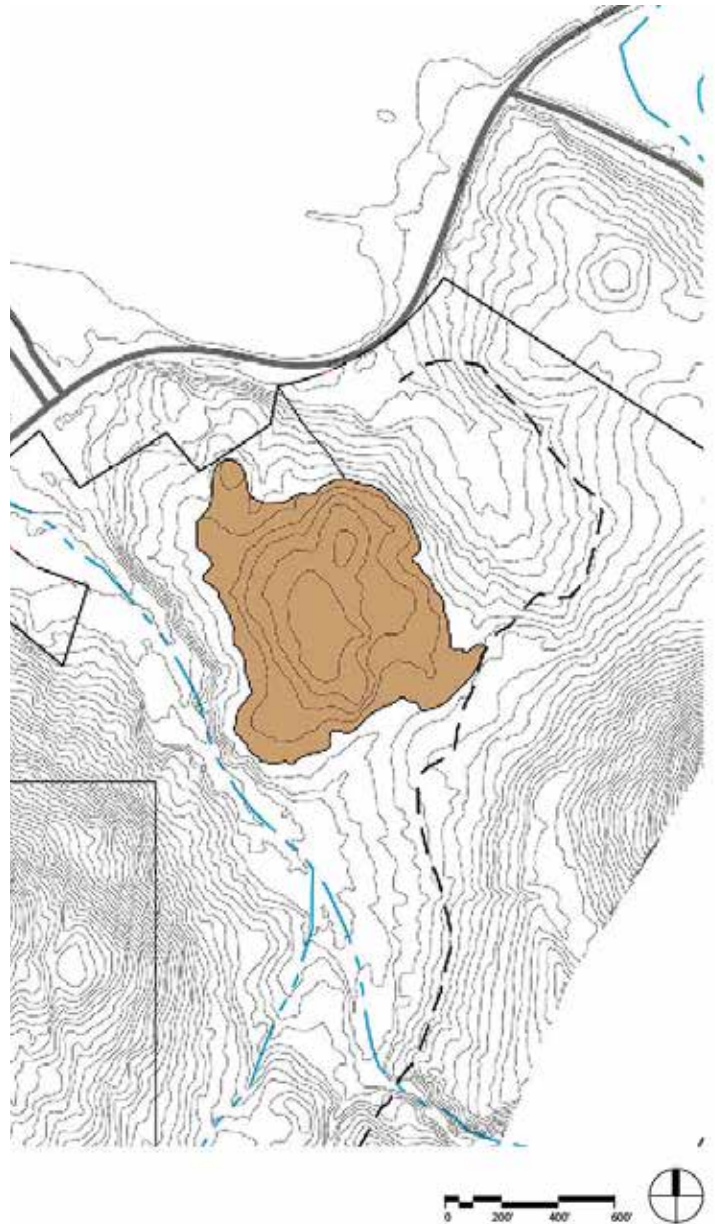


## No Name Creek Terrace

No Name Creek Terrace is a moderately sloping, slightly elevated land area north of No Name Mountain and just a little south and east Halibut Point Road. Because of its lower elevation, moderate terrain, and proximity to Halibut Point Road and water line, the Creek Terrace may be less costly to access and develop for housing than Sound View Ridge discussed below. However, the Creek Terrace is occupied by wetlands for which development impacts would have to be mitigated. Also, residential development here may require individual septic systems, which could be problematic near wetlands. Finally, the area could be in the shadow of No Name Mountain during a few weeks in winter, and the location is somewhat distant from town and services.



Key Plan



### Site Opportunities & Constraints

- + Moderate slopes
- + Proximate to Halibut Point Road & Cross Trail Phase 6 Trailhead
- + Proximate to existing water line, with extensions
- Costly to extend sewer service
- May require new electrical sub-station
- Distant from town and services

**FIGURE 15—NO NAME CREEK TERRACE**

Potential Land Use: Residential



### Sound View Ridge

Sound View Ridge occupies the broad north-south ridge between No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain. Lower than the adjoining high knolls, Sound View Ridge contains moderately sloping, irregular terrain and forested wetlands with pockets of muskeg. As its name implies, portions of Sound View Ridge offer sweeping westward views of Sitka Sound. Moderately sloping terrain across higher ground, limited muskeg wetlands, and great views make Sound View Ridge marginally more suitable for housing development than many other parts of the study area. Housing development on the ridge was suggested in a previous study that addressed the opening of a new rock quarry on the east side of No Name Mountain. Sound View Ridge could host mixed residential development consisting of single-family detached homes, apartments and condominiums (Figure 16).

However, road access and utility service for residential development on Sound View Ridge could prove costly. An access road from Halibut Point Road to the ridge would have to climb about 200 feet in elevation across steep terrain. An access road from the Granite Creek Industrial Area up to the ridge may be a less expensive alternative. The high cost of extending conventional City water and sewer utilities to residential development on Sound View Ridge could justify alternative utility systems, such as a package sewage treatment plant or individual septic systems for sewage, and individual holding tanks filled by water trucks or higher elevation community water tanks. Finally, development impacts to the forested wetlands on the ridge will require mitigation, perhaps accomplished by putting lower elevation muskeg wetlands and associated creeks into permanent conservation easements.

Due to potentially high development costs, Sound View Ridge may not provide much if any affordable housing. Also, at the present time there may be other more suitable locations in Sitka for new residential development. However, Sound View Ridge could accommodate future demand in the local housing market for higher-priced view properties and perhaps some moderately-priced apartments or condominiums.



### Site Opportunities & Constraints

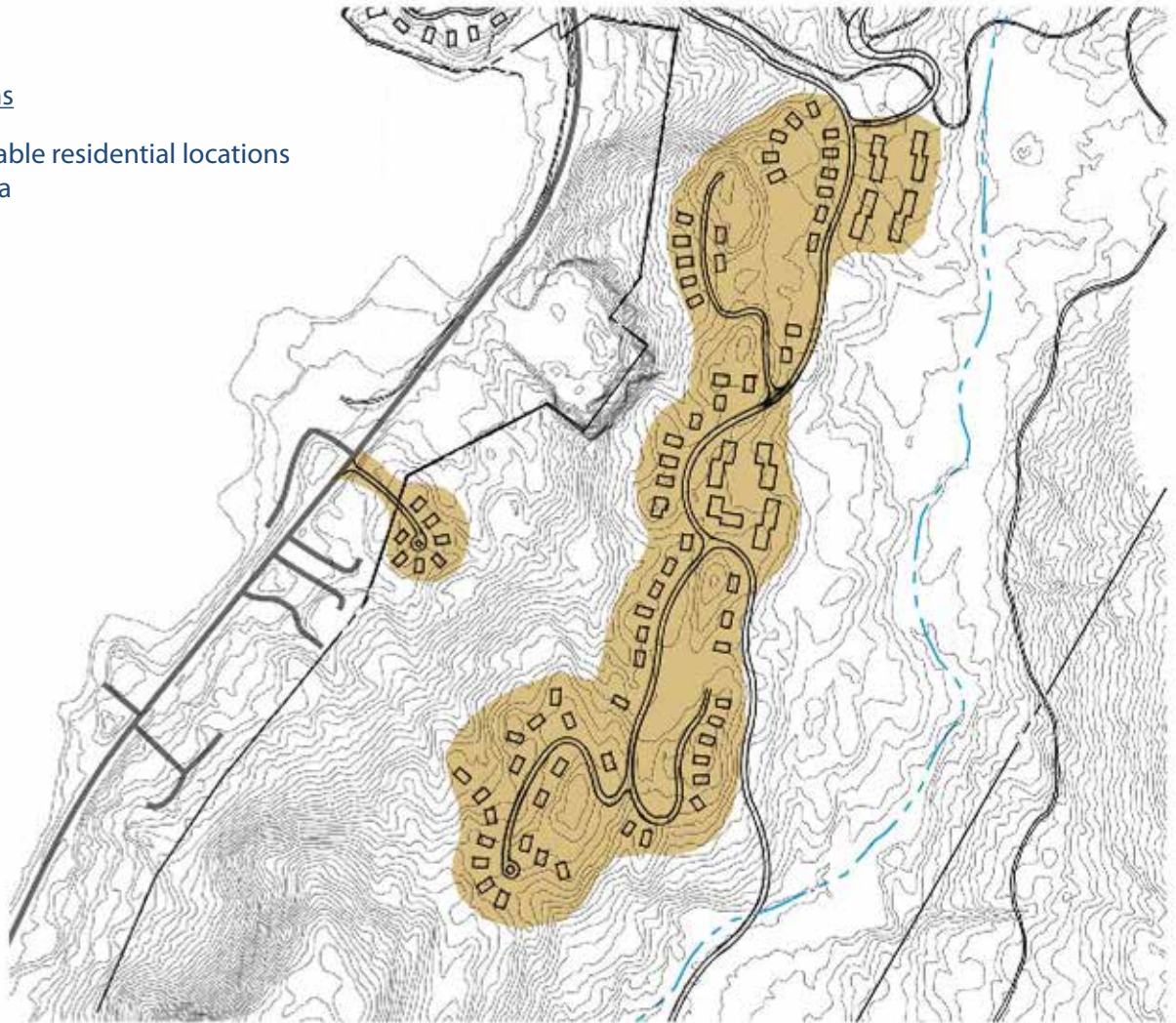
- + Undulating topography, moderate slopes
- + Higher elevation with views to Sitka Sound
- + Less wetland areas than other parts of study area
- Not proximate to existing utilities (water, sewer, electrical); high cost to bring utilities to site
- Not proximate to existing road infrastructure
- Distant from town and services



Key Plan

### Other Considerations

- Other more suitable residential locations may exist in Sitka



**FIGURE 16—SOUND VIEW RIDGE**

Potential Land Use: Mixed Residential (Single family detached homes, apartments, and/or condominiums)



## Muskeg Wetlands

As mentioned in the Site Analysis, over half of the study area is occupied by various types of wetlands, including large muskegs which occur on flatter, low-lying site areas directly east of and below No Name Mountain and Sound View Ridge. A salmon-bearing tributary of Granite Creek flows southward through the muskegs. Due to their deep, saturated organic soils or peat, it is difficult to construct roads and structures in muskegs, and development impacts to muskeg wetlands are expensive to permit and mitigate. Therefore, it is suggested the muskegs and adjoining open hemlock wetlands be used for recreation and open space, and possibly set aside in a permanent conservation easement as mitigation for development impacts to wetlands elsewhere in the study area. The muskeg zone will also serve as a scenic natural buffer for the Cross Trail that travels through here.



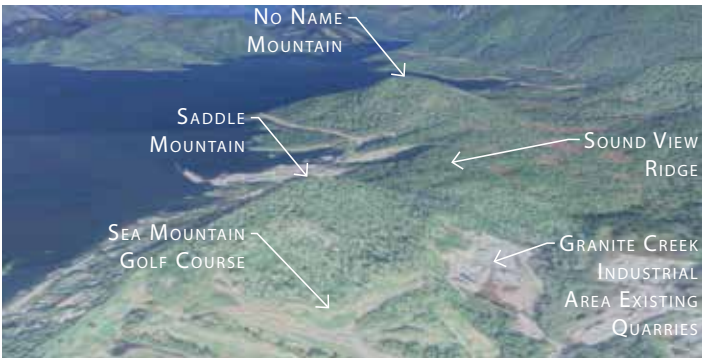
**FIGURE 17—MUSKEG WETLANDS**

Potential Land Use: Passive Recreation, Wetlands Banking, Open Space



Saddle Mountain (West Side)

The west side of Saddle Mountain and Sound View Ridge is made up of extremely steep forested terrain. It would be very expensive as well as inadvisable to develop and build in this steep rugged landscape. This area would be best suited for open space and passive recreation such as for trails and subsistence gathering. Additionally, these suggested uses would allow the waterfront-facing slopes to maintain their beautiful, natural visual character to visitors arriving by boat.



View of Study Area Facing North

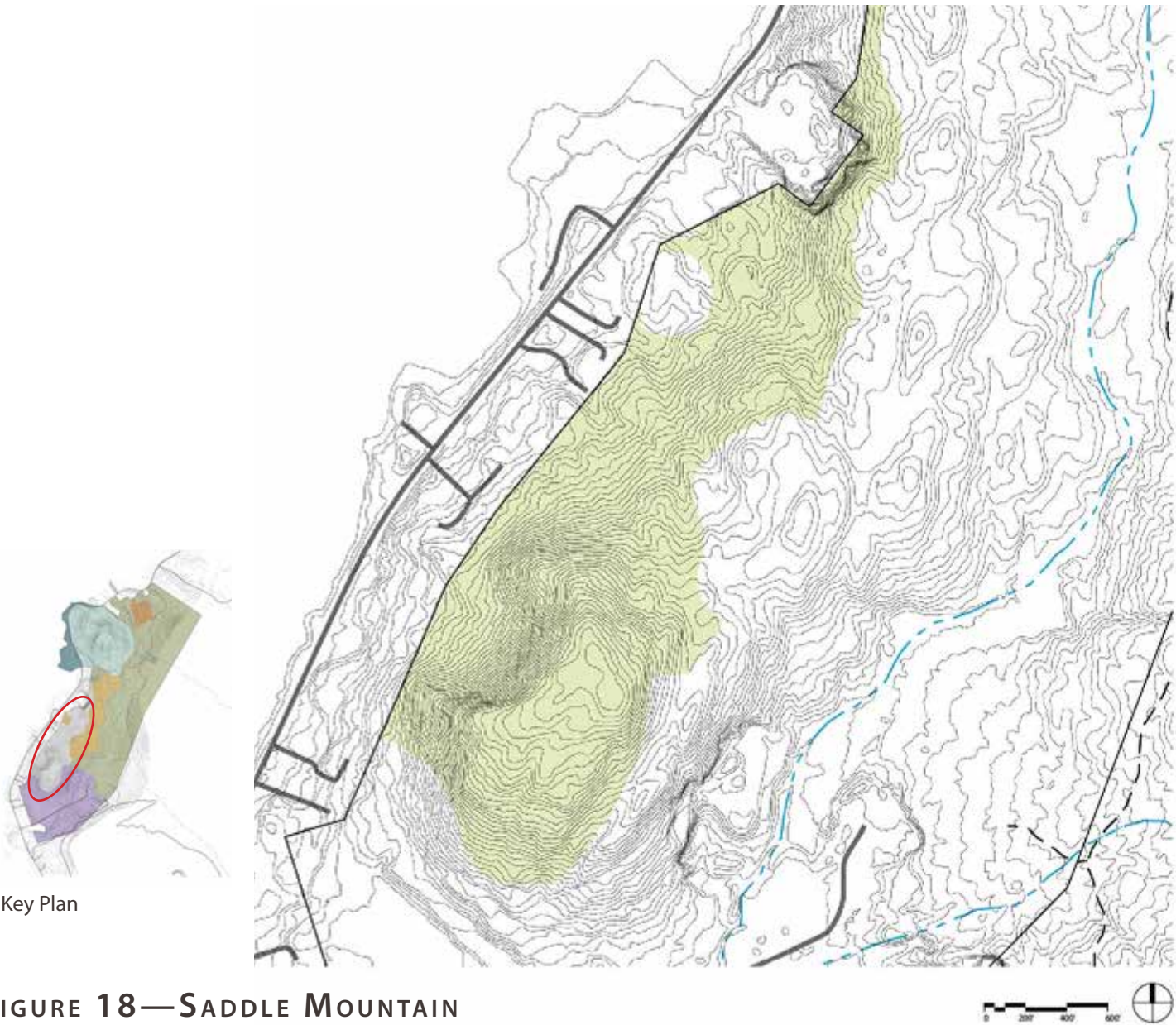


FIGURE 18—SADDLE MOUNTAIN  
Potential Land Use: Passive Recreation & Open Space

### Granite Creek Industrial Area

With direct access off Halibut Point Road, the Granite Creek Industrial Area at the south end of the study area is already occupied by commercial and industrial land uses. Increased industrial and commercial activity is appropriate here. Rock quarrying can continue and expand into Saddle Mountain to meet Sitka's foreseeable rock demand. Exhausted quarry sites nearby will provide a convenient location to deposit overburden from expanded quarry operations. The flat floors of other exhausted quarry sites here can be leased for fleet storage and other light industrial or commercial uses.

The existing nine-hole Sea Mountain Golf Course could conceivably grow to eighteen holes up the south slopes of Saddle Mountain. The area between Granite Creek Road and Harbor Mountain Road at the south-most part of the site could also be developed for commercial, light industrial, or residential uses. However, development near or along Granite Creek, which flows through this southern-most area, will need to address potential impacts to wetlands and the salmon-bearing creek. Existing water and sewer infrastructure at the Granite Creek area will have to be improved and expanded with increased development.



*Sea Mountain Golf Course*



*Granite Creek quarry*

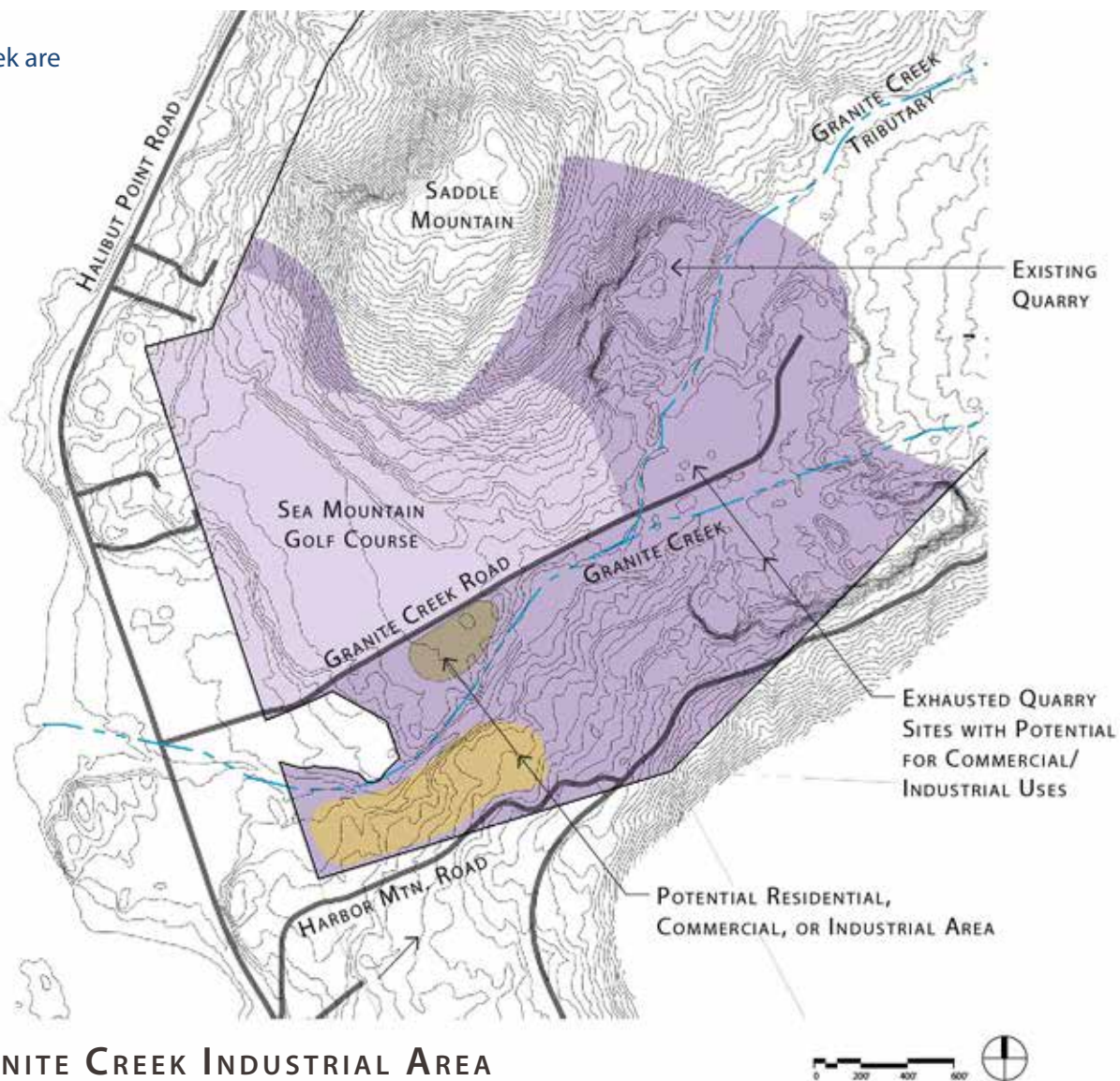


Site Opportunities & Constraints

- + Existing quarry & commercial activity
- + Adequate rock source for foreseeable future
- + Overburden area is proximate to quarry (minimizes trucking)
- + Area largely out of view from visitors arriving by ship
- + Existing golf course; could expand to 18-hole course
- + Ample flat land (former quarry)
- + Close to Halibut Pt. Road; existing access via Granite Creek Road
- Wetlands & Granite Creek are critical areas



Key Plan

**FIGURE 19—GRANITE CREEK INDUSTRIAL AREA**

Potential Land Use: Rock Quarry, Storage, Light Industrial/Commercial, Expanded Golf Course, Residential

### Land Use Schemes for Entire Site

Three alternative land use schemes were considered for the entire study area. These schemes explore different combinations of the land use options discussed above for the seven separate areas or zones. The three schemes for the overall site and the land use options for individual areas were vetted with the community via the project website discussed in the next section. The following three land use schemes A – C offer ideas on how the entire site could be developed by merging or bringing together the suggested land uses for the seven individual site areas discussed above.

#### Scheme A

Per Scheme A (Figure 20), intensive site development would be confined to the Granite Creek Industrial Area where commercial and industrial activity would continue and increase with expanded quarrying, fleet storage, and other light industry and commercial development. The Harbor Point and No Name Mountain zones would be developed to accommodate outdoor recreational tourism activities for cruise ship visitors and others. However, housing and other land uses in the study area would be limited to perhaps only small residential areas near Halibut Point Road. Financial return on the site would be obtained through land leased for recreational tourism and for continued and expanded commercial, industrial and quarrying activity at Granite Creek. Basically, Scheme A suggests most of the study area would remain undeveloped and used for open space and recreation.

#### Scheme B

Scheme B (Figure 21) suggests that areas deemed suitable for residential use – Harbor Point, Sound View Ridge, No Name Creek Terrace, and a small area at Granite Creek – all be developed for housing. Per this scheme, the light industrial, commercial, and quarrying activity at the Granite Creek Industrial Area would continue and expand. This scheme does not propose any recreational tourism development on the site; however, large areas of the site would remain for open space, passive recreation, and wetland banking. Financial return on the site would be obtained through continued and expanded industrial/commercial activity at Granite Creek, and through the sale of residential properties. However, high development costs and weak demand for housing could sharply diminish residential development and financial return on the site.

#### Scheme C

Scheme C (Figure 22) suggests a balanced combination of land uses for the study area. As with schemes A and B, the commercial, industrial, and quarrying activity at Granite Creek would continue and expand. Scheme C proposes Harbor Point and No Name Mountain be leased from the City for recreational tourism activities and uses. If the local demand for housing increases, and if development costs can be kept reasonable, then housing could be developed on Sound View Ridge and possibly at No Name Creek Terrace. Housing could also be developed in the distant future on Harbor Point since this area initially could be leased from the City for recreational tourism. The Muskeg Wetlands and Saddle Mountain areas would remain for open space, passive recreation, and wetlands banking as is shown with Schemes A and B. Financial return on the site would be generated by leasing land for recreational tourism and for ongoing and increased quarrying and industrial/commercial activity at the Granite Creek Industrial Area. The development and sale of residential property on Sound View Ridge might offer a future return.





- Keeps and expands industrial/commercial uses at Granite Creek area
- Maximizes recreational tourism land use
- Allows for minimal, dispersed residential land use
- Provides generous areas for open space, passive recreation Cross Trail buffering
- Provides large wetland banking areas

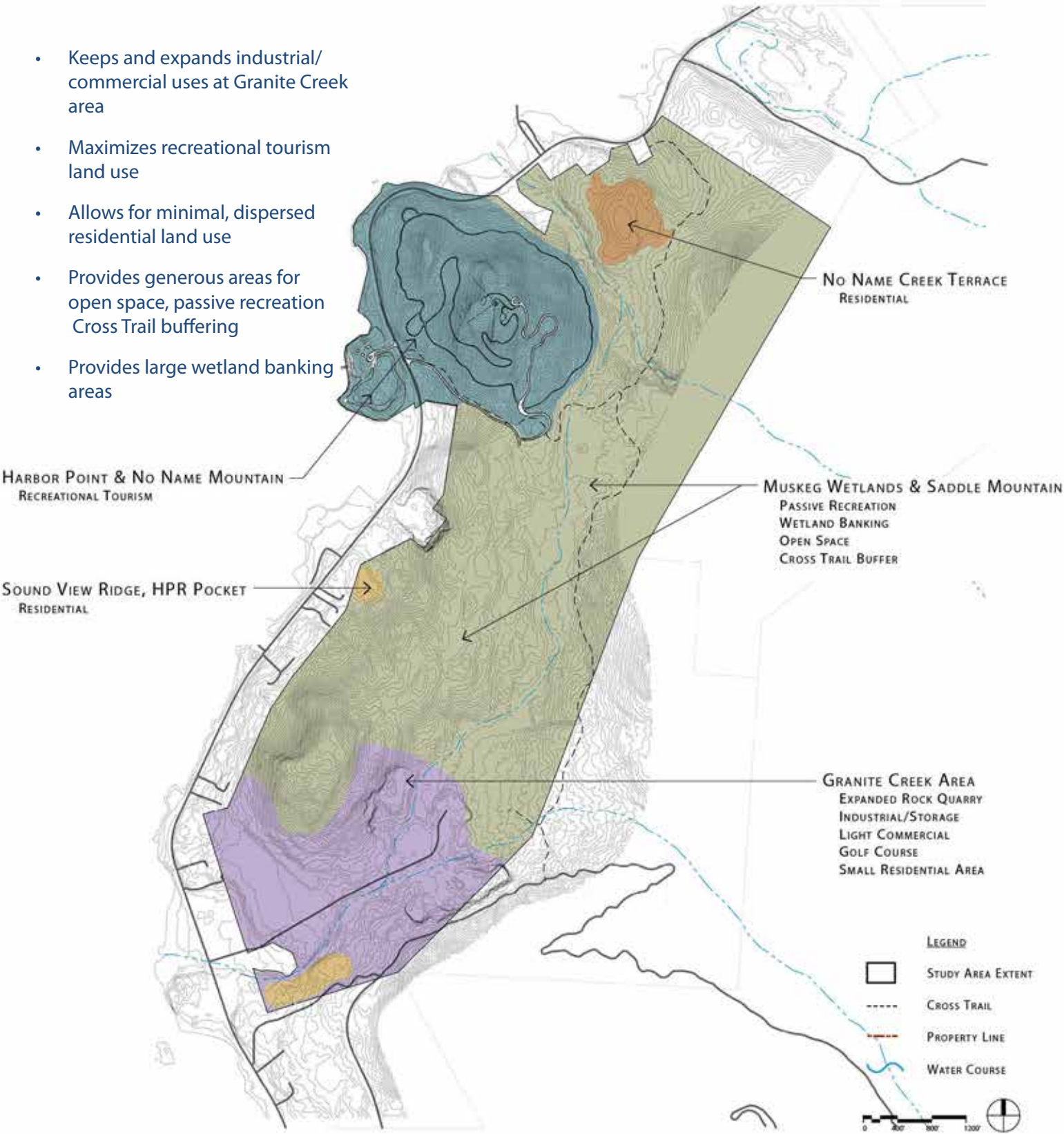


FIGURE 20—LAND USE SUITABILITY: SCHEME A

## 4 | ALTERNATIVE LAND USE SCHEMES

- Keeps and expands industrial/commercial uses at Granite Creek area
- Provides for no recreational tourism land use
- Maximizes residential development
- Provides areas for open space, passive recreation, wetland banking and Cross Trail buffering

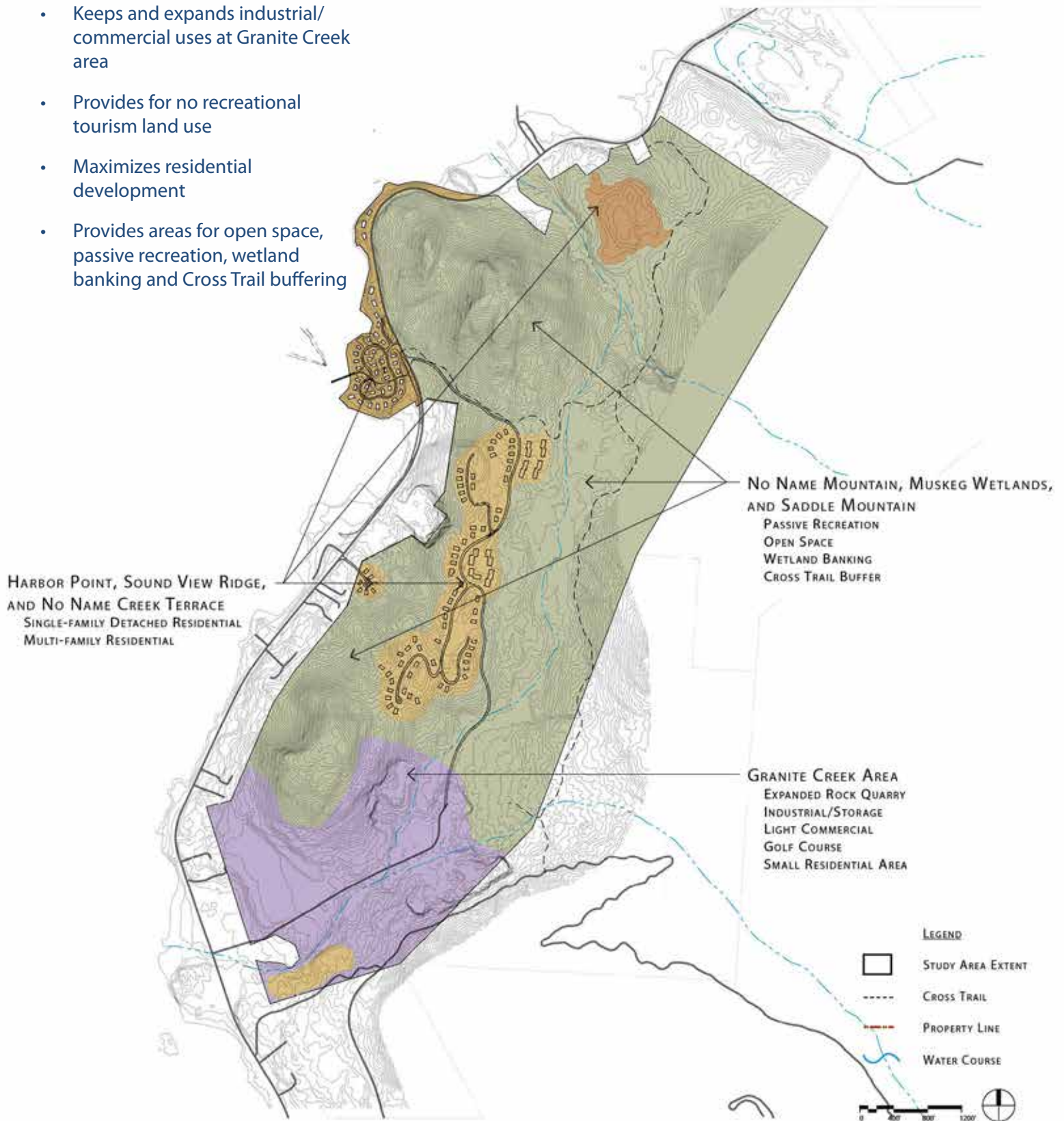


FIGURE 21—LAND USE SUITABILITY: SCHEME B



- Keeps and expands industrial/commercial uses at Granite Creek area
- Maximizes recreational tourism land use
- Maintains some residential land use
- Provides areas for open space, passive recreation, wetland banking & Cross Trail buffering

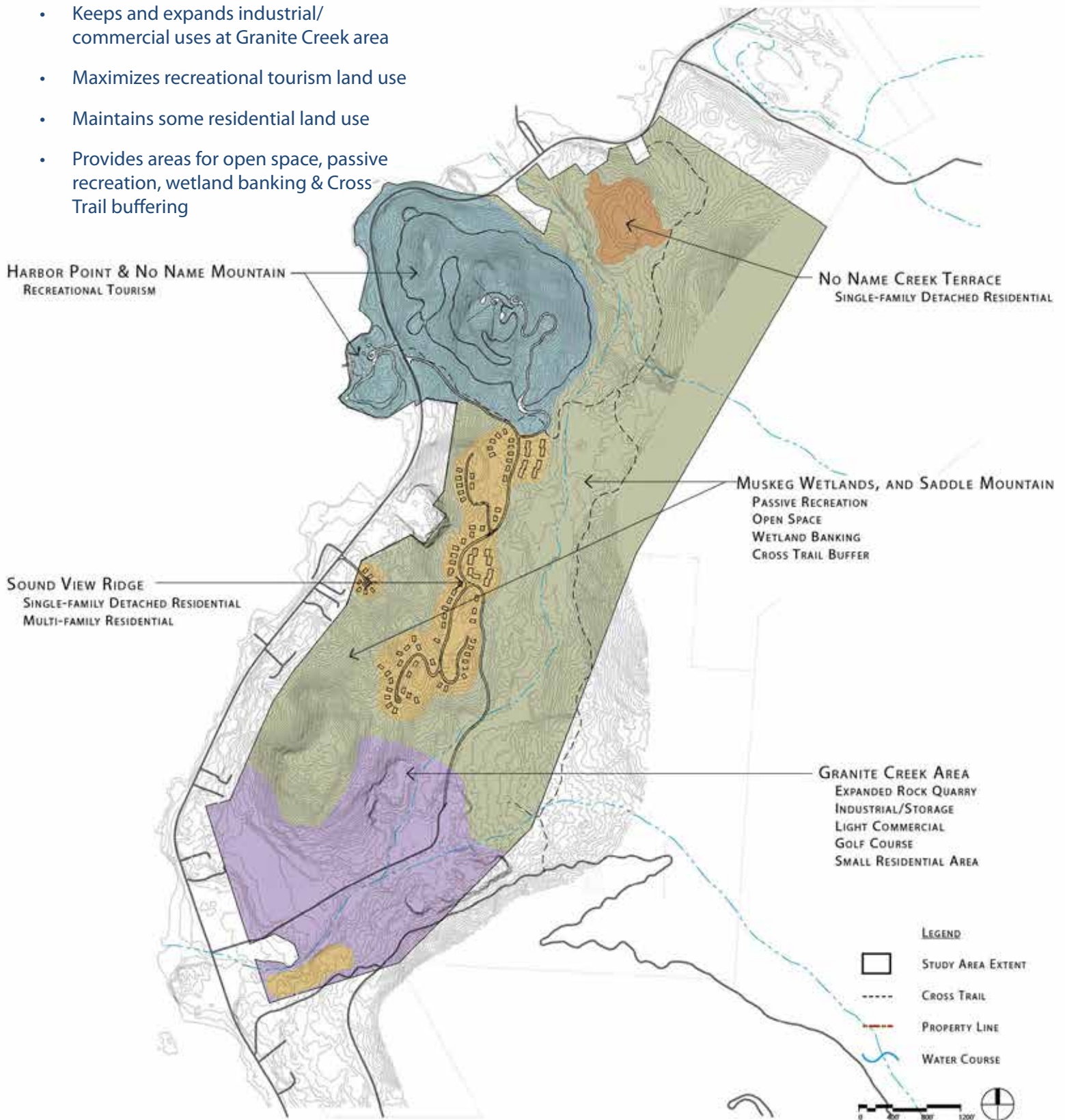


FIGURE 22—LAND USE SUITABILITY: SCHEME C

## Project Website and Public Opinion Survey about Alternatives

This planning study began with the intention of directly engaging Sitka residents in discussions about their ideas and concerns for developing the study area. However, because of restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the originally planned public meetings and workshops could not be conducted. Instead, a project website was used to involve residents in decisions about land use and development on the study area site. The website remained active from April 29 through May 17, 2020. A link to the project website was provided on the City's website, and public notifications and announcements about the project website were provided through local public radio, the local newspaper, the City's Facebook account, direct emails to various Sitka residents, and buffer mailings to 200 addresses adjacent to the study area.

The website hosted a narrated video presentation discussing the site analysis and market analysis findings and the alternative land use schemes contained in this report. This video presentation provided information for the public to participate in an online survey, where viewers could register their preferences and opinions about the alternative land use schemes as well as on other land use issues and considerations. Eighty-eight Sitka residents viewed the website video and took the survey. The survey results are contained in the appendix and summarized as follows:

- A majority of respondents feel wetlands, particularly the low-lying muskegs on the east side of the study area, should be maintained for open space, passive recreation, cross trail buffer, and wetland banking.
- A substantial majority (59%) of respondents feel there is currently adequate supply of quarry rock in Sitka, and 47% indicated existing quarry sites should be expanded at the Granite Creek Industrial Area to meet demand. Some indicated that either new quarry sites should be opened in the study area, and/or that leasing agreements at current/expanding quarry sites should be modified to increase competition and reduce rock costs.
- Most respondents believe there is high demand for single family homes and multi-family apartments in Sitka.
- Only 25% of respondents support housing being developed on Harbor Point, while much of the remainder are either opposed (45%) or neutral (16%) about residential use of Harbor Point.
- A slight majority (51%) are supportive of housing development on Sound View Ridge.
- In light of the high cost of providing conventional (water and sewer) utilities, respondents are generally favorable to alternative utility systems for new housing development.
- A slight majority (51%) would support allowing land in the study area to be leased for recreational tourism.
- Just under 46% of respondents are in support of Harbor Point being used for recreational tourism.
- Respondents are almost evenly split on using No Name Mountain for recreational tourism (46%) or for open space and passive recreation (44%).
- A slight majority (51%) feel No Name Creek Terrace should be used for open space and passive recreation versus those who prefer residential development (44%) for this area.
- A majority (55%) favor mixed residential development (single-family houses and multi-family apartments and condominiums) on Sound View Ridge, while 41% feel the area should be used for open space and passive recreation.
- Respondents favor continued use of the Granite Creek Industrial Area for quarrying, light commercial and industrial/storage uses.
- A vast majority (85%) feel the steep west side Saddle Mountain should be kept as open space for passive recreation.
- Of the three overall land use schemes presented in the preceding section of this chapter, 35% favor scheme C, 27% prefer Scheme A, and 19% favor Scheme B.





Citizens' comments provided with the opinion survey covered a wide range of topics and suggestions. Several survey respondents commented on the issue of using portions of the study area for recreational tourism by cruise ship visitors. Respondents indicated that recreational activities and facilities should also be made available to locals and independent (non-cruise ship) visitors and travelers, and that recreational opportunities should be broader in scope, perhaps including year-round, winter-time activities, outdoor education, and cabins or camping. Some felt recreational activities in the study area for cruise ship visitors would take business away from downtown merchants, as well as be detrimental to other attractions in and near the downtown area. Others pointed out that catering to cruise ship visitors provides only seasonal jobs and financially rewards a select few, while some felt tourism boosts Sitka's economy and renown for the benefit of all.

The need for *affordable* housing in Sitka was reinforced by survey respondents' comments. Many felt that housing for lower-income individuals and families should be a priority, and if affordable housing cannot be developed in the study area, then it should be built someplace else where development costs will not put housing out of the price range of lower to middle income residents. Some indicated high-end housing on the waterfront parcel should be ruled out for various reasons. Other suggestions included providing senior housing in the study area, and using off-grid, sustainable utility systems to mitigate development costs.

Based on comments, there seemed to be consensus that the cost of quarry rock for construction projects is far too expensive in Sitka. Reasons provided for the high costs ranged from insufficient quarries and inadequate supply to a lack of competition among the few current rock suppliers in Sitka and a flawed leasing system at the City's Granite Creek quarries.

As supported by comments, survey respondents generally felt sensitive natural areas in the study area, such as wetlands, shorelines, and steep forested lands, should be kept in open space and used for recreation and nature enjoyment. However, a couple of folks indicated natural areas and nature are abundant around Sitka, and the *entire* study area should be developed, if possible, for maximum economic gain.







## 5 | LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overview

Information in the preceding chapters provide the basis for land use and development recommendations in this chapter. Generally, the land uses and types of development proposed for the study area site rest upon a foundation of the site's existing conditions, Sitka's economic and market conditions, consideration of potential alternative land uses, the local community's ideas and preferences, and finally the consultant team's professional judgment about what makes sense for development in the study area.

The consultant team's estimation of what is appropriate for the study area partly comes from the team's familiarity with land use policy and planning and with development practices and standards elsewhere. Traditional land use planning and zoning mandate that same or similar types of development be contained within designated geographical areas; for example, houses and apartments are to be built in areas designated "Residential", while factories and manufacturing plants are to be allowed only in areas zoned as "Industrial". This segregation or compartmentalization of different types of development helps to avoid issues that arise when dissimilar or incompatible land uses and activities occur in close proximity to one another, such as a foundry in the midst of a residential area. Traditional land use zoning also yields efficiencies in transportation and utility infrastructure and delivery of services.

Contemporary approaches to land planning emphasize denser, more concentrated development patterns than the sprawl-type development that sometimes results from traditional planning and zoning. Referred to as

smart growth, cluster development, new urbanism, transect-based planning, form-based code and other terms, the higher-density approach allows for a mixing of certain compatible land uses that may be discouraged by traditional planning and zoning. The value of higher densities coupled with mixing of compatible development types is found in more efficient land use, reduced costs for utility and road infrastructure, creation of a "walkable" environment, conservation of natural resources and farmland, and other benefits.

Importantly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach or system to land use and development for a specific site or an entire municipal jurisdiction. Every community and place are different, with different geographical, socio-economic, and environmental conditions that warrant unique, place-specific land use development plans, comprehensive plans, or zoning code and development standards. While examples of what has been done and practiced elsewhere are useful and valuable, often the more successful land use plans or comprehensive plans are those that are adapted to or spring from particular aspects of Place.

The recommendations for land use and development in this study borrow from both traditional and contemporary land use and planning practices; however, the recommendations are also tailored to the study area's site conditions, Sitka's economic conditions and needs, and the local community's ideas and preferences. Per the recommendations in this chapter, future development and land use in the study area are intended to have their own unique place-based character and qualities.

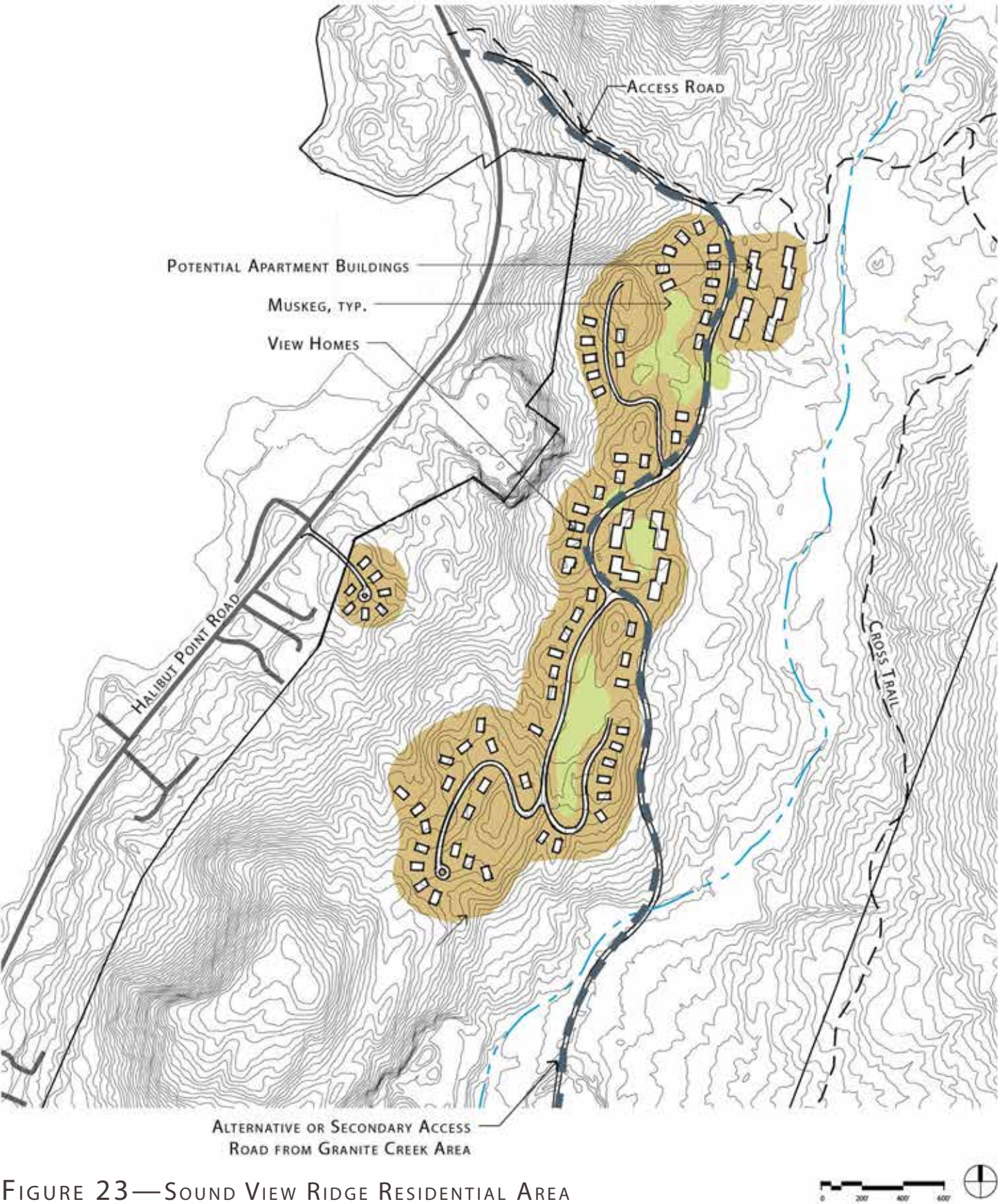


FIGURE 23—SOUND VIEW RIDGE RESIDENTIAL AREA





## Residential Areas

As discussed in Chapter 4, much of the study area site poses challenges to building development due to steeply sloping, higher elevation terrain and extensive wetlands. However, certain areas may be marginally suited to housing development as described below.

### Sound View Ridge

The broad north-south ridge between No Name Mountain and Saddle Mountain within the study area was named Sound View Ridge during the preparation of this master plan. Moderately sloping terrain across higher ground, fewer muskegs, relatively shallower organic soils, and sweeping views make Sound View Ridge conditionally better suited to residential development than many other areas within the study area. Single-family detached homes, apartments, and/or condominiums could potentially be developed on the ridge.

Per Figure 23, road access and utility service to Sound View Ridge could be brought in from Halibut Point Road via an access road that would climb about 200

feet in elevation across steep terrain. An alternative or secondary access road from the Granite Creek Industrial Area may also be possible. Underground water and sewer lines to the ridge could be routed along either road. However, constructing an access road and conventional water and sewer utilities to and along the ridge will be costly. Alternative water and wastewater systems could reduce construction costs for utilities, but construction costs for roads, drives, house foundations, etc. will invariably be higher due to organic soils and other site conditions that are typically encountered on development sites in and around Sitka. Permitting and mitigation required to address development impacts to wetlands on Sound View Ridge will also add cost.

Sound View Ridge may not supply much if any affordable housing due to higher development costs. There may also be other more suitable locations in Sitka for new residential development. However, future demand in the local housing market could make Sound View Ridge attractive for higher-priced view homes and perhaps moderately-priced apartments and condominiums.



### Harbor Point

During the preparation of this master plan, the 17-acre parcel along the waterfront side of Halibut Point Road within the study area was named Harbor Point according to the area's designation on marine charts. Harbor Point has shoreline frontage on its south, west, and north sides, and it fronts Halibut Point Road (HPR) on its east side. The site's terrain is rough and irregular, but it does not contain any mapped wetlands or steep slopes other than rocky drop-offs at the shoreline. Mature forest covers much of the site, with views of the water obscured by vegetation nearly up to the shoreline. The site is bordered by a water main in HPR, and the City's sanitary sewer line in HPR ends just south of the site at Cove Marina.

Harbor Point's waterfront setting, lower elevation, proximity Halibut Point Road and utilities, lack of wetlands, and views of Sitka Sound all contribute to potential residential development of this waterfront parcel. High-end view-homes could be built on larger lots along and near the shoreline, while perhaps more affordable smaller homes on smaller lots, condominiums, or apartments could be developed on the property's interior and close to Halibut Point Road. Community trails and paths would allow all Harbor Point residents to access the beach, and potentially connect to the Cross Trail on the east side of HPR. City revenues would be increased through outright property sale and on-going residential property taxes, and new home building would bolster the local construction industry and jobs. However, costs to develop this property will be moderately high, and local demand for high-end waterfront homes may fluctuate.

### No Name Creek Terrace

The area referred to as No Name Creek Terrace is located on slightly elevated land just north of No Name Creek and No Name Mountain, and just south and east of Halibut Point Road. Because of its lower elevation, moderately sloping terrain, and proximity to Halibut Point Road and water line, the Terrace may be less costly to access and develop for housing than Sound View Ridge. However, development impacts to wetlands over the entire Terrace area will require mitigation, and, due to the lack of a sewer line in the area, homes here may require individual septic systems which could be problematic near wetlands. Finally, the area may be partly in the shadow of No Name Mountain during a few weeks in winter, and the location is somewhat distant from town and services.



*Harbor Point beach area*



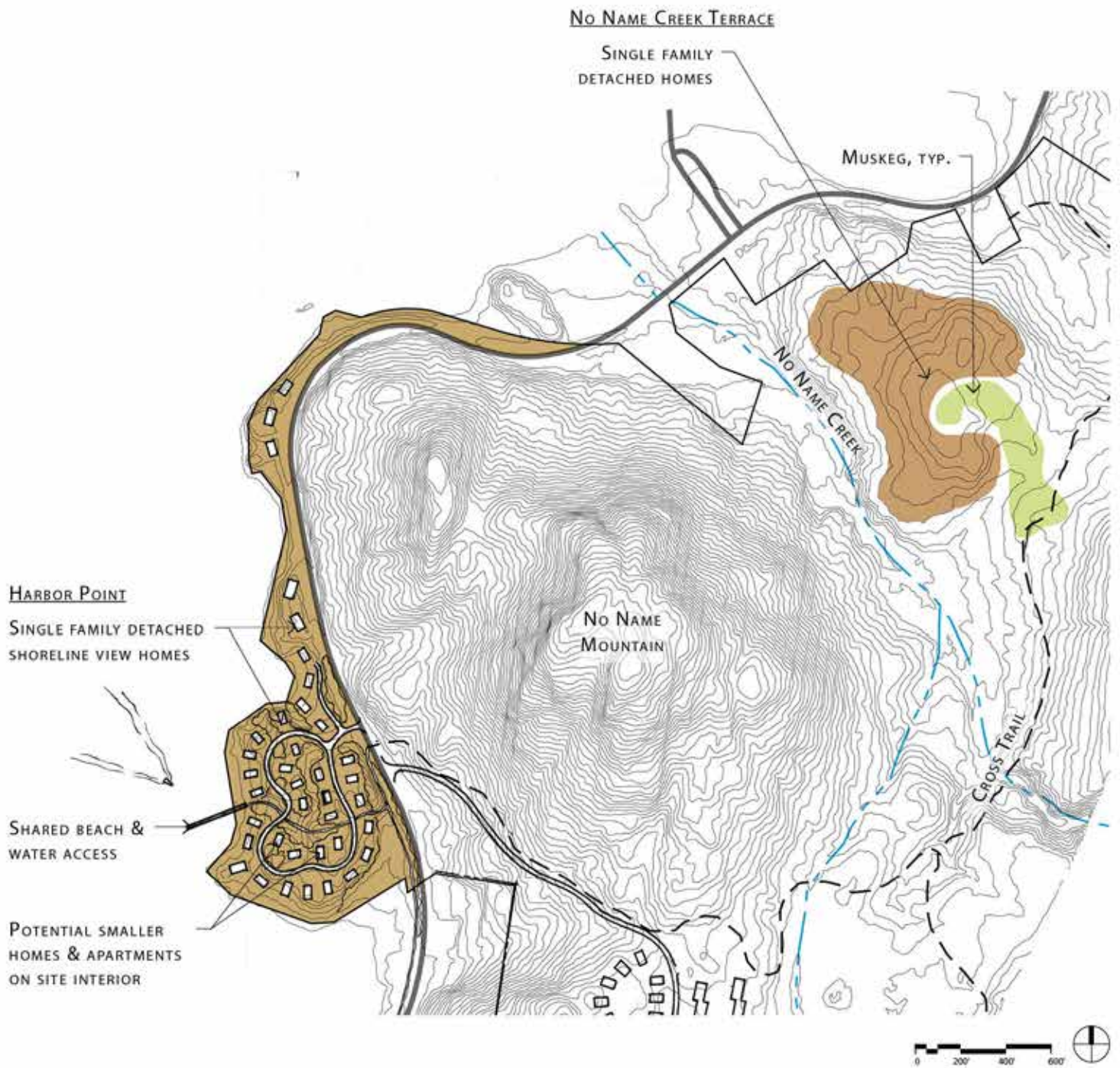


FIGURE 24—HARBOR POINT & NO NAME CREEK TERRACE RESIDENTIAL AREAS

## Granite Creek Area

Sitka's 2030 Comprehensive Plan calls for residential development to be developed or infilled at the south end of the study area on property bordered by Halibut Point Road, Granite Creek Road and Old Harbor Mountain Road. Portions of this area outside of the study area are already occupied by residential development between Halibut Point Road and the study area's west boundary. Within the study area, there are perhaps small areas north and south of Granite Creek that could accommodate residential development. These areas are close to water and sewer utilities, and they are accessible from either Granite Creek Road or Harbor Mountain Road. However, these areas are occupied by wetlands, and a 60-foot building setback along Granite Creek will further limit developable area. In addition, much of the buildable area between Granite Creek Road and Granite Creek is currently occupied by the local electric utility, who may need on-going use of the area. However, a small, moderately sloping area between Granite Creek and Harbor Mountain Road may be suited to the development of a few new homes and apartment buildings.

As discussed in the section on the Granite Creek Industrial Area, the Sea Mountain Golf Course offers site conditions that are more suitable to residential (and commercial) development than most other locations in the study area.



## Reducing Residential Development Costs

As mentioned, challenging site conditions throughout the study area will complicate the construction of roads, utilities, building foundations and other structures, thereby increasing development costs. High development costs will limit the ability to develop affordable housing within the study area. However, various strategies ranging from the utilization of alternative utility and building systems to financing options could be explored to reduce development and home ownership costs, perhaps putting some housing in the study area within reach of median- to low-income residents. Some of the following approaches may be appealing to younger, modest-income individuals and families who would like to remain in Sitka, and appealing to older fixed-income residents inclined to age in place:

### Financing Strategies

The City and Borough of Sitka may want to consider pursuing the following programs and strategies to finance utility and road infrastructure for potential residential development in the study area:

- USDA Rural Development offers programs and services to promote economic development and improve quality of life in rural communities. Namely, the USDA's Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program makes available low-interest loans or provides outright grants to qualifying local governments, non-profits, and tribes to extend and improve water and sanitary sewer utilities to homes and businesses. Similarly, the Electric Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee Program makes insured loans or loan guarantees to public agencies and other qualifying entities to finance construction of or improvements to electric distribution and transmission systems, including off-grid renewable energy systems.
- Tax Incentive Funding (TIF) is a mechanism that gives local jurisdictions (through state laws) the ability to partially fund site development or redevelopment, including infrastructure improvements, on the basis of future increases in property taxes resulting from said development and improvements. Variations in the TIF model allow jurisdictions to modify and adapt the financing structure to a particular situation or project.



### Alternative Utility Systems

Bringing conventional buried water, sewer and electrical utilities to residential areas within the study area will be costly. As mentioned in Chapter 1, alternative utility systems could reduce construction and operation costs for utilities.

- **Wastewater disposal:** Individual, on-site septic systems or a community package sewage treatment plant could prove less expensive to build and operate than providing underground sewer lines (with lift stations and force-mains) to distant and dispersed residential areas. Other innovative approaches to sewage disposal and treatment such as individual composting toilets with grey-water recycling or on-site release have been permitted in some jurisdictions.
- **Potable water supply:** Constructing long-distance underground water mains to residential development on Sound View Ridge, coupled with likely pump stations or elevated water tanks to provide adequate water pressure, will be expensive. Less costly alternatives to supply water may include individual water tanks or cisterns supplied by roof or ground surface run-off or by water trucks. Although not necessarily cheap, individual water purification systems can convert residential gray water (from laundry, bathing, washing) into potable water, creating a nearly closed, water recycling system.
- **Electrical supply:** According to knowledgeable sources, solar-powered battery banks can supplement a home's electrical needs, but these systems are inadequate in supplying a typical home's entire electrical needs due to Southeast Alaska's cloudy weather and shorter periods of winter daylight. Conventional buried or overhead electrical service by the local utility provider will therefore be required to supply homes' electricity. In addition, a new electrical substation will be required at significant cost to supply electricity to any substantial new residential or commercial development in the study area. Although expensive, electrical infrastructure is typically less costly than conventional water and sewer mains, especially in rough terrain.

- **Total "off-grid":** There are myriad examples of comfortable, safe and healthy homes employing some combination of high-tech and low-tech alternative water, sewage, heat and power systems that enable self-sufficient, off-grid residences totally divorced from public utilities. For example, wood combustion is an ancient, low-tech, and efficient way to heat a home, and to even cook, while a combination of high-tech solar panels, wind or water-driven kinetic energy generators, and advanced battery storage systems can provide enough electricity to supply a few energy-efficient household devices even in areas where sunlight is scarce. Water supply and wastewater disposal can be as simple as taking water from the land and putting treated wastewater back into the land, or handled by a high-tech self-contained, closed-loop water treatment and recycling systems. Total "off-grid" residences could prove less costly than homes served by conventional utilities.



*Off-grid house*

### "Intentional Community" Development

Every community is intentionally created, but the term "intentional community" applies to a type of planned community where residents are united by a common set of beliefs, philosophies, living standards, lifestyles, or interests. The physical form and operation of intentional communities embody or support their residents' societal, environmental, spiritual, or economic values. As such, these communities may be characterized by self-sufficiency, shared resources and facilities, alternative building and utility systems, resource and energy conservation, unique ownership structure, and almost always a focus on economical development to keep housing costs low or affordable for residents. Intentional communities can be composed of single-family detached homes and multi-family attached units. Following are examples of intentional communities that might be applicable to residential development at Sound View Ridge, Harbor Point, or Granite Creek:

- **Co-housing community:** Made up of residences closely clustered around or integrated with shared spaces and facilities, such as a communal house and kitchen, gardens, and recreation areas. These communities are intended to foster social interaction and cooperation. Co-housing residents collaborate on child and elder care, community meals, maintenance, events, celebrations, and entertainment, and even business and income ventures. Clustered housing and shared facilities tend to reduce development costs.
- **Housing cooperative:** Typically, a legally incorporated entity that owns, manages, and perhaps develops a residential community property. Residents are considered fee-paying shareholders in the cooperative corporation, with each shareholder

granted a right to occupy a residence in the co-op. Cooperatives enable members or shareholders to pool their resources, thus increasing their buying power and lowering an individual member's costs for home ownership. Operated as non-profit entities, housing co-ops have been around for a long time, and the co-op ownership structure is often applied to various types of intentional communities.

- **Ecovillage:** Cohousing with a strong emphasis on environmental stewardship and sustainability. Ecovillage residents are united by lifestyle and habitation having the least adverse effect on the natural environment. Ecovillage housing employs "sustainable", sometimes lower-cost, construction and utility technologies. Anti-consumerist attitudes compel eco-villagers to make-do for themselves and their community, for everything from growing their own food (through permaculture) and constructing their own dwellings to producing their own energy. Ecovillages are world-wide, and their members network and collaborate on making the eco-lifestyle more mainstream.
- Other types of intentional communities include commune, kibbutz, monastery, and even some assisted-living communities where residents share a set of values and principles manifested by both individual dwellings and the community's overall physical form.



*Housing cooperative in Seattle, WA*



## Housing Type and Form

In developing an area for residential use, the type of housing will be an important consideration. Single-family detached homes, duplexes, multi-family attached apartments, attached condominiums and townhomes, mobile homes, tiny-houses, and assisted living centers are all housing types, each with their own spatial aspects, densities, ownership structure, and cost. Generally, costs for housing construction and occupancy decline with higher densities with smaller and closer units and improved efficiencies in land use, access, and utility infrastructure. Higher density housing types include apartments, condos, and townhomes. While certain housing types may be incompatible with each other, most can comfortably co-exist within close proximity or intermixed when elements of scale, massing, architectural style, and other issues are carefully considered. In the development of any of the potential residential locations in the study area, a mix of housing types should be considered to increase density and

reduce per unit development costs, perhaps putting some housing within reach of lower to middle income residents.

The siting, form and aesthetic quality of housing are also important considerations with economic implications. As discussed throughout this report, site conditions within the study area strongly influence where housing might be built. Within those residential areas, housing of any type should be integrated with existing site conditions to the greatest extent possible. Pockets of muskeg should be dodged, big trees or stands of trees should be preserved, streams and natural drainages should be kept intact, and other major terrain features should generally be respected, all with the goal of integrating housing with the intrinsic landscape rather than damaging or destroying it. Doing so will reduce construction costs and make residential areas and residences feel like they are an integral, harmonious part of the land. Attractive dwellings in natural settings will also command higher property values.



*Ecovillage with multi-family attached units, Ithaca, NY*



## Granite Creek Industrial Area

The Granite Creek Industrial Area at the south end of the study area currently hosts commercial and industrial activity. Granite Creek Road provides convenient access from Halibut Point Road, and water and sewer lines in Granite Creek Road serve the area. The Granite Creek Industrial Area is occupied by active and exhausted rock quarries, storage areas for construction materials and equipment, a solid waste disposal site, and a nine-hole golf course across the south base of Saddle Mountain. Granite Creek, a salmon-bearing creek, meanders through the area.

Rock quarrying in the Granite Creek Industrial Area should continue and expand into Saddle Mountain to meet Sitka's ongoing needs for structural fill material for construction projects. The City's lease agreement should be modified to increase competition and production among contractors who are quarrying rock. Exhausted quarry sites nearby will provide a convenient location to deposit overburden from expanded quarry operations in Saddle Mountain, and the flat floors of other exhausted quarry sites can be leased for fleet or equipment storage and other light industrial or commercial uses.

Sea Mountain Golf Course, across the south base of Saddle Mountain, may not represent the "highest and best use" for this site in looking to the future. With its slightly sloping terrain, lower elevation, absence of wetlands and forest, and proximity to Halibut Point Road and utilities, the golf course site contains the most development-suitable land in the entire study area. The existing nine-hole golf course could conceivably be expanded from nine to eighteen holes by terracing additional fairways up the south slopes of Saddle Mountain. However, given the difficulty and high cost of developing other lands in the study area, the golf course site may need to be considered for housing and/or commercial development where the financial return on the site for these uses would be significantly higher than the revenue generated by the golf course lease. A broad open space zone could be created to buffer residential/commercial development on the south side of Saddle Mountain from continued rock quarrying on the east side of the Mountain.

Limited existing water and sewer infrastructure at the Granite Creek Industrial Area could limit development if utility capacity is not increased.



*Sea Mountain Golf Course*



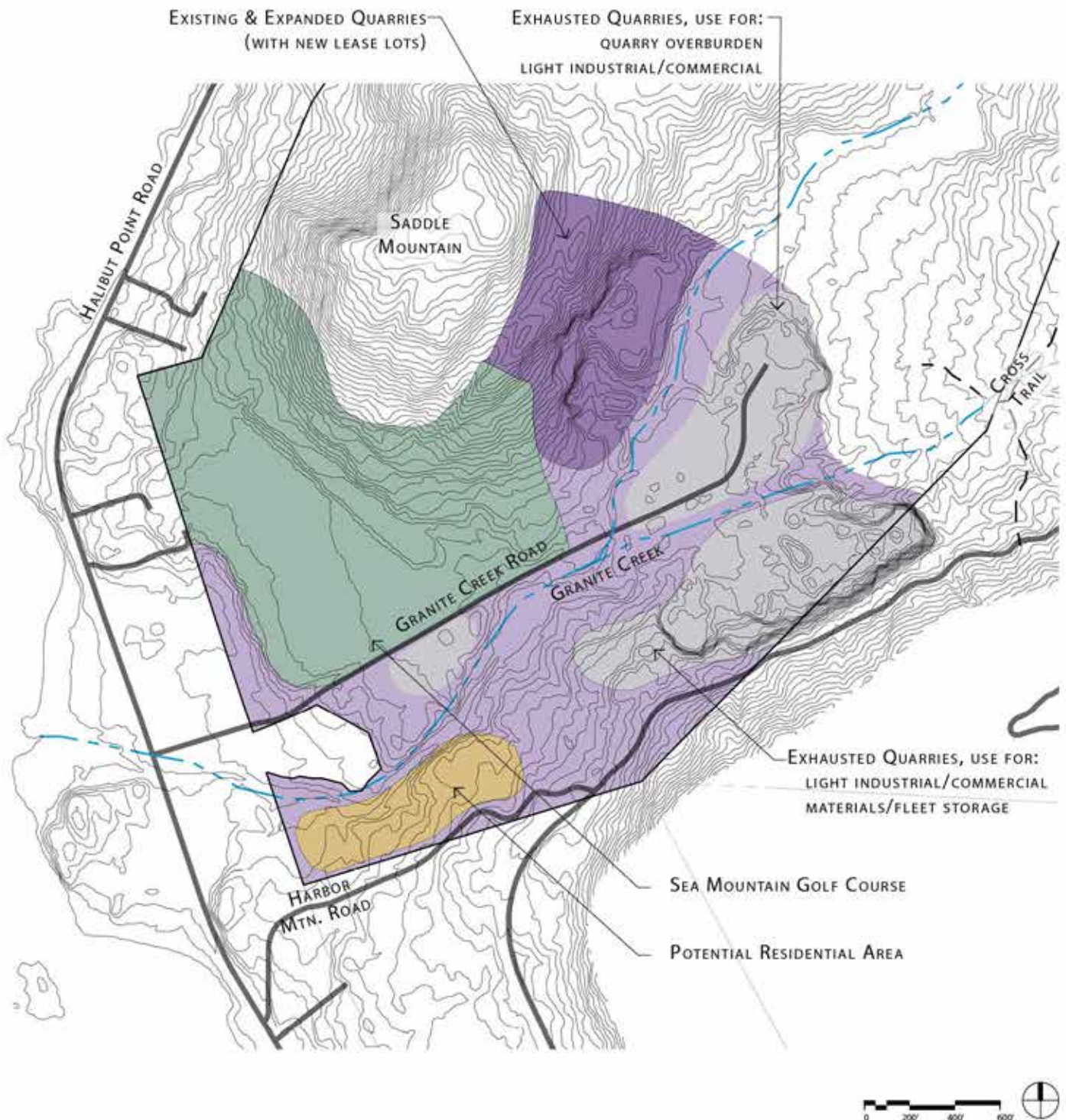


FIGURE 25—GRANITE CREEK INDUSTRIAL AREA

## Recreational Tourism Areas

Recreational tourism is broadly defined as revenue-generating outdoor recreational activities oriented to cruise ship visitors and other recreationists. Recreational tourism activities are often set in a natural landscape and range from less intense to more physically demanding pursuits, including but not limited to the following:

- Hiking, nature, and mountain biking trails
- Water sports such as kayaking and fishing
- Zipline and/or aerial-ropes challenge course in trees
- Rock climbing and/or rappelling
- Tram, funicular, or aerial cable car up steep terrain to scenic promontory
- Gravity-coaster down through steep forested or open terrain
- Outdoor performances, educational talks, and local arts/crafts demonstrations
- Outdoor salmon bake/crab feed
- Nature-based “glamping” or cabin lodging

Instead of being developed for housing, Harbor Point’s beautiful forested shoreline setting overlooking Sitka Sound could host various recreational tourism activities that are being sought by cruise ship visitors and independent travelers. Outdoor recreational tourism activities on Harbor Point would be conveniently located near the current and expanding Halibut Point Marine Cruise Ship Terminal just south of Harbor Point. Bringing visitors to recreational activities at Harbor Point would therefore reduce bus traffic on Halibut Point Road to and from the downtown. Potential recreational activities and facilities (such as aerial-ropes course, kayaking, and salmon bake venue) at Harbor Point would generally fit with rather than damage the natural and scenic qualities of the site. Moreover, the City would maintain ownership of Harbor Point, leasing to others for development and operation.

Offering panoramic views of Sitka Sound and the Baranof Island mountains, No Name Mountain could also host activities and facilities associated with recreational tourism, such as mountain biking and nature trails, ziplines, scenic overlooks, and a tram road, funicular,

or aerial cable car to its summit. These facilities and activities would generally require lower impact, light-on-the-land infrastructure that would fit with the site’s steep, forested terrain. Recreational tourism activities on No Name Mountain would be near the expanding Halibut Point Marine Cruise Ship Terminal and would increase the range of activities proposed for Harbor Point. The land for recreational tourism activities and facilities on No Name Mountain would be leased from the City and developed by others for this use.

Recreational activities and facilities at Harbor Point and/or No Name Mountain should be made available and accessible to all Sitka residents and independent travelers, and not just limited to cruise ship visitors. By the same token, recreational activities and facilities for locals, such as the Cross Trail, should be accessible to visitors. In addition, providing *year-round* recreational opportunities in the study area would appeal to both locals and independent travelers. It’s important that recreational tourism areas and facilities in the study area do not take on the character of a theme park or amusement park. Instead, recreational facilities and activities should be carefully integrated with the natural landscape to enable a bit of wild Southeast Alaska to be experienced and enjoyed through recreational activities by locals and visitors alike.



*Tree to tree aerial ropes course*



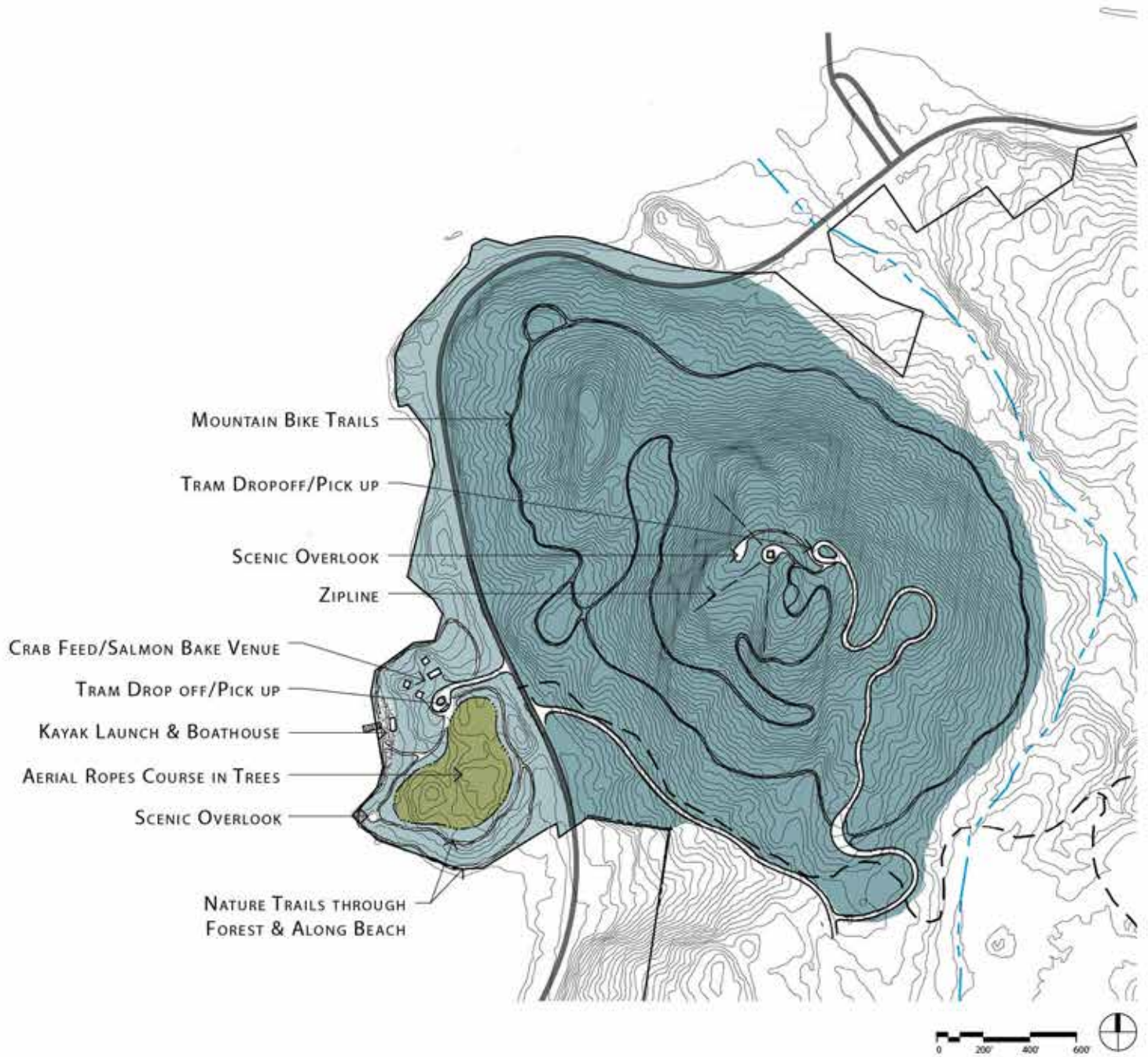


FIGURE 26—POINT & NO NAME MOUNTAIN RECREATIONAL TOURISM AREAS

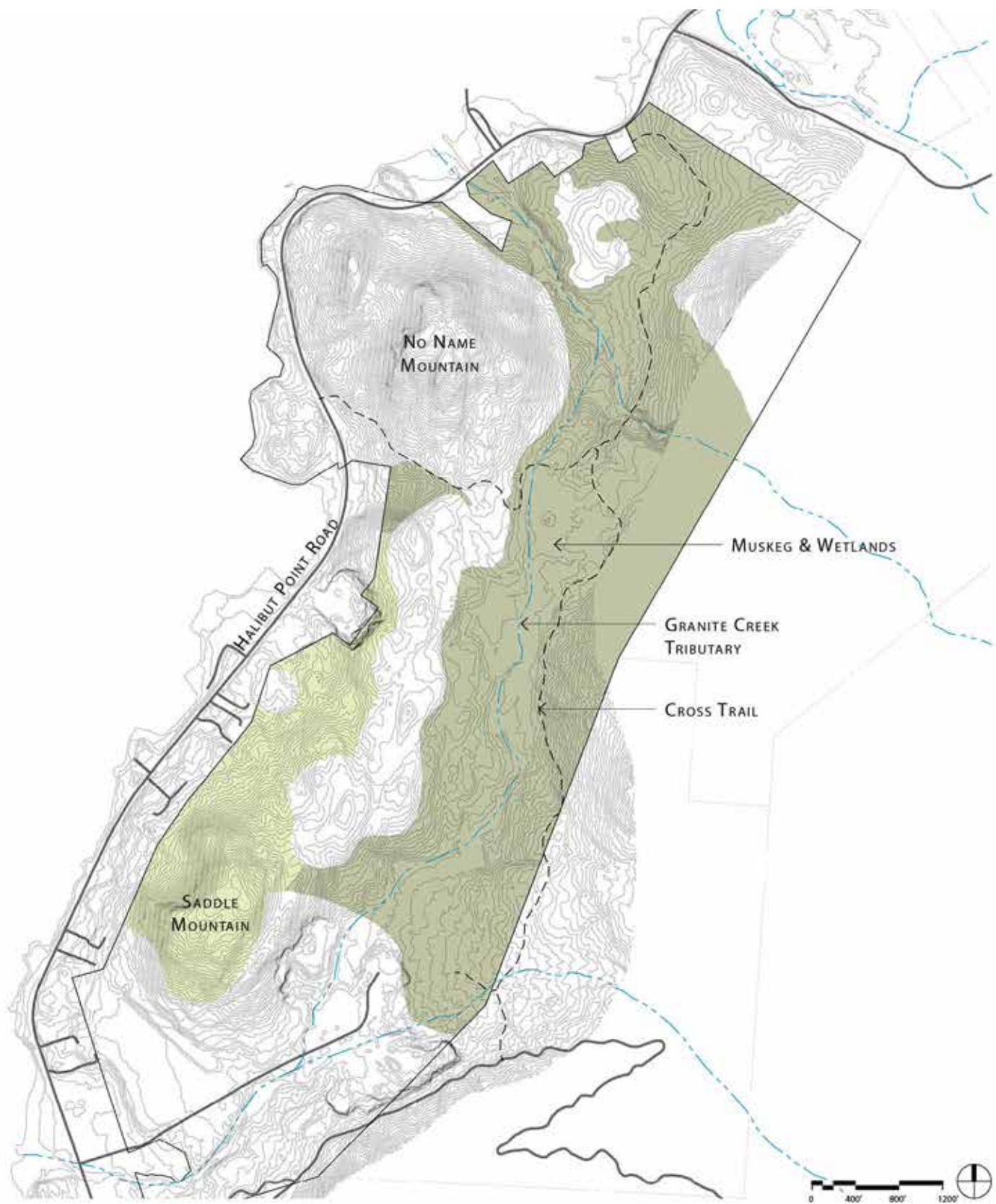


FIGURE 27—SADDLE MOUNTAIN & MUSKEG WETLANDS OPEN SPACE AREAS





## Open Space, Passive Recreation, and Wetland Mitigation Areas

As discussed in Chapter 2, over half of the study area is occupied by different types of wetlands, including large muskegs that occur on the flatter, lower-lying site areas directly east of and below No Name Mountain and Sound View Ridge. A salmon-bearing tributary of Granite Creek drains southward through these muskegs. Due to their deep, organic soils and peat, it would be difficult and expensive to build roads and structures in muskegs, and development impacts to muskegs would be expensive to permit and mitigate. The muskegs and adjoining open hemlock wetlands should therefore be set aside for open space, passive recreation, and wildlife habitat. The muskeg and wetlands area shown in Figure 27 could be put into a permanent conservation easement as potential mitigation for development impacts to wetlands elsewhere in the study area or on other City owned properties off-site. The muskeg and wetlands area will also provide a scenic natural buffer for the Cross Trail that travels through here.

The west sides of Saddle Mountain and Sound View Ridge are characterized by extremely steep, forested terrain. Due to severe site conditions, including landslide risk, it would be expensive and inadvisable to develop and build in these areas. These areas should remain as open space to be used for passive recreation such as hiking trails and subsistence gathering. Maintained as open space, these waterfront-facing slopes will keep their beautiful, natural visual qualities for cruise ship visitors and local boaters on Sitka Sound.

No Name Mountain rises to over 400 feet above sea level on the northwest part of the study area. The extremely steep, forested slopes of No Name Mountain would also be difficult and expensive to develop for homes or commercial buildings. The high steep knoll should therefore remain undeveloped open space used for passive recreation and wildlife habitat. As such, views of this impressive high green knoll will be kept intact and unaltered for cruise ship visitors and locals out on Sitka Sound. However, as discussed in the previous section, No Name Mountain could also host more intensive or active outdoor recreational activities associated with recreational tourism.



## Development Costs

High development costs or high construction costs are a recurring issue with respect to proposed land use and development in the study area. However, projecting actual costs for road and utility construction on the site, and for tangential items such as environmental permitting and engineering, is difficult. Specific site conditions (like depth to firm substrata) are unknown, the layout of roads and utilities is undetermined, and the location, density, and type of structures remain undecided. All these factors and others affect construction costs which can still be hard to estimate even when these things are better known or understood.

Nevertheless, “high costs” need a point of reference. The following rough order of magnitude (ROM) unit costs have been assembled to assist the City in considering construction costs for potential development in the study area. These ROM unit costs have been derived from recent public construction bids, correspondence with various suppliers and manufacturers, and experience with construction in the region. These costs represent what CBS may expect to receive from bidders if applicable aspects of any future development were put out to general solicitation.

Roads will provide access, and potentially utility corridors, to various types of development in different areas. Most of the undeveloped portions of the study area are overlain by organic peat and ash of various thickness. Neither of these materials are typically considered suitable subgrade for roads supporting vehicle traffic, and these unsuitable materials should be excavated and replaced with granular structural fill. Gravel roads are surfaced with surface course, while paved roads are capped with base course and, typically, asphalt concrete pavement. Paved roads may also be accompanied by concrete curb and gutter at the edge of pavement. All roads should be either elevated above the adjacent ground elevation, or have either ditches or curb and gutter to channel surface runoff away from the driving lanes. General illustrations of roadway typical sections can be found in the City and Borough of Sitka Standard Specifications and Drawings.

The following earthwork costs can be used as a starting point for estimating basic gravel road construction ROM estimates. These may also be useful in estimating other work items using similar materials, such as building pads and trails.

Item	Unit	Estimated Unit Cost
Unusable Excavation (disposed of nearby)	Cubic Yard	\$10
Usable Rock Excavation	Cubic Yard	\$30
Backfill (Subbase, Selected Material)	Cubic Yard	\$40
Surface Course	Cubic Yard	\$50

Utilities are frequently encapsulated in road corridors when servicing development projects. These include potable water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and electricity. Unit prices for conduits conveying these services varies substantially depending on size, material, depth of bury, and other factors. The table below presents common costs for a given utility. The costs include furnish and install efforts.

Item	Unit	Estimated Unit Cost
10-inch HDPE Potable Water Pipe	Linear Foot	\$100
10-inch HDPE Sanitary Sewer Pipe	Linear Foot	\$100
18-inch HDPE Storm Sewer Pipe	Linear Foot	\$75
Electrical Conduit and Conductors	Linear Foot	\$70





Utilities may have ancillary or supplemental components for proper operation. For example, providing City water to Sound View Ridge will require supplemental pressure such as from a booster pump station or elevated water tank. Sanitary sewer systems may require lift stations if the topography is not favorable for a strictly gravity system. Gravity sewer systems require manholes at horizontal turns, vertical grade breaks, and typically at regular intervals along straight runs. The electrical system will require a transformer per certain number of homes (a transformer can accommodate approximately 10 homes). If any proposed development consists of more than 50-100 homes, or any significant commercial development, a new electrical substation may be required. ROM unit costs for these items are presented below.

Item	Unit	Estimated Unit Cost
Water Booster Pump Station	Each	\$400k-500k
Sanitary Sewer Lift Station	Each	\$400k-600k
Sanitary Sewer Manhole	Each	\$10,000
Electrical Transformer	Each	\$6,000
Electrical Substation	Each	\$20M



Example Multi-Unit Package Treatment Plant  
(Photo from: <http://www.purestream.com>)

Alternative utility systems may be worth exploring depending on the type and location of development. Many of these can fall on private property owners and include: individual septic systems or private marine outfalls for sanitary sewer, holding tanks with delivery and/or catchment systems for potable water, or solar arrays and battery banks for supplemental electricity. CBS would not likely be responsible for the costs of these systems and they will not be discussed further. However, a decentralized or “packaged” wastewater treatment plant may prove economical in providing municipal sanitary sewer collection to certain developments, particularly residences on Sound View Ridge. Packaged wastewater treatment plants operate similarly to a typical central treatment plant, although on a smaller scale. They are capable of meeting stringent treatment requirements for discharging into streams, rivers or other receiving water bodies. A quote from one supplier for providing equipment, system start-up and training services for a plant capable of supporting approximately 100 homes totaled approximately \$300,000. The actual installed construction cost, including site and electrical work, is expected to be 2-3 times this quote.

These ROM, budgetary-level unit costs represent a fraction of what is typically compiled on unit price construction bid schedules. Utility service connections, pavement, concrete hardscapes, street lighting and miscellaneous contractor work items like mobilization, erosion and sediment control, and traffic control, to name just a few, all contribute significantly to overall project costs. Publicly available construction bids are an excellent reference for project budgeting. Further, a healthy contingency should be applied to cost estimates at the concept level to account for the high number of unknowns yet to be resolved.

Planners should also consider professional services including pre-design (project scoping, topographic surveying, permitting, and geotechnical investigations), design and construction administration/inspection when budgeting for a project. Pre-design services are difficult to predict. Design services can usually be estimated as a percentage of the construction cost, which varies based on project size and complexity. These percentages are published by various professional entities, including the American Society of Civil Engineers.

### Rough Order of Magnitude Costs for Sound View Ridge and Harbor Point Residential Areas

ROM cost projections for residential development of two areas within the study area have been prepared with some assumptions. These estimates are tailored to the costs that may be incurred by CBS based on past project experience, and generally consist of access and limited utility services to residential subdivisions. Estimates have not been prepared for areas dedicated to recreational tourism, light commercial/industrial, or quarrying as it is anticipated that these areas will be accessed and improved by future private landowners or lessees.

For the proposed Sound View Ridge residential area, the ROM estimate assumes the following:

- CBS will provide road access, electrical primary conductors/transformers, and potable water and sanitary sewer mains. Driveways, lot development and utility connections will be the responsibility of developers and individual property owners.
- Sanitary sewer and potable water connections will be at Granite Creek Road. (Alternatively, connections with the mains in Halibut Point Road near the north end of Sound View Ridge could be evaluated if the access road is to connect to the existing road system at the north and south ends.)

- Sanitary sewer within the housing development and approximately halfway to the connection point on Granite Creek Road will be gravity, with manholes at turns and spaced at 400 feet maximum along straight runs. One lift/pump station will be required to complete the connection to Granite Creek Road. (An alternative may be connecting to the Harbor Point subdivision sewer system, which could pump sewage to a connection with the existing gravity pipe near Cove Marina; this may be worth a cost/benefit analysis as pursuit of this master plan advances.)
- A 3-foot cut will be required to remove unsuitable soils and reach competent subgrade for the access road
- A 4.5-foot-thick backfill section capped with a 6-inch thick surface course will be the road structural section.
- Rock material will be sourced from the Granite Creek Area, and unusable excavation will be disposed of at the Granite Creek Area or wasted onsite.
- The road will have two lanes, each 12 feet wide with 1-foot wide shoulders, and a gravel surface
- A culvert will be required every 300 feet and the culverts will each be 30 feet long

By taking the Total Project ROM Design and Construction figure, and dividing it by the total length of road (approximately 10,000 linear feet), the **unit cost per linear foot of road and utilities is approximately \$1,100 per linear foot at Sound View Ridge.**





*Granite Area Sound View Ridge Estimated  
Construction Costs for Utilities and Access Road*

Item No.	Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
1	Mobilization	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$650,000	\$650,000
2	Clearing and Grubbing	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$70,000	\$70,000
3	Unusable Excavation	30,000	Cubic Yard	\$10	\$300,000
4	Backfill	50,000	Cubic Yard	\$40	\$2,000,000
5	Surface Course	5,000	Cubic Yard	\$60	\$300,000
6	Storm Drain Culvert	1,000	Linear Feet	\$75	\$75,000
7	Water Pipe, 10-inch HDPE	8,000	Linear Feet	\$100	\$800,000
8	Water Booster Pump Station	1	Each	\$450,000	\$450,000
9	Sanitary Sewer Pipe, 10-inch HDPE	8,000	Linear Feet	\$100	\$800,000
10	Sanitary Sewer Manhole	30	Each	\$10,000	\$300,000
11	Sanitary Sewer Lift/Pump Station	1	Each	\$500,000	\$500,000
12	Electrical (Primary Conductor)	10,000	Linear Feet	\$70	\$700,000
13	Electrical Transformer	8	Each	\$6,000	\$48,000
14	Erosion and Sediment Control	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$50,000	\$50,000
15	Traffic Control	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$20,000	\$20,000
16	Construction Surveying	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$85,000	\$85,000

Subtotal Construction Cost	\$7,148,000
Recommended Contingency (20%)	\$1,429,600
<b>Total Construction Cost with Contingency (20%)</b>	<b>\$8,577,600</b>

*Professional Services*

Pre-Design Services (5% of Total Construction) <i>Permitting, Surveying, Geotechnical</i>	\$428,880
Design Services (10% of Total Construction) <i>Final Design, Bid Phase Assistance</i>	\$857,760
Contract Administration/Construction Inspection (10% of Total Construction)	\$857,760
<b>Total Project ROM Design and Construction Cost Estimate</b>	<b>\$10,722,000</b>

\*Does not include wetland mitigation costs

## 5 | LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

For the proposed Harbor Point residential area, the ROM estimate assumes that:

- CBS will provide road access, electrical primary conductors/transformers, and potable water and sanitary sewer mains. Driveways, lot development and utility connections will be the responsibility of developers and individual property owners.
- The potable water connection will be with the existing main in Halibut Point Road; an alternative connection may be a “spur service” outside of Halibut Point Road, near Cove Marina. Sanitary sewer will connect with an existing gravity main outside of Halibut Point Road near Cove Marina via a force main.
- Sanitary sewer within the housing development will be gravity, with manholes at turns and spaced at 400 feet maximum along straight runs. One lift/pump station will be required to complete the connection to Cove Marina.
- A 2-foot cut will be required to remove unsuitable soils and reach competent subgrade for the access road.
- Approximately 1,000 cubic yards of bedrock excavation will be necessary to achieve the desired road profile and alignment; the excavated bedrock will be re-used on site as fill.
- A 4.5-foot-thick backfill section capped with a 6-inch thick surface course will be the road structural section.
- Rock material will be sourced from the Granite Creek Area, and unusable excavation will be disposed of at the Granite Creek Area or wasted onsite.
- The road will have two lanes, each 12 feet wide with 1-foot wide shoulders, and a gravel surface
- Eight culvert crossings will be required, each 30 feet long.

Again, taking the Total Project ROM Design and Construction figure and dividing by the total length of road (approximately 2,500 linear feet), the **unit cost per linear foot of road and utilities is approximately \$1,400 per linear foot at Harbor Point.**

It should be noted that the combined new housing units of Sound View Ridge and Harbor Point in the proposed land use plan is likely near or exceeding the 50-100 new housing unit threshold before a new electrical substation may be required. The cost of a new substation has not been included in either construction estimate, and it will drive project costs up substantially. This should be carefully evaluated before proceeding with the recommendations and options in this land use plan.

These costs have been provided as ROM, budgetary-level tools to assist with broad-scale planning, and do not encompass all aspects of any given project.





**Harbor Point Estimated Construction Costs for  
Utilities and Access Road**

Item No.	Item	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Cost
1	Mobilization	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$120,000	\$120,000
2	Clearing and Grubbing	2	Acre	\$10,000	\$20,000
3	Unusable Excavation	5,000	Cubic Yard	\$20	\$100,000
4	Usable Rock Excavation	1,000	Cubic Yard	\$10	\$10,000
5	Backfill	11,000	Cubic Yard	\$40	\$440,000
6	Surface Course	1,200	Cubic Yard	\$60	\$72,000
7	Concrete Road Patch, 8-inch Thick	30	Square Yard	\$200	\$6,000
8	Storm Drain Culvert	240	Linear Feet	\$75	\$18,000
9	Water Pipe, 10-inch HDPE	2,500	Linear Feet	\$100	\$250,000
10	Sanitary Sewer Pipe, 10-inch HDPE	2500	Linear Feet	\$100	\$250,000
11	Sanitary Sewer Manhole	16	Each	\$10,000	\$160,000
12	Sanitary Sewer Lift/Pump Station	1	Each	\$500,000	\$500,000
13	Electrical (Primary Conductor)	2500	Linear Feet	\$70	\$175,000
14	Electrical Transformer	4	Each	\$6,000	\$24,000
15	Erosion and Sediment Control	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$20,000	\$20,000
16	Traffic Control	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$20,000	\$20,000
17	Construction Surveying	All Req'd	Lump Sum	\$50,000	\$50,000
Subtotal Construction Cost					\$2,315,000
Recommended Contingency (20%)					\$463,000
<b>Total Construction Cost with Contingency (20%)</b>					<b>\$2,778,000</b>

**Professional Services**

Pre-Design Services (5% of Total Construction) <i>Permitting, Surveying, Geotechnical</i>	\$138,900
Design Services (10% of Total Construction) <i>Final Design, Bid Phase Assistance</i>	\$277,800
Contract Administration/Construction Inspection (10% of Total Construction)	\$277,800
<b>Total Project ROM Design and Construction Cost Estimate</b>	<b>\$3,472,500</b>

\*Does not include wetland mitigation costs

# CONCLUSION

This study's comprehensive approach to data gathering, community input, and collaborative planning has yielded a flexible and responsive Master Plan that will serve as a "living document" to guide development in the study area over the next 15 years. This land use study aims to resolve historic assumptions about the study area and its use by setting the stage for timely, appropriate, and environmentally sound development that contributes to Sitka's economic vitality. Based on the study area's existing conditions, Sitka's economic needs, and the contribution of project stakeholders and the public, the recommendations in this land use master plan will foster constructive activity in the study area for the near and distant future.

The Executive Summary of this report outlines "Next Steps" to be pursued in the short term to initiate development in parts of the study area. It is strongly suggested that initial efforts focus on the following two key actions:

- **Recreational Tourism:** The City should prepare and issue a "Request for Proposals" to parties interested in leasing land and developing facilities in the study area (at Harbor Point and/or No Name Mountain) for outdoor recreational activities oriented to cruise ship visitors and others.

- **Quarrying, Commercial, and Industrial activity at Granite Creek:** The City should begin planning the expansion of rock quarrying into Saddle Mountain, in conjunction with modifying the City's quarry lease agreement to allow more operators to extract rock. The City should also promote availability of land at the Granite Creek Industrial Area for commercial and industrial uses.

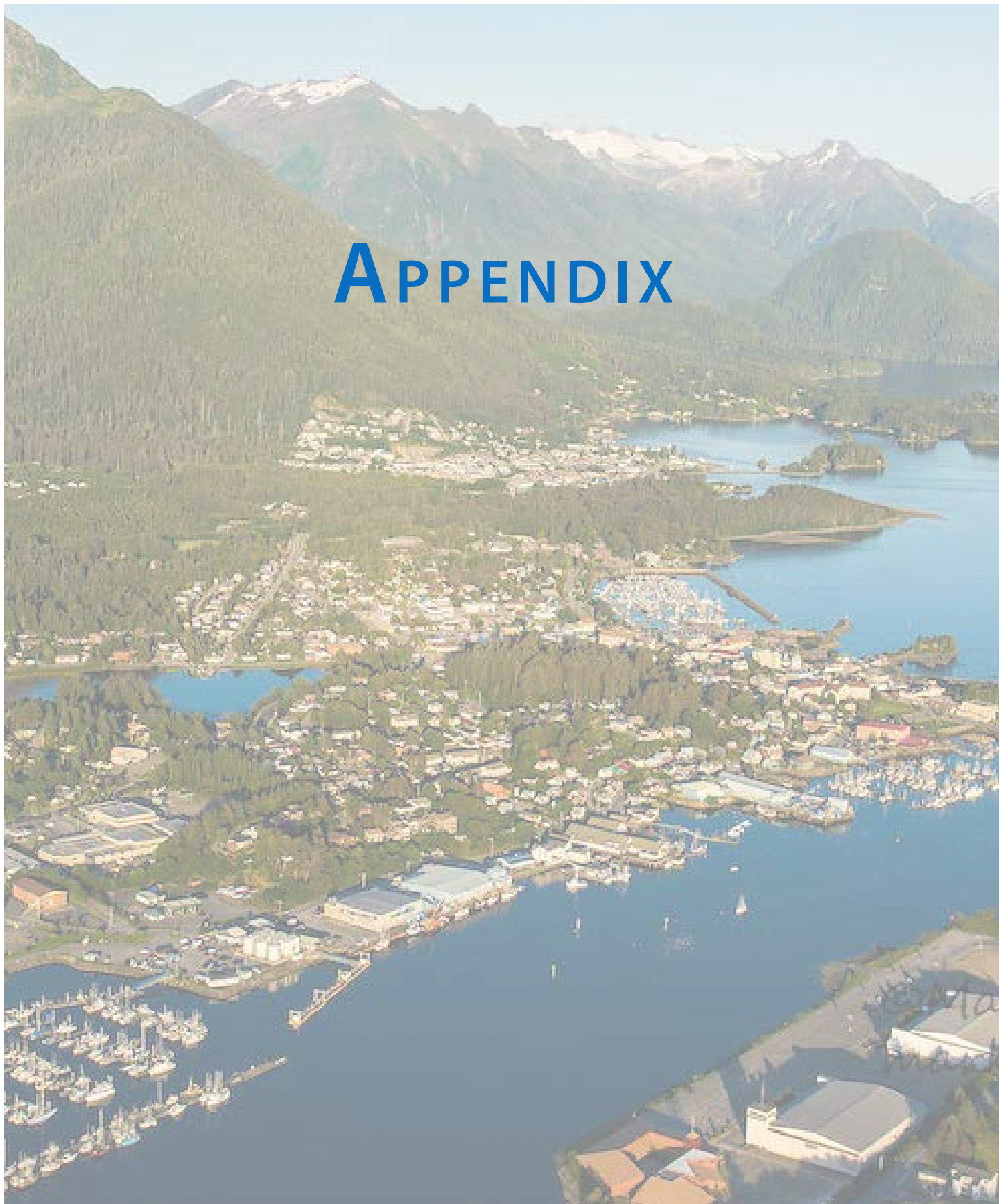
In addition to the efforts discussed above, the City may want to pursue funding and development of a small residential area, such as at Granite Creek. Although small in scale, a residential project such as Granite Creek would need to address most of the same issues, from mitigation of wetland impacts to providing utility service, that would require resolution in the development of a larger residential area. Alternative housing and ownership structures could also be considered with the objective of providing affordable housing at Granite Creek.

Most of all, planning and development efforts within the study area should remain responsive to Sitka's economic needs and the community's input and preferences. Community support will be crucial to anything taking shape and happening in the No Name Mountain/Granite Creek area.





# APPENDIX









## APPENDIX

### Previous Studies Referenced

The planning team referenced the following studies and publications relating to the development of land in and around the study area:

Sitka Gravel Resource and Management Study (1982)

Evaluation of Solid Waste Landfill Alternatives for Kimsham Street & Granite Creek (1999)

Granite Creek Soils Probe and Wetlands Investigations Final Report (2000)

Map: Kean Study Composite Topography & Wetlands (2000)

Granite Creek Master Plan (2002)

Sitka Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (2002)

Sitka Trail Plan (2003)

Draft Geotechnical Report, Quarry Site Investigation (aka FAA Geotech Report) (2006)

Assembly presentation on quarries in Sitka (April 2008)

GCIS Overburden Sites Discussion (2008)

Request for Assembly Discussion and Direction re: Sale/Lease of Rock Quarry Sites (2008)

Rock quarry status memo (2009)

Sitka Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (2010)

Foundation Geology Report for Granite Creek Bridge and No Name Creek Bridge (2011)

Sitka Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Action Plan (2012)

Granite Creek Quarry Subdivision Wetlands Delineation (2012)

No Name Mountain Quarry Access - Preliminary Reconnaissance Report (2016)

Cross Trail Environmental Studies (2017/2018)

Sitka Economic Profile Report (2019)

2030 Sitka Comprehensive Plan & Technical Document

Map: Study Area DEM

Map: Locations to Access 3-Phase Power

Map: Water & Wastewater Utilities

City and Borough of Sitka GIS

## Stakeholder Engagement

The planning team, including consultants and staff from the CBS Planning Department, conducted a comprehensive stakeholder engagement effort, including interviews and written comment. Stakeholders contacted included the following:

### Stakeholder Interviewees

Mic Tisher, Tisher Construction

Adam McLeod, K&E

Joe Williams, K&E

Jeremy Twaddle, Island Enterprises

Pete Weiland, construction

Jason Keith, construction

Jim Way, construction

Marty Johnson, construction

Kris Karsunky, construction

Ron Davison, construction

Ron Waldron, construction

Sam Smith, construction

Scott McArthur, construction

Brian Schmidt, construction

Adam Chinalski, construction

Jamal Floate, construction

Troy Bayne, earthwork

Harry Greene, CBS Streets Superintendent, former earthwork contractor

Tim Eddy, earthwork

Chris McGraw, Halibut Point Marine

Chuck McGraw, Halibut Point Marine

Chuck McGraw, Jr, McGraw Construction

Chris Pearson, construction/earthwork

Connor Nelson, earthwork/construction

Garry White, SEDA

Keith Brady, realty

Mike LaGuire, realty

Candi Barger, realty

Travis Vaughn, realty

Trevor Harang, Arrowhead

Kerri O'Toole, Baranof Realty

Stacy Mudry, Ready Mix

Roger Hames, Hames Corporation

Marty Martin, construction and land owner

Mim McConnell, Sitka Community Land Trust

Roger Sudnikovich, former quarry operator, earthwork

Del Stengle, earthwork

Jerome Mahoskey, earthwork

Michael Eich, City and Borough of Juneau (Stabler's Point Quarry)

Jeff Wheeler, Sitka Electric Department

Brian Doyle, Sitka Wastewater Department

Joe Swain, Sitka Water Department

Bob Trousil, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Lynne Brandon, Sitka Trail Works

Rob Allen, formerly Allen Marine

Kirby Day, Princess Cruises

Mike Tibbles, Cruise Line Industry Association – Alaska

Lyle Kessler, United States Coast Guard

Maegan Bosak, SEARHC

Keith Perkins, USDA Rural Development

Richard Doland, construction

Perry Edwards, USFS

Lynne Brandon, Sitka Trail Works

James Poulson, Parks and Rec Committee

Charles Horan, Horan and Co Appraisals

Karl Potts, CEO Shee Atika

Ralph Vigilante, SECON

Michael Harmon, CBS





## Organizations Contacted

Sitka Tribe of Alaska  
 Sitka Tribal Enterprises  
 Sitka Economic Development Association  
 Sitka Golf Association  
 Sitka Chamber of Commerce / Visit Sitka  
 Sitka Community Land Trust  
 Sitka Sound Science Center  
 Allen Marine  
 Shee Atika, Inc  
 Sitka Water Dept  
 Sitka Sewer Dept  
 Sitka Electric Dept  
 State of Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities  
 City and Borough of Juneau  
 Southeast Alaska Land Trust  
 Sealaska  
 United States Army Corps of Engineers

## Other Public Engagement Efforts

### Meetings held/attended

Kickoff meeting – January 22, 2020  
 SEDA  
 Natural Resources Committee, Sitka Tribe of Alaska – March 10 and May 13

### Public Service Announcements and/or Public Notice

Raven Radio – morning interview (Planning Director and Special Projects Manager)  
 Raven Radio – public service announcement -2 weeks  
 Sitka Sentinel – public notice ad – 8 dates  
 Sitka Soup – full page display ad – 2 weeks  
 Facebook – city page  
 City website home page – notice and link to interactive website

Planning Department website home page – notice and link to interactive website

Letter to Editor – Sitka Sentinel

### Survey Form Dropoffs\*

Petro Marine  
 Chocolate Moose  
 Harry Race  
 Silver Basin  
 The Cellar  
 Old Harbor Books  
 Russells  
 BIHA office  
 LFS Marine  
 Computer Store  
 STA main office  
 STA Healing House  
 Wintersong Soap Company  
 Galanin Gallery  
 Artists Coop  
 Tongass threads  
 Sitka Public Library  
 Ben Franklin (remaining small shop)  
 Spenards  
 True Value  
 NAPA  
 Work and Rugged Gear Store

\*Due to social distancing and business closures, not as many forms were filled out/returned as hoped.

### Direct mailing

Approximately 200 addresses of properties adjacent to the study area received direct mail advising of project and requesting comment.

### Public Comment Forms

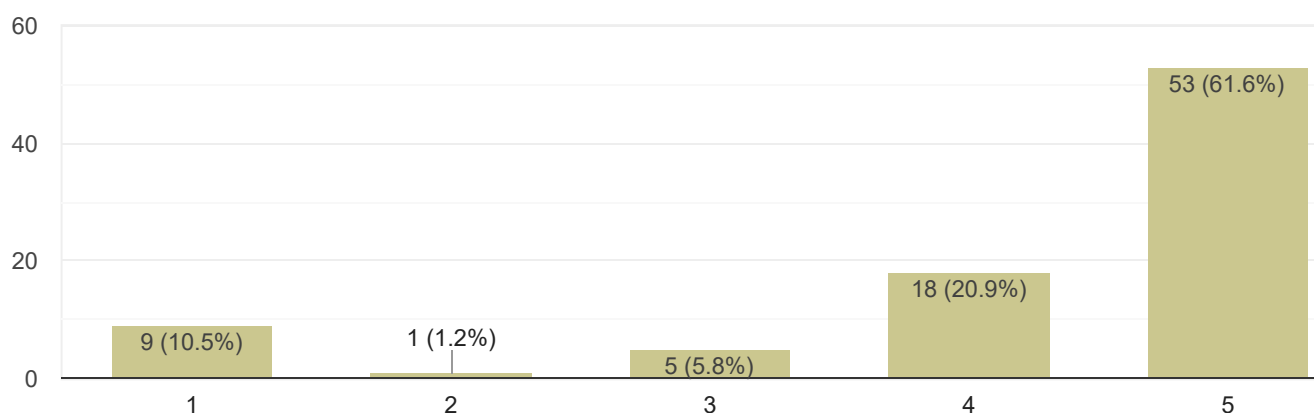
Public Comment forms were available in three locations at city hall, at the library, and online since February 2020.

## Survey Results

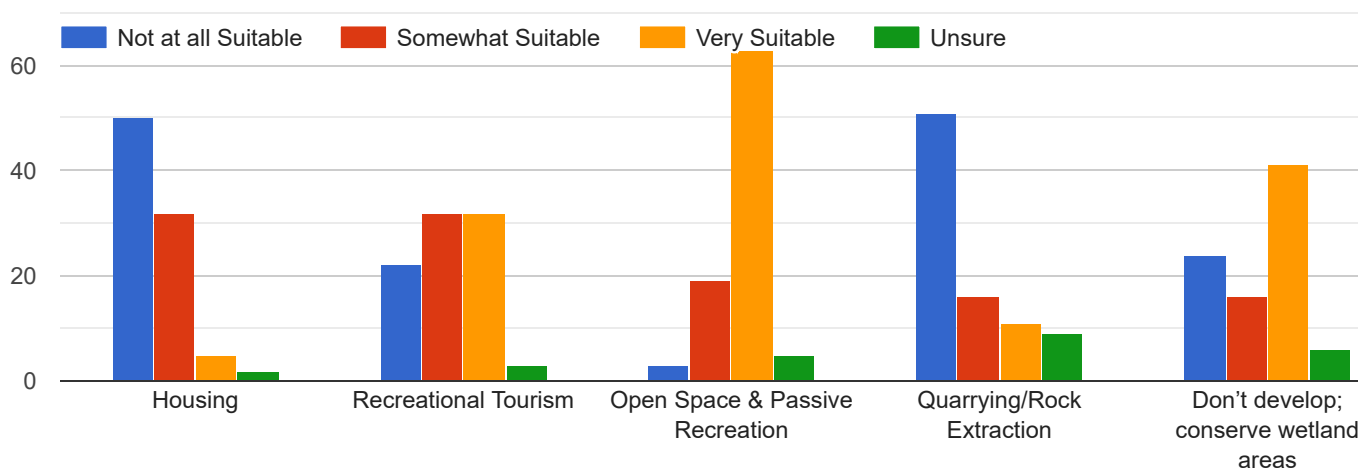
The below section includes the complete results of the online survey that was active from April 29 through May 17, 2020.

1. How important is it to keep parts of the site as open space for a Cross Trail buffer, passive recreation, and/or wildlife habitat?

36 responses



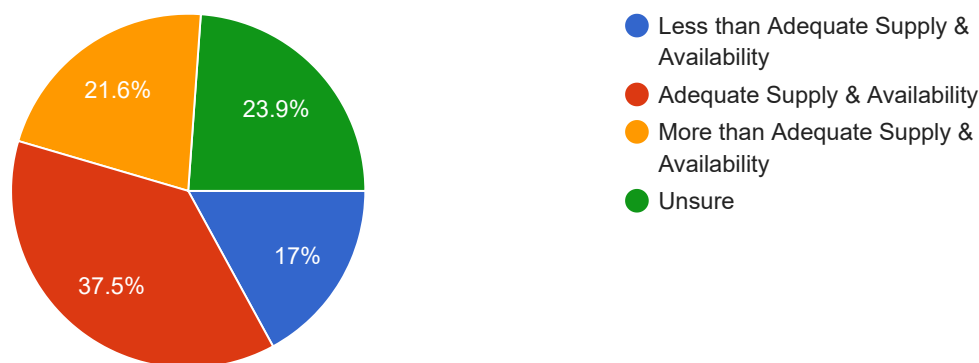
2. Given the costs and challenges of developing in wetlands, rank the suitability of using wetlands for the following activities or types of development:





3a. Do you think there is currently adequate supply and availability of quarry rock for construction projects in Sitka?

88 responses

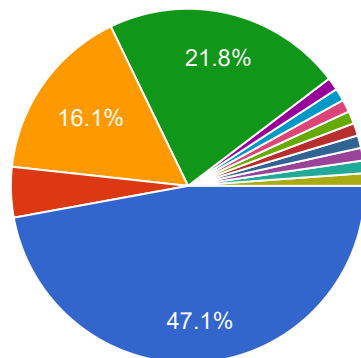


3b. If you answered "Less than Adequate Supply & Availability" above, please explain why below:

- There are no viable revenue generating sources left to the city, granite creek played out and the only other quarry is owned by biha and leases to K&E
- Prices for rock available now are too high!
- Less than if several future large projects
- The rock is there, but the process for obtaining leases needs to be streamlined and more leases granted to prevent periods of unavailability
- Too few providers cause shortages and drive up prices
- Expensive rock/ no competition
- There may be adequate supply, but a bit of a monopoly, which creates unreasonable costs for those needing it.
- Rock for home sites/driveways/roads is currently not allowed to be removed from Granite Creek area. Rock has not been removed from Saddle Mountain for years now. The operators of the Indian River pit may have told you they had plenty of rock because they have the only viable pit and will have a monopoly on rock if no other sources are developed.
- NO additional rock for out of town companies to develop or additional companies in town to develop if they are interested.
- We are barging rock into Sitka for at least road but probably building too.... We live on a rock.
- Need more choices and competition
- The cost for crushed aggregate has gone through the roof and all the contractors i have spoken with have said this is due to a continually reduced supply and increased demand
- Have spoken with folks in various industries that have concerns --very spendy to ship rock in and that is what has been happening recently
- Very hard to find "wall rock" and just not enough for larger projects.

#### 4. What area should be developed for expanded quarry production?

87 responses



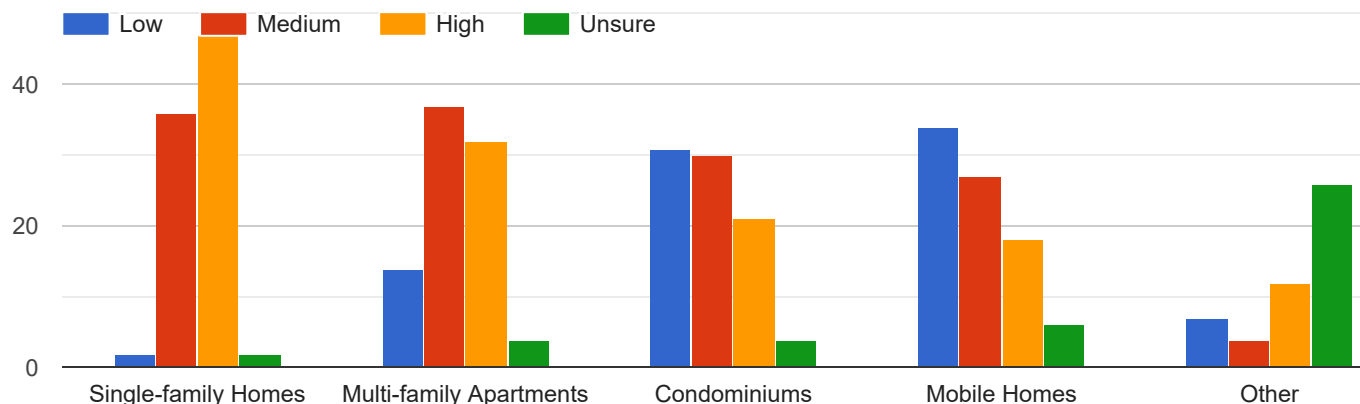
- Granite Creek Industrial Area - Expanded Lease Lots into Saddle Mountain
- No Name Mountain - New Quarry Development
- Granite Creek Lease Lots - New Quarry Development
- Unsure

#### Other:

- NONE
- I thought that the quarry operators said our rock supplies are adequate?
- No further development at this point
- Granite Creek Industrial area, but without expanding the lease lots into Saddle Mountain.
- I also think that while the rock pit at granite creek should be expanded. I also think that overburden should be relocated soon. Old rock pits could make a suitable area for residential development with a nice view from up there.
- Leave it alone. Why on earth are you bound and determined to DESTROY our town?
- No further development at this time.
- None
- Out Katlian Bay road

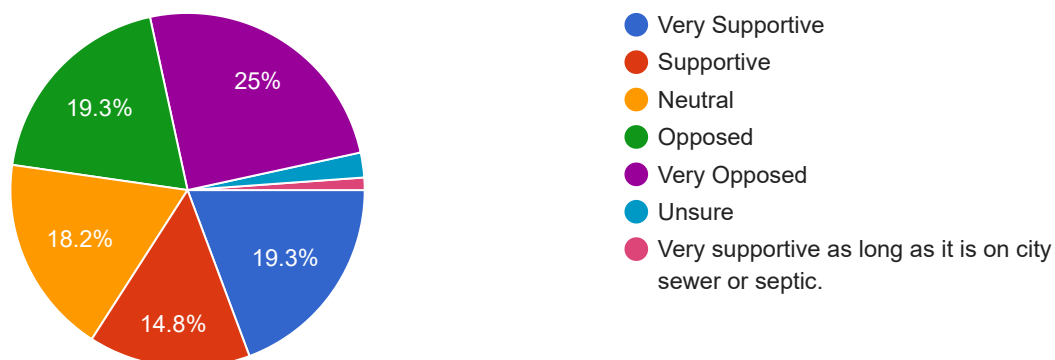


5. For each of the following types of housing, please indicate the level of demand you believe exists in Sitka:



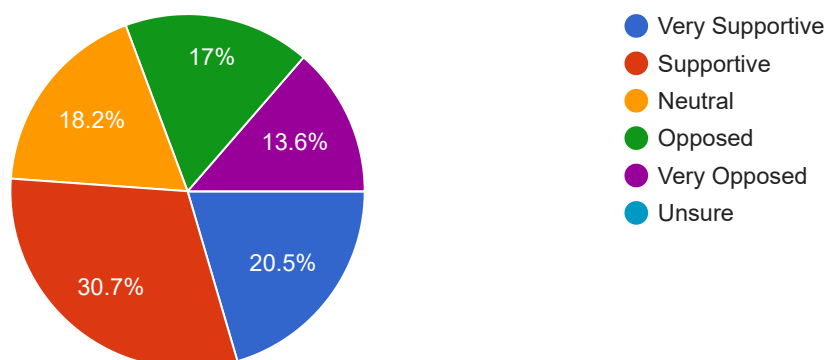
6. How supportive are you of allowing housing to be developed on the waterfront parcel of the site?

88 responses



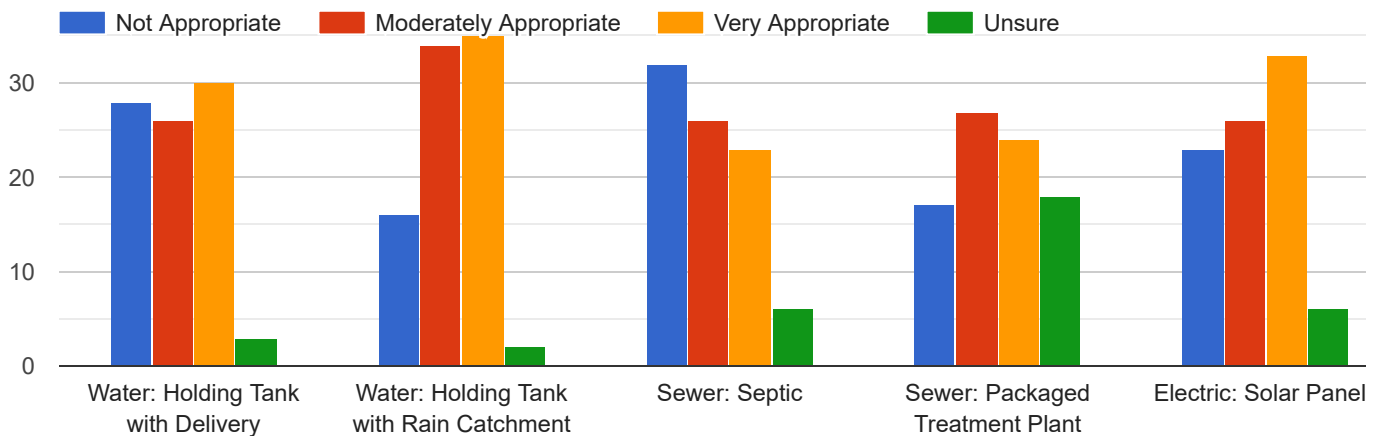
7. How supportive are you of allowing housing development on the Sound View Ridge upland area of the site?

88 responses



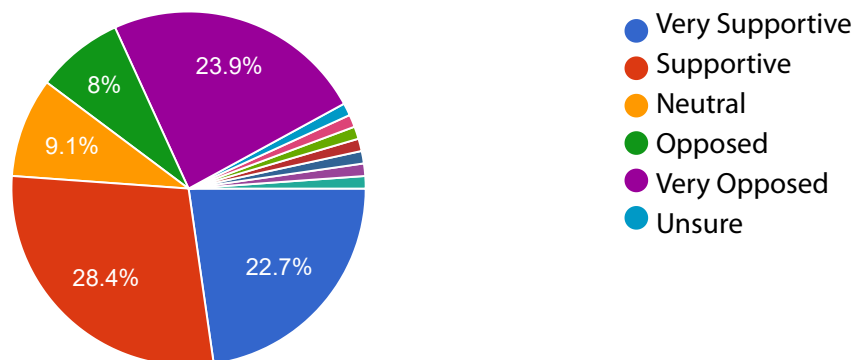


8. In light of the anticipated high costs of providing conventional utility service for new housing development, how appropriate are the alternative utility options below? (i.e. do you think they are reasonable and attractive options for new development Sitka?)



9. How supportive are you of allowing land to be leased for cruise visitor activities (i.e. recreational tourism) on the study area? (Note: the graphic below depicts a potential development scenario; cruise visitor activities could vary depending on the potential developer)

88 responses



Other:

- For God's sake!! Seriously?? Tourist entertainment?? Seriously appalling.
- Supportive but with restrictions. Low impact. E.g. no ziplines. Emphasis on trails
- Supportive if it was owned by the city and the use benefited the city financially. i.e. I don't think it should be sold to cruise companies.
- There should be a mix of high end housing and rec tourism
- Unclear what arrangement this would be who would develop etc.

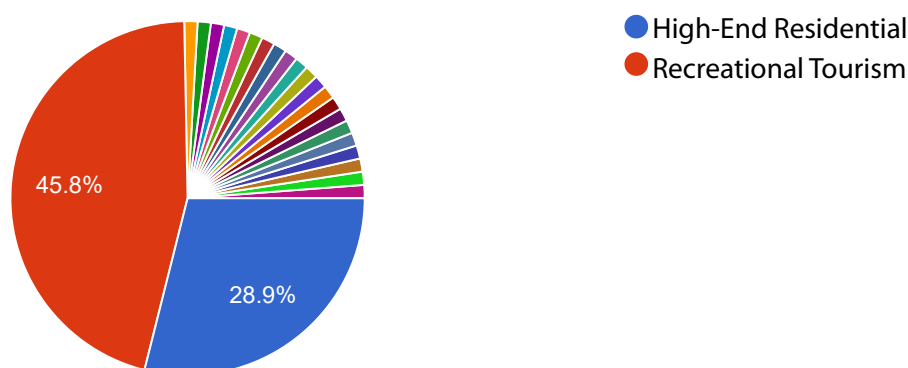


## Question 9, "Other" continued:

- I think that the opportunities are boundless but feel that you are wrong in aiming at cruise ship visitors only. I think that industry will decline and you should be looking at pleasing independent travelers. Baby Boomers want cruises but what about the younger generations that want experiences? I think we need to rework Old Sitka and enhance it. A ghost town perhaps. Provide a place for tourists to buy or rent camping gear for the campgrounds so they can "sleep with the bears". Build more cabins in the campground so the tourists do not get eaten by the bears!. Make it easy to fly in and stay there. I think our future needs to support independent travelers that want to stay for a week or two. I also think that we need to be better than our SE neighbors, for example: Hoonah has the longest zipline in the world. Can we beat that? I think we can! Have you considered a ferris wheel on Japonski Island?
- Unsure

## 10. Which land use do you prefer for the Harbor Point area?

83 responses



## Other:

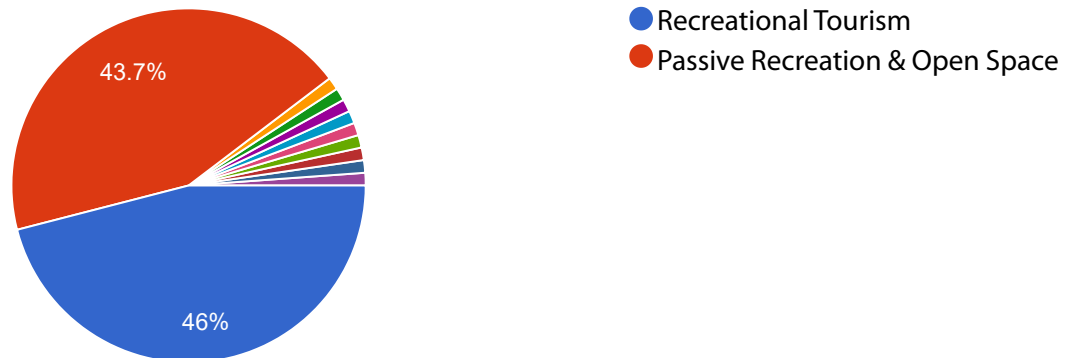
- 1) City owned barge dock to ship rock from No Name Mountain. 2) Lease/sell parcel to cruise ship line to build hotel.
- Again...ridiculousness. No. No. No.
- I think it should be used for recreational tourism but not just for cruise ship passengers as I believe that industry will never recover. You need to look at the next generation of tourism. They will want to stay for a week or two and learn things. Give them opportunities to volunteer at the Raptor Center, Sitka History Museum, Fortress of the Bears and Sheldon Jackson Museum!
- Leave alone
- Leave it alone
- Leave it alone.
- Leave it as is. People appreciate a taste of the real Alaska and this is the last undeveloped waterfront on HPR
- Leave it!
- Mix of both. Something for sitkans and the tourism
- Natural habitat
- New boat launch
- Park
- Passive recreation

Question 10, "Other" continued:

- Passive recreation use & scenery. No amusement adventure park or high-end residential development.
- Protected wildlife area; passive recreation.
- Public access to the beach areas, mixed use in the cove area, low density large lots upland .
- Public recreation
- Recreational tourism coupled with an oceanographic learning center and trails for electric ATV's
- Recreational, but not oriented toward cruise ship visitors
- Walk-in public use cabin(s) with waterfront access.
- Walking trails, picnic sites and fishing spots for locals

11. Which land use do you prefer for the No Name Mountain area?

87 responses



Other:

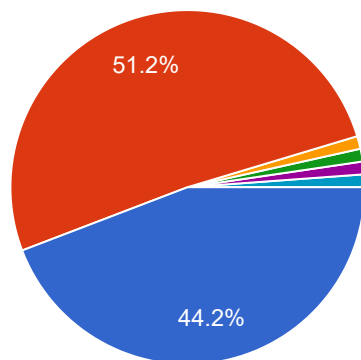
- Combination of the two options above (passive rec/open space & some rec tourism)
- Generate activities towards all visitors not just cruise ships
- I think it should be left as is for the tourists who want to see what our environment is really like. That might be passive recreation and open space, but I'm not really clear of your definitions of those areas.
- No. No. No. Greedy. Greedy. Greedy.
- Recreation, public use cabin(s). Trails for everyone.
- Recreational tourism is fine, but I don't think just focusing on cruise ship visitors is a good idea. This year is a good example of why. The waterfront property should be developed for high end residential which will provide Sitka property tax revenue for decades and the mountain can be developed for not only cruise ship visitors but Sitka really needs to explore year round tourism opportunities. Ski area with snow making capabilities? (We have plenty of water) Cross country skiing? Snow shoeing? Ice skating rink? There are some things that would be nice that were available for year round residents instead of forgetting about us and just focusing on summer tourists.
- Revenue generating Trap , Skeet and Sporting Clays park
- Rock extraction quarry
- Study said No Name Mountain would supply 100 year source of rock exportable to other locations in Alaska.





12. Do you think the No Name Creek Terrace area is suitable for residential development, or should it be used for passive recreation & open space?

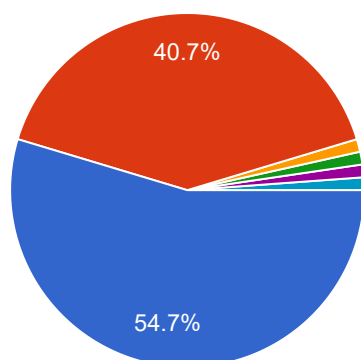
86 responses



- Single-family Detached Residential
- Passive Recreation & Open Space
- Commercial activity. Too far out, better residential opportunities closer to town
- Same thoughts as for the previous question.
- Leave it alone
- We really need single family homes but can it be mixed use?

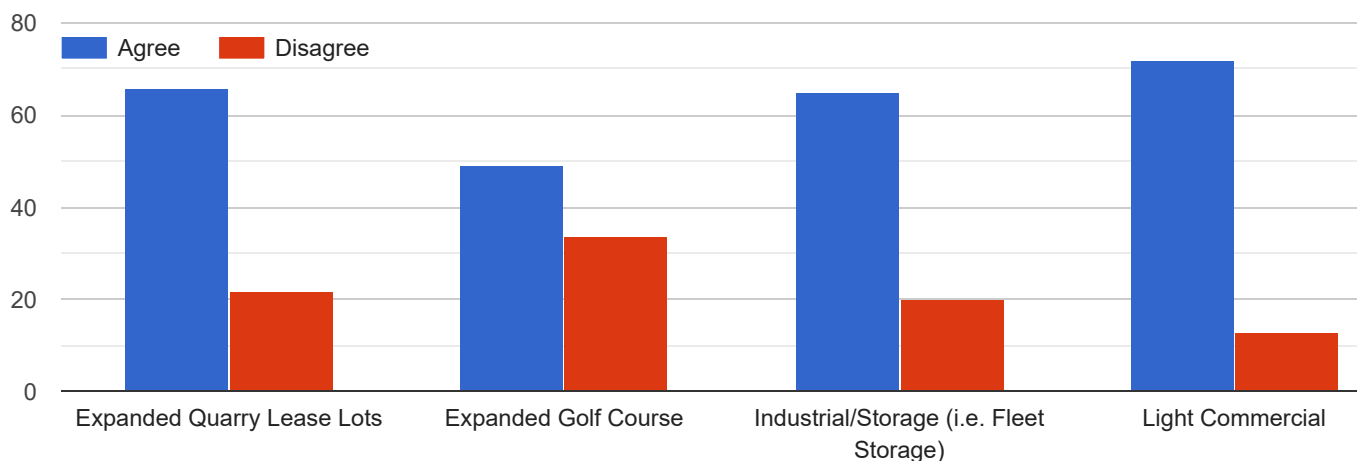
13. Which land use do you prefer for the Sound View Ridge area?

86 responses



- Mixed Residential
- Passive Recreation & Open Space
- Single family homes. No condominiums or apartments. As an adjacent land owner I don't want my property value (I spent a LOT for this home) driven down by condo's or apartments. My next be...
- Both
- If feasible, low density housing
- both

14. Do agree or disagree with the proposed land uses for the Granite Creek Area?



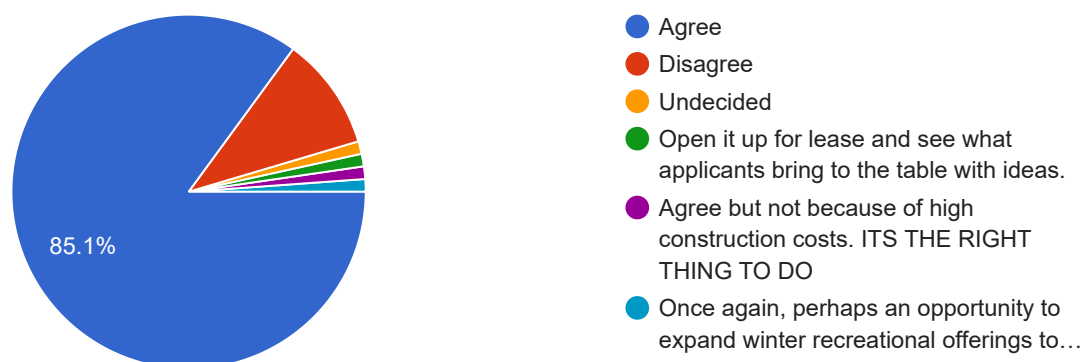
### 15. Which land use is most suitable for the Muskeg Wetlands area?

88 responses



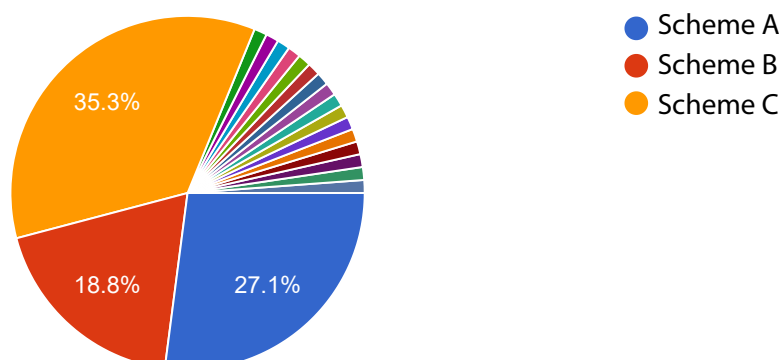
### 16. Considering the severe slopes and difficult construction conditions associated with the Saddle Mountain area, do you think this area should remain undeveloped and used for passive recreation/open space?

87 responses



## 17. Select which overall land use scheme you prefer for the entire study area site.

85 responses



### Other:

- All of the land should be open for development. It's the best area in Sitka that is safe from landslides. If the city put a thousand residential lots on the market the utilities in the area would be developed. One thousand new homes would paying property taxes and for utility services would cover the cost of development.
- At this time and with the financial situation the city will be in after the events of 2020 I feel it best to shelve this whole project and focus on keeping the city solvent by keeping people here in Sitka and doing everything possible to create new full time jobs here in Sitka
- B is best but no housing at No Name and mixed high end waterfront property and recreational tourism
- Combination - harbor point residential use, mix of rec tourism & open for passive rec in suitable areas, develop granite creek area further for the listed objectives.
- Do not expand the golf course.
- I do not support any development of the waterfront area
- I like Scheme b with limited residential if at all on sound view ridge. Development costs for residential would be prohibitive in any case. Better to develop residential in other, more suitable areas
- I prefer a hybrid use option for Harbor point and no name mountain where harbor point is high end residential and the no name mountain is developed for tourism/local recreational use. This could include zip line, mountain bike trails, view points, etc. Tourism is only a 4 month activity in Sitka, but outdoor rec trail improvements on no name mountain could enhance quality of life for locals year round. look at HPR rec area! One of the residential lost could be set aside for public waterfront access and connect to the trails on no name mountain during the off season.
- Land use C with conditions. See other comments at the bottom.
- Leave it alone
- No development except quarry expansion in Granite Creek & some other light uses there. No golf course expansion.
- None of them.
- None. Stop sucking up to the greedy cruise cows.
- See above comments. I like A, but with waterfront single family home development, like in B, but I don't like the Sound ridge housing in B. With option C, again the waterfront should be single family housing and no Sound ridge housing. As with all, winter time recreational opportunities are being missed.
- These areas should remain undeveloped at this time.
- Why is this study ruling out quarrying no name mounting?!



Please share any other comments you would like the planning team to consider:

- Something that will generate revenue for this town besides tourism...
- The cost to properly set up water, sewer, and utilities now will be beneficial in the long run because housing without 21st century amenities will not draw as much interest. See housing in Fairbanks... prices for homes without water don't sell for much.
- Thank you for considering the opinions of those who live and work here.
- More recreation area. Leave wetlands alone. Thank you.
- As i get older (I am in my mid 70s) the idea of a condo becomes more attractive. That is one reason I picked option 3, because there could be some nicely sited condos that people who are selling larger homes can move into. Perhaps a senior campus that combines condos, assisted living and long term care in one location where people can move "up" as care needs change, on the Sound View Ridge. Many seniors can afford the development costs, especially if they sell their homes which have increased in value. That would free up their current homes. for instance, ours could easily be made into two apartments that may help alleviate median cost housing problems. // I think developing more high end waterfront residential property is not appropriate given the fall in population forecast. A better use would be for tourism development. The development of canopy walks, a tram, mountain bike trails, zip line would also provide recreational opportunities for residents as well as visitors. // What is the status of the proposed swap with McGraw, land for a haul-out. Allowing McGraw to expand the cruise facility may be the best use of that land and get us a haul-out, I think given the bids we got for the haul-out at the Paxton Park we may want to go back to that. // Support use of Granite creek for gravel, rock quarry and expansion of the golf course, if they want to. // One other option, could this land be swapped for land that may be appropriate for mobile home parks. Mobile homes seem to be a way to provide affordable housing. When we first moved here we had a mobile home. When we could afford it we moved "up" to a stick built view home. Affordable housing is still a need, even though it may not be appropriate for this site is there any way this site can be leveraged to provide for affordable housing elsewhere. This is one of the main obstacles to our kids moving back. (If we could get a nice view condo perhaps we could sell our house on very generous terms to our kids.) // Finally, thank you for the PDF. I found the video very difficult to work with. I could not move the cursor to where I wanted to look at something again. When I wanted to stop the video to look at a map there would be a YouTube pop up covering the map part i wanted to look at. I wish you had better highlighted the PDF at the top of the page for those of us who do not learn or absorb material well from video. I did not see it until after I had slogged through the video. // Thanks for the opportunity to go through this and comment.
- Consider taking cruise ship passengers via boat to mitigate Halibut Point Rd disintegration. If ground transportation is used, make transfer to Electric Vehicles a requirement.
- For Harbor Point—mixed combination of high end residential and tourism.
- I appreciate this thorough study. I do want to state that it would be a win-win for Sitka if we could create an activities area for cruise passengers. The caveat is that if we pursue this at harbor Point we need to control the traffic on HPR, and we need to move people without creating noise and air pollution for the residents. I suggest more water transport to the downtown area, and requiring the use of electric or hybrid buses as opposed to the outdated diesel rigs presently being used.
- Why on earth do we need to expand a golf course that is already underutilized? More tourism-related spaces? How about new ideas that create year-round jobs.
- I really like the video and the survey as a means of input for this planning decision. Good job!!



- The one critical aspect I think that was overlooked is that development of the Harbor Point and no-name mountain areas for tourism (option A?) means that the benefits of increased tourism only flow to the one or two businesses leasing the property. The remote location of this area from downtown and the fact that tourists may focus on the new areas and not enter downtown was never mentioned. The economic impact of diverting tourists from the downtown area where many local businesses benefit from their spending to a theme park out the road where a few businesses benefit was completely overlooked.
- For residential, I would prefer we look at pockets on Kramer Ave that are suitable as well as up Indian River. These are both much closer to town and utilities. I would hope that with expanding tourism out HPR, that we don't kill our downtown area.
- Easy does it on this one, We're just now opening this up with the continuation of the cross trail.
- If sound view rest ridge was kept off the grid and eco-friendly, that would be ideal. Internet availability would be helpful though. Seems like less need for high end housing than low end housing and economic funds to city a priority, if tourism continues.
- Leave it alone.
- Affordable homes is of prime importance, , there is all kinds of benefits, when people can afford their own place. Also I don't know for sure , but it seems that area wouldn't be a great site for solar, as it seems to be in the shade a lot of the year
- The city needs to stay out of the real estate business, the mill site management has been ridiculous, sell the land to the highest bidders and use the money to keep costs down. Stop spending resources on "planning".
- Natural green spaces make sitka better its not all about tourism or high end or expensive housing areas .
- What is needed in Sitka isn't more high-end residential, but affordable homes for small families and couples. // Consider adding in-stream hydropower for electricity in the area.
- Quarry the top of Saddle Mountain then turn that area into residential once quarrying was over with. Good view, sunny most of the year and close proximity to overburden sight and town.
- This seems like a piece of land that probably is most valuable remaining in the "bank," held for the future and well being of the environment.
- What would be the tragedy in leaving our little oasis alone? You are desperately trying to destroy Sitka and turn it into yet another ugly tourist garbage dump. The CHARM and DRAW of Sitka is that she is what she is! Destroy that and we are nothing more than another ugly tourist trap on the all important schedule. THAT would be the tragedy.
- There is a noticeable need for low priced single family dwellings.
- As I've mentioned earlier I feel that it is a big mistake to put all our eggs in the cruise ship tourism basket, with this year a prime example of why. I understand that tourism is a huge business that is here to stay, but this area has a prime opportunity to expand to year round tourism with the exploration of winter time outdoor activities. I understand that some of this study area may not be suitable for such things, but when you consider the possibilities of Harbor Mountain, other areas, along with this study area and there is opportunity here to have a more comprehensive plan for the whole area. I did like the Gondola idea early in the presentation. I have had more folks than I can mention from Outside ask me if Sitka has a winter recreation park, ski area, or other such attractions and I have to sadly tell them no. Plus, as a year round resident, it would be nice to have future development with an eye and ear to things that will stay open all year. It's frustrating and insulting that so many businesses just cater to the tourists and then give the residents the middle finger during the shoulder/off season. Just sayin'!....
- I'm not going to actively support any development until the city cleans up the old landfill/golf course water runoff to Granite Creek. This large ditch and down slope ponds are smelly, unsightly and has yet to be correctly sampled. We can't move forward if we are going to create more situations like this! The unsightly drainage issues are viewable

by going up to the golf course and observing the runoff to the west and south. I will actively (media exposure/ municipal assembly attendance/third party support) oppose any golf course/industrial expansion plans until we can see mitigation for existing runoff. For more information please call 907 414 0556.

- I Like the presentation. You should be proud of this planning effort. Amy and Scott did a great job. I also like at least 5 waterfront residential lots to defray costs.
- I really hope you will broaden your views and not bank our future on the profitability of cruise ship passengers. I was born at the end of the Boomer generation. Cruises were my parents dream. I want more adventure. You could not pay me enough to take a cruise on a large ship however I might consider an Alaskan Dream cruise. I truly think we could excel as a destination but you need to think about independent travelers. They may want cheap hostels, all inclusive campgrounds or luxury accommodations but they will all want experiences such as deck hands on a fishing boat for a week or the best zip line in the world or digging for clams. Maybe they want to be a volunteer at a museum or learn about SE flora and fauna. Think outside of the box people!
- I don't think Sitka needs more highly expensive, waterfront homes. Sitka does need more affordable housing and as far as recreational use for cruise ships it would be nice to keep traffic directed towards that side of town. The open spaces around the Cross Trail should be protected.
- I am concerned about the high growth of heavy vehicle traffic (buses and trucks) on HPR and the lack of enforceable rules as to speed and adequate containment of loads (have had auto windshield damaged repeatedly with gravel and no way to recoup replacement costs). I do think these issues need to be addressed and corrected. Also, just the "beating" the state highway takes from the heavy vehicles; there should be an equitable way to reimburse the city from businesses which depend on the route while still controlling use!
- I would also support overall land use suitability Scheme B as my second choice
- Other areas are better suited to these development ideas. please leave some undisturbed areas nearby for residents recreation. not everything has to be about making a buck.
- If you are going to develop, consider doing so in order to keep the housing market and job opportunities available for the younger generations. We would all love to make Sitka home, so we need more revenue and more affordable housing. I believe improving our tourism is key in creating more revenue. If housing is built, it MUST be suitable for a low-medium income family to purchase. Please, no more high-end residential areas until the housing problem is balanced.
- Scheme A is the best, but do not want residential development on Sound View Ridge.
- The city needs to create projects that will generate long term income rather than raising rates and taxes to meet their needs. No Name Mountain has already been identified by a study the city did a number of years ago as a 100 year source of hard rock that can be exported for state and federal jobs all over the state (breakwaters/shore protection). Rock for these projects is now being barged in from British Columbia, Canada so the City of Sitka could easily compete with them. // This study also leaves out the strip of land along the upland side of HPR (base of No Name Mountain) that could be used for high end residential home view lots and commercial development. Putting a road up into this area from HPR would be easy, and the development costs would be less the anywhere else. (That is if the city decides to sell the waterfront area for housing). Once the waterfront area is used for housing the city will never be able to extract rock from No Name Mountain. // Since this plan will affect this area for decades to come, remember that once Saddle Mountain has been leveled that level area will be suitable for commercial and industrial development. // I agree the population of Sitka is dropping, but you fail to consider the main reason for that is a lack of housing. Not just affordable housing, but housing in general. If the city would develop some of this land for housing people would move here. Rich folks would build expensive homes that would increase the city property tax base. Leaving this land locked up makes no sense if we are to grow.





- Sitka needs mountain biking. It's one of the very few towns in the USA that doesn't have ANY mountain bike single-track trails.
- Contiguous shoreline is a rare and precious commodity. Once subdivided, it will remain subdivided. Tourism may or may not be the best use of the land right now, but added to the equation must be the future potential of the property as a contiguous whole against future needs. // Private homes may be beneficial for the tax base, but so is economic activity. It will be a while before tourism reaches pre-coronavirus days, and during that time we will need to get as much from each tourist as possible. With Alaska's economic future profoundly challenged, it is likely the housing market will be soft at the same time every potential job will be precious.
- I'm all for many of the ideas presented here, but I think we can come up with better uses for land than golfing.
- This is NOT the time to be determining the fate of the study area and its parts. Set this development project aside; it arose only because the McGraw business wanted to acquire a parcel. The future of the cruise ship industry is highly questionable, contrary to the video. Post-Covid ridership is questionable, and globally the industry likely will have to greatly downsize to mitigate climate change. Don't mar this scenic asset of Sitka's for this unnecessary and likely ill-advised development. I CONTEST both the video's conclusion that, for the water front parcel, the 'highest and best use' is commercial or high-end residential development, and that no other explicit option was given for the related survey question. Concerning the high-end waterfront residential option, let's not continue widening the wealth gap in Sitka, especially with a development like this which most likely will just attract Lower-48 baby-boomer retirees, who after a year here won't pay sales tax or a big chunk of the property tax. Considering that parcel and the other potential residential parcels, the growth is unlikely to pay for its development costs - as has widely been true in much of the U.S. for decades. Sitka is at a point of crisis -- considering the high cost of living, the Covid shutdown which may recur, and uncertainties of climate change and ocean acidification on our economy -- such that we should be worrying about houses getting boarded up instead of trying to get yet more built in the proposed locations, must less for a clientele that mainly has yet to move here. I regret the study and its recommended options have prodded this negative reaction; however, I think my assessment is closer to the reality of the situation and what should be decided.
- I am open to any development that doesn't infringe on the current golf course.
- I am unclear on what the priority level of this proposed project is for the city. In the context of current overall development in the city, this doesn't seem like where the city should be putting its energy. It is not a viable area for "affordable" housing, and given that the city's population isn't growing, high end single family home development doesn't seem like it needs to be a high priority either. If the goal is economic development, the city would be better off developing a marine haulout and seeking to grab market share in the marine services sector. Regardless of the fact that we would be late entrants into that field, Sitka has a lot to offer. // This presentation doesn't talk about funding. If this is just going to be a giveaway of public lands to private entities in the hopes that there will be some trickledown positives for the city in the form of employment and tax receipts, this too seems ill conceived. Overall, unless by "long term development", you mean 100 years from now, I'm not seeing this as being a viable avenue of investigation for the city.
- Tourism will be a stable/necessary income source for Sitka again, but it may take a few years. - Keep the scenic view from a tour ship natural - The existing spent S&S rock quarry, upland from the deep water dock, is ugly from the water
- This site too expensive to develop for residential use - Others areas closer to town are still available
- Rock is necessary to develop building pads/site prep on the remaining steep sloped lands and as the existing 60+ year homes are demolished and new structures built - the granite creek rock source area can be expanded and should be kept hidden from the tourists/visitors view

- Sitka needs wetlands credits/bank for development of other city owned property closer to town with existing utilities/infrastructure close by
- These are uncertain times for Sitka and Sitkans. With the Covid-19 scare, the low price of a barrel of crude oil, the high bond debt for raising the blue lake hydro dam project, the aging infrastructure, etc., I think Sitkans will procrastinate on making any decisions and will let your group select the best use of the lands. // The existing utility diagram shows the CBS water main extending to Starrigavan - I think it stops at the Ferry terminal as stated in the verbiage
- I suggest to consider better utilization of quarry materials. Don't allow waterfront residential lots to fill in the ocean. Make lots big enough to suit the topography. Quarries should be better planned to avoid the huge eyesore like the one upland of the cove area. After a quarry is exhausted the land use should be set up for future uses, not a hazard for the surrounding land owners. // Thank you for Conducting this survey.
- Great form and format to provide info and get feedback. thanks
- Focus on keeping the main street store fronts open and employing citizens year round rather than such a strong focus on tourism which employs some locals but only part-time while the majority of those employed live out of Sitka and most out of state. So those wages have little to no multiplier effect on our economy. If our main street dies we soon will look like downtown Ketchikan, Skagway, or all the other cities in SE Alaska. The fact that we are a functional city and not just a main street of tourist trinket shops has been noted time after time by visitor surveys on which city is your favorite and why. I think this is a fine project to consider, but at this time we have much greater issues to plan for and this is currently not the time for this project.
- Hello, // Thank you for this comprehensive approach to a beautiful parcel of land on this island home. I have a lot to say about this moving forward so I'm attempting to keep this short... // Positives from a business standpoint I think development of additional "excursions" for our cruise ship passengers is always a plus-it adds depth to Sitka as an active, interesting port; and therefore more valuable to the cruise ship industry. It also will be fun for our local friends and neighbors (Zip line, hiking trails, etc) to have additional recreation opportunities. Concerns from a business standpoint include the health of our downtown. Not just the businesses but the history, the church, the museums, the ability to maintain a healthy community; whether you are a profit or non-profit entity. This may not seem to directly affect that concern however with the plan for expanded dock facilities it is a concern that "bussing" people in will not happen in the numbers previously realized. // As for housing opportunities it is hard to imagine that happening at any cost that would help our current housing situation. Investors/big money would have to be involved here and that would be great for our community if done so that it opens up real estate for everyone.. hard to imagine. // I will continue to keep up on this-after all we do have plans for an ice cream shop in this very neighborhood!
- I am confused by the "recreational tourism" development. Would it be to sell the land? But with restrictions to keep it mostly natural? or to lease it, but allow some permanent development? It seems like an option could be to develop an area as a public park, like the state parks and Forest Service, that would be public access, but would also allow commercial use by permit? // Was there any analysis of costs/revenues for zip lines etc. - it seems like that sort of thing could just as well happen upland, and not on the waterfront, and in any case, it seems like the value of the land should be put pretty high, as it is a vanishingly small resource in Sitka, undeveloped waterfront. // I recall seeing back when McGraw/Halibut Point Marine proposed trading the tract of waterfront Harbor Point in exchange for building a haul out at the Industrial Park, a map that showed how there was a condition on the property that there had to be a public easement to allow public access to the water. Is that the case? It seems like that would be very important no matter how it is developed. // I think the highest and best use of that Harbor Point waterfront would be public, just because there is so little available, and there are plenty of high end waterfront homes already. If they



did sell it for houses, there should be public access and the strip of waterfront/beach should all be public. I think that could make the entire development more valuable, if all the homes (or rental cabins, or zipline concession) had access to the shoreline. But I think it would be better as a park (that could be used for tourism) than as housing. // Another concern is cultural and archaeological, it seems likely that there are cultural sites there. // In general it looks like the best thing for Sitka is to let this place in general stay natural, the wetland bank idea is great, and to take great care in decisions on the waterfront, so that it is in best interests of the community - when Shee Atika developed Alice Island I think they missed an opportunity, to have all the houses have access to the shore. So if there was houses built at Harbor Point, they would be inland and the shore all around would be public access. // Then Granite Creek, seems like keeping industrial type activities focused. Golf course is great.

- We have open space - recreation everywhere around Sitka. We need more housing , more land to put on Tax role.
- Thank you for this comprehensive approach to a beautiful parcel of land on this island home. I have a lot to say about this moving forward so I'm attempting to keep this short. Positives from a business standpoint I think development of additional excursions for our cruise ship passengers is always a plus-it adds depth to Sitka as an active, interesting port; and therefore more valuable to the cruise ship industry. It also will be fun for our local friends and neighbors (Zip line, hiking trails, etc) to have additional recreation opportunities. Concerns from a business standpoint include the health of our downtown. Not just the businesses but the history, the church, the museums, the ability to maintain a healthy community; whether you are a profit or non-profit entity. This may not seem to directly affect that concern however with the plan for expanded dock facilities it is a concern that bussing people in will not happen in the numbers previously realized. As for housing opportunities it is hard to imagine that happening at any cost that would help our current housing situation. Investors/big money would have to be involved here and that would be great for our community if done so that it opens up real estate for everyone.. hard to imagine. I will continue to keep up on this-after all we do have plans for an ice cream shop in this very neighborhood!

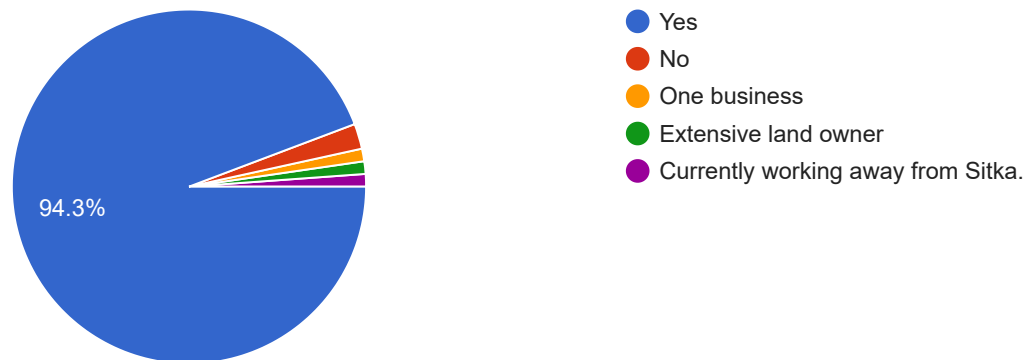


## Demographic Survey Responses

The following optional questions were provided at the end of the land use survey.

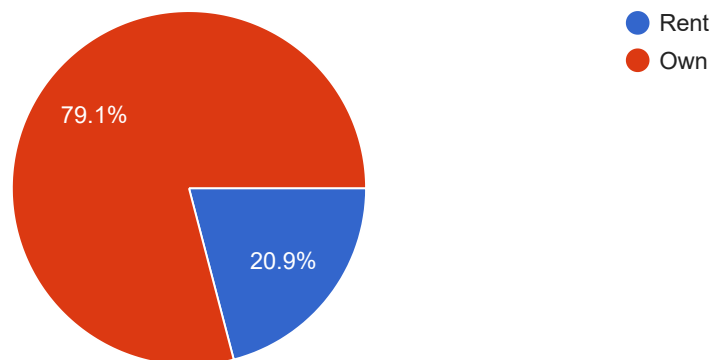
### 1. Are you a resident of Sitka?

87 responses



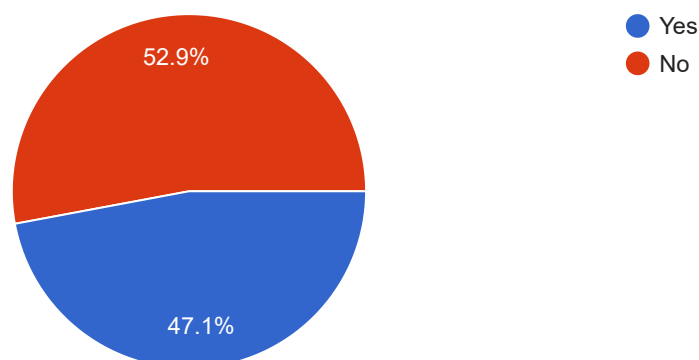
### Do you rent or own your home?

86 responses



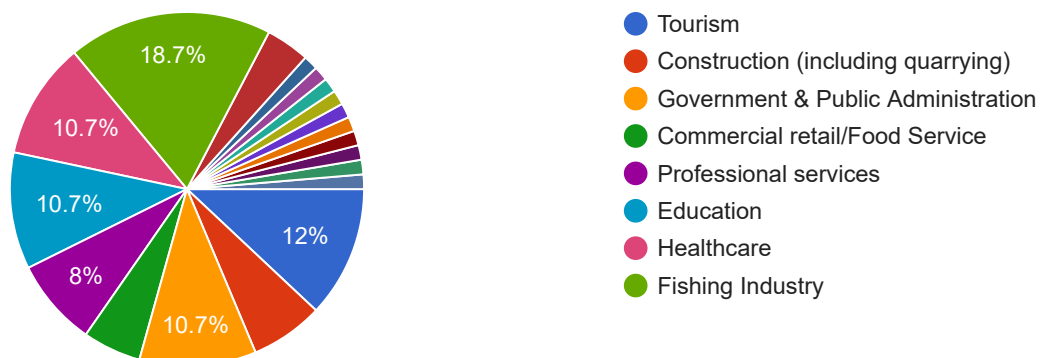
### Do you own your own business?

85 responses



If you are employed, please specify the sector in which you work:

75 responses

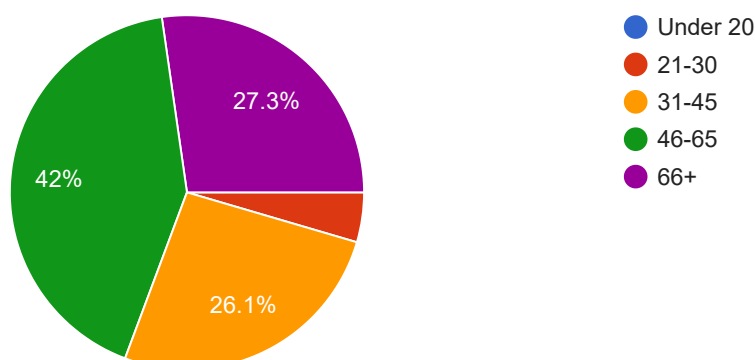


Other:

- Affordable housing, real estate, boat broker
- Art and writing
- Logistics
- Media consultant
- None of your business
- Non-profit - mixed animal welfare and tourism
- Retail community pharmacy with 30+ employees that are struggling to live and raise families in Sitka. We would like to start a frozen food business but cant see how with all the utility expenses and lack of a good labor pool
- Retired
- Retired
- Retired
- Retired, but still active in construction, fishing, and professional services
- Small business owner

Please specify your age range:

88 responses



## Other Feedback

The following feedback was received during the open survey period, but separately from the web-based collection:

### Respondent 1:

Contiguous shoreline is a rare and precious commodity. Once subdivided, it will remain subdivided. Tourism may or may not be the best use of the land right now, but added to the equation must be the future potential of the property as a contiguous whole against future needs. Keeping the shore property in city hands and leasing it (presumably for tourist interests) allows future choices.

Private homes may be beneficial for the tax base, but so is economic activity. It will be a while before tourism reaches pre-coronavirus days, and during that time we will need to get as much from each tourist as possible. With Alaska's economic future profoundly challenged, it is likely the housing market will be soft at the same time every potential job will be precious.

There appears to be a good size chunk of property along Sand View Ridge that might make a good senior citizen complex with a number of apartments or stand-alone homes for active folks, assisted living for folks who need some help, and a nursing home for folks who need more. Sitka appears to be "aging in place" so that such a facility will be appreciated by elders who don't need the large homes that they're currently living in, but don't want to leave Sitka and their friends and family who live here. This might give a living density that would justify the higher development cost and the need for some sort of transport into downtown (a loop of "the ride"? a van from the facility, whatever.)

### Respondent 2:

1. First, I thought the on-line video presentation was an innovative way to present the project effort to date.

The drone footage was also interesting and flying the area when there was some snow on the ground helped create ground cover contrast that would not be visible if the flight was done during the summer.

2. Point #7 in the Key Concepts regarding the lack of water depth for a dock at Harbor Point confused me. The marine chart shows a 25 to 45 foot shelf immediately offshore that drops sharply to 100 feet of water. This is an ideal layout for a trestle dock that reaches deep water. I believe Harbor Point has great potential for a cruise ship terminal and that option was not discussed at all in the draft plan.

3. Another thing that is missing is the identification of a road corridor between Granite Creek and No Name Creek. Road access would open up the entire study area to tourism options as well as options for self sustained housing. Many, in fact, most of Sitka's island homes are self sustaining, so it is not a huge leap to create similar options within the study area. During one of my previous stints at CBS a Ketchikan logger proposed building a one-lane road with turnouts through the study area in return for rights to helicopter log cedar trees from CBS lands in the same area. I heard not long ago that he was still interested. He proposed doing the permitting as well for the road.

4. The draft plan states that adequate rock resources presently exist in Sitka which may be true. However, those resources are controlled by one or two companies which effectively cuts off small contractors. The lack of competition also drives up construction costs, both private and public. I believe the plan should identify a potential quarry site that could be developed for use by any party that has the capacity to operate in the quarry according to set safety standards. Petersburg does this, if I remember correctly.

5. As a general statement I liked Land Use Scheme A with the addition of a road corridor through the study area.

I would also support an RFP to sell Harbor Point for waterfront commercial activity that could include high end housing development in addition to a cruise terminal.





Open comment form responses – were available online, delivered to businesses/organizations, and available at City Hall and Library from early February – end of March:

### Comments for Best Uses of Study Area:

1. Sell lots, make affordable housing/affordable lots
2. I think this area should remain as wilderness/recreational use. Keep the support for existing business/industry intact by not opening up more areas for development. With Sitka's financial struggles, let's put the infrastructure money into maintaining what we already have instead of creating more expenses.
3. Leave it alone for recreational use, no business!
4. Subdivide for affordable housing.
5. Sitka needs affordable housing and also more support services for boats. There is a lack of services for fishing boats such as life raft and survival suit inspections, we also need places more than one place for buying skiffs and motors, as well as more places that provide welding and machine shop services. It seems kind of pointless to have another rock quarry because once you dig it up the land is probably useless. Also, what can be done with the rock? Now that the airport expansion is completed is there really any use? We also need more stores for buying food in bulk.
6. Leave it be.
7. The SCLT would like to see some land set aside for a SCLT neighborhood, or even a lot here and there in a subdivision.
8. 1) Large waterfront section: city must retain ownership of this property. A large commercial dock should be built on this parcel of land. This dock would be used by large ocean going barges that haul away rock removed from No Name Mountain as well as cruise ships. These activities would generate revenues for the city for decades. 2) No Name Mountain: city needs to maintain ownership of this large rock source because it will generate revenue for the city for decades to come. The type of hard rock at this location would be exported all over the state for state and federal jobs such as harbors, breakwaters, shore protection, etc. 3) North Benchlands on town side: small lots of 5,000-7,500 sq. ft should be sold to the public by lottery drawing. LID would be used to construct homes. People would be allowed to build their own homes, cabins, tiny homes, or place manufactured homes on these lots. 4) Area near Granite Creek: should be used for commercial and industrial uses.
9. Really open to any possibilities for adding land and commerce to our community.
10. Set aside some industrial zoning area's in places with Quarry potential. Surround those areas with light commercial (smaller commercial lots) and then move into residential zones. The industrial areas should be surrounded by commercial areas to buffer the residential areas. Some greenbelt areas should also be disbursed throughout to create a natural buffer between zones. If possible, keep quarry sites further uphill away from the waterfront. Maybe use the greenbelts as easements for utilities where possible to eliminate any need to escheat those easements later from private owners. This end of town is our new first impression of our town. It's the first thing the tourists off the ships at the new dock will see. Keep the heavier commercial and industrial zones out of their view and create a more welcoming lighter commercial and residential zones closer to their view. Maybe even incorporate CCR's for facade's in direct sight of passengers. We have to remember that like it or not we rely on them to come back and tell others about our wonderful town. We need them to brag about us and their experience.
11. Housing development and rock quarry. I also want to note there should be a cultural resource survey done and part of the planning process for any development as there are known cultural resources in the project area.



March 10th, 2020

Amy Ainslie, CBS Planning and Community Development Director  
 Scott Brylinsky, CBS Special Projects Manager  
 100 Lincoln St.  
 Sitka, AK 99835

Dear Amy and Scott,

Thank you for attending and presenting information on the No Named Mountain/Granite Creek Master Plan at the February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 SEDA Board meeting. Please find the following comments from SEDA regarding the proposed development of this area.

The City and Borough of Sitka has a fiduciary responsibility to receive the best financial return on this community land asset to meet the needs and support all Sitkans.

The master plan for this 832 acre parcel of property had the ability to allow for multiple different types of use.

#### **Granite Creek Rock Quarries**

The land adjacent to the current CBS rock quarries on the southern end of the parcel appears to have potential for further expansion. Zoning issues and access need to be investigated and vetted by the community.

Additionally, there are reports that No Named Mountain has the potential for extracting high quality rock. This area should be investigated to analyze rock quality and quantity. Rock from this area has the ability to bring a financial return to the CBS and provide rock for future development of the parcel and the community overall.

#### **No Named Mountain Waterfront Property**

The waterfront property at the base of No Named Mountain has the potential for marine use, industrial use, commercial use, housing, and recreation. When considering development use of this high valued property, consideration should be taken to investigate the best return on asset to the community, including job creation and positive revenue to the CBS via property taxes and other revenue sources. The CBS could implement a multiple step request for proposal process to determine the interest from the private sector.

#### **CBS Uplands adjacent to Halibut Point Road**

The CBS lands adjacent to Halibut Point Road should be investigate for mixed use development. A mixed use of commercial and residential has the ability to allow for economic growth, while providing housing for business owners, employees and the general public.



### **No Named Mountain**

The property of No Named Mountain proper has the potential for multiple uses. The ocean facing side should be investigate for mixed use development and/or residential. The parcels facing away from the ocean should be investigate for industrial (including rock quarrying), commercial, mixed use, and residential.

### **Upland property between No Named Mountain and Granite Creek**

The flat upland property that runs between No Named Mountain and Granite Creek has the potential for residential, mixed use, industrial, and commercial use. The water facing parcels should be investigate for high end housing for the return to the community via property taxes. The inland properties should be investigated for mixed use and affordable, high density concepts in relation to the proposed Sitka trail network. Industrial and commercial use should additionally be looked for various pockets in this area.

### **Development Funding**

Development of the proposed parcels will require funding for baseline infrastructure, including water, sewer, electric, roads, etc... The CBS should investigate funding by the private sector via the RFP process or public funding via grants, bonds, and other creative financing methods. The CBS might consider investigating Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for this proposed new development. The TIF tools has been used by multiple municipalities to fund new development projects in the past few years.

SEDA appreciates the ability to comment on the No Named Mountain/Granite Creek Master Plan.

Please let me know if you have any question or if we can be of help in any way.

Sincerely,



Garry White, SEDA Executive Director



## Late Comments

Comments received after the close of the online survey period are included below:

Sitka Conservation Society  
P.O. Box 6533  
Sitka, AK, 99835  
(907) 747-7509  
info@sitkawild.org  
www.sitkawild.org



*Protecting the natural  
environment of the Tongass  
while supporting the  
development of sustainable  
communities since 1967.*

May 20, 2020

To Planning Director Amy Ainslie and Special Projects Manager Scott Brylinski:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the No Name Mountain Master Land Use Plan. The Sitka Conservation Society is making these comments on behalf of our membership of over 300 Sitkans that use, depend on, and care about the integrity of the Sitka Community Use area and the No Name Mountain area. We would respectfully offer a few considerations and suggestions in regards to the city's proposal to find the best use of the No Name Mountain area. Out of the proposed schemes for the master land use plan, SCS supports scheme A. We hope that the comments below provide additional points of consideration that can be used to enhance the suitability of this scheme for the area.

- **Affordability:** It is clearly demonstrated and communicated that the area of study will not help with the home affordability crisis in Sitka. We do not believe that development of the waterfront area will increase affordability in Sitka and discourage the use of this area to provide more high-end housing that remains out of reach for so many Sitkans, while simultaneously increasing property value and rates around town to higher standards as well.
  - If any high-end housing development is to be pursued in any of the study area, the City should evaluate the costs of investment needed to develop the area by the City (including utilities, site prep, roads, etc.) in comparison with the long-term property tax revenue generated. Included in this calculation should be the assumption that any development or construction of high-end housing would most likely be done by an older population, and this population does not - or after a few years, will not - pay taxes on property because of state tax relief for Seniors and the sales tax exemption for seniors in Sitka. These tax relief breaks do not contribute to the community's overall financial needs.
  - One avenue for the City to address the affordable housing crisis in Sitka is to evaluate the potential development of the golf course area. This area is flat, has good materials underneath for building on, and is adjacent to roads and infrastructure (water, electric, sewer). Acquisition of the site would have to be pursued either as a purchase or trade. Sitka Conservation Society does not have an opinion on the golf course as a housing site right now, and respects that the property is private. Pursuit of this area for affordable housing is perhaps one of the more logical areas in Sitka, but this idea would need to be pursued by a discussion with the current property owners and with the community as a whole. This suggestion comes from a question raised by the consultant's report, where there is mention of expanding the golf course to be an 18 hole golf course. Where did the interest or demand for golf course expansion come from?
- **Economic Diversification:** Any plans pursued should consider economic diversification especially making sure that a variety of local business has opportunities in new tourism development. The ideas of the semi-industrial areas for workshops, boat storage, and light manufacturing may offer some opportunities.



- We are concerned that potential development of a recreational tourism operation by a large cruise ship corporation out Halibut Point Road would have negative impacts for local businesses in Sitka. Recreational tourism development should happen through an equitable process and ensure that a variety of *local* businesses have the ability to bid on and compete for development opportunities. The COVID19 crisis has demonstrated that cruise ship corporations are unreliable and do not consistently conform to high standards for human health, community and public engagement at large. Furthermore, cruise ship corporations are all registered in foreign countries where they can influence and corrupt local governments and avoid paying taxes that contribute to overall well-being in the United States. They have also demonstrated a proneness to litigation with local communities that they visit, as per the lawsuits that the city of Juneau has repeatedly been engaged with.
- In order to maximize local community benefits and return, we support leasing of city land rather than sale of parcels to individual tourism operators.
- **Wetlands Mitigation Banking:** The City of Sitka should look at setting aside wetlands that are not easily developed in a mitigation bank as a revenue-generating source. Mitigation banking is a way to offset ecological loss from development projects by compensating for the preservation and restoration of a different area. The City should assess whether the significant wetland acreage that is unsuitable for development in the area behind No Name and Saddle Mountain could be suitable in a mitigation banking program. This has the potential to provide the city with a much-needed revenue source.
- **Rock Pits:** Rather than developing new rock pits, we recommend that the utilization and expansion of existing rock pits should be considered. Development of a rock pit at No Name Mountain is completely infeasible due to development costs, infrastructure investment needs, and the already available alternative sources of rock. Local rock pit operators describe the proposal to develop a rock pit at No Name Mountain as “not worth the air spent talking about it”. We recommend that the City heed the recommendations of the consultants to expand the Granite Creek rock pit area.
  - Alternative sources of rock that should be developed include the rock pits along the Green Lake Road system. These areas are already adjacent to the road infrastructure and there are many “pocket-pits” that have already been developed for supply that could be expanded and meet current and future rock needs. Another alternative source is the Katlian Bay road project, which will create an ample rock supply from the road cut construction.

Sincerely,



Katie Riley  
Policy Engagement Director



Andrew Thoms  
Executive Director

# Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Tribal Government for Sitka, Alaska

May 28, 2020

Scott Brylinsky, Special Projects Manager  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Planning Department  
100 Lincoln St.  
Sitka, AK 99835

RE: Sitka Tribe Comments on the No Name Mt./Granite Land Use Master Plan

Dear Mr. Brylinsky:

I write on behalf of Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA), tribal government in Sitka, Alaska for over 4,000 tribal citizens. As a tribal government, STA is responsible for the health, welfare, safety, and culture of its citizens. STA respectfully submits the following comments on the No Name Mountain Granite Land Use Master Plan.

STA is opposed to the No Name Mountain Granite Creek Land Use Master Plan due to the impact the coronavirus and associated health mandates has had on the ability of elders and other tribal citizens to meet and review the plan and provide recommendations to Tribal Council. Even under ideal circumstances STA would have found it impossible to thoroughly vet and provide comments on the complex and dense Plan in the twenty-one-day public review and comment period.

STA requests the City postpone finalizing the No Name Mountain Granite Creek Land Use Master Plan until such time that elders and tribal citizens can safely meet in person, without fear of the coronavirus, to review and comment on the Plan. The areas under consideration for development require close review and consideration by our tribal elders and culture bearers and we must abide by public health guidance.

STA also requests the City provide the Tribe with any National Environmental Policy Act documents related to Phase 6 of the Cross Trail.

Sincerely,



KathyHope Erickson  
Council Chair

(907) 747-3207 • Fax: (907) 747-4915 • 456 Katlian Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835







*May 21, 2020*

Dear Planning Department,

Our 240-member strong Sitka Cycling Club has prioritized building single-track mountain bike trails as a top goal. Currently, we are finishing a single-track trail near Sitka High School and are excited to work and ride on other bike trails in our community. In five years, we would love to develop a strong network of trails that can attract and be used by visitors while simultaneously benefiting the growing number of local cyclists.

Multiple studies demonstrate a significant economic impact of bicycle and trail tourism. In 2017 study from Outdoor Industry Association reported that bicycling participants spent \$83 billion on trip related sales (bicycle tourism). Sitka has the potential to tap into this market while providing tremendous health and quality of life benefits to the 8,700 residents who call Sitka home.

It was very exciting to see that bike trails are being considered for the No Name Mountain and Granite Creek master plan. Our club strongly supports developing bike trails in Sitka. Thank you for considering this request and the many benefits of having bike trails in the No Name Mountain and Granite Creek area.

For more background on the club visit our website at <https://sitkacycling.wordpress.com/> or call me at 738-8734.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Osborne", written over a light blue horizontal line.

*Doug Osborne*

*President, Sitka Cycling Club*



## Sitka Trail Works, Inc

801 Halibut Point Road, Sitka AK 99835

Phone: 747- 7244 email: [trail@sitkatrailworks.org](mailto:trail@sitkatrailworks.org)

Lynne Brandon, Executive Director

May 26, 2020

RE: Granite Creek Master Plan

Dear Planning Department:

Sitka Trail Works' Board of Directors met on May 21 and discussed the information presented by the planning team for the future development of the Granite Creek area. Sitka Trail Works' mission is to work efficiently and supportively with our partners to create, maintain and promote a beautiful, diversified and accessible trail system. The Board appreciates the opportunity to comment on development which may affect public use of the Cross Trail.

The Board broadly stated that their priority for use of the area is for outdoor recreation and open space and for uses that clearly provide benefits to the community. This includes land uses that enhance local health, are multiuse and available year-round. Further improvements should be ADA accessible to the greatest extent possible and help people learn about and appreciate the outdoors. Development should be structured in a way that both visitors and locals can use. Trails and protection of the Cross Trail's viewshed are priorities.

Specific recommendations include the following: The economics of any land development seems impracticable for housing. No additional quarries should be developed until the need is proven. If additional rock is needed in the future this work should take place in the Granite Creek area.

Outdoor recreation-oriented land use is important since this will support health, contribute to a high quality of life and drive spending that helps business, creates jobs and generates tax revenue that pay for schools and other public services. Investing in outdoor infrastructure attracts employers, residents, retirees, and a skilled workforce, ensuring that Sitka will thrive economically and socially. Smart investments can further grow this dynamic sector; good planning will make sure we grow while maintaining the quality of our natural setting and community.

Regards,

*Lynne C Brandon*

Lynne Brandon, Executive Director  
Sitka Trail Works, Inc.



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# THANK YOU

JONES  JONES

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