

City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

# MEMORANDUM

То:	Chris Duerksen, Clarion Associates John Robert Smith, Smart Growth America
From:	Michael Scarcelli, Planning and Community Development Department Director
Subject:	Progress Report for Next Steps from Smart Growth America Technical Assistance – Sustainable Land Use Code Audit
Date:	December 21, 2017

Since the September 12-13 Smart Growth America workshop and Next Steps memo that laid out a variety of recommendations, the City and Borough of Sitka has continued to make major progress on its draft Comprehensive Plan and have adopted a 9 month game plan to begin discussion and adoption of several recommendations.

In mid-November, our Department received the "Next Steps" memo from SGA that details the 3 topic areas, gives a brief overview of challenges and opportunities, and makes formal recommendations, including implementation strategies.

The following is a CBS Staff Summary of SGA's Recommendations:

## I. Housing Choices

- a. Promote accessory dwelling units
- b. Regulation and tracking of short-term rentals
- c. Reduce lot size and revise development standards
- d. Off-street parking reductions

## II. Downtown Development

- a. Explore increasing height maximum and setting a height minimum
- b. Incentives for multi-residential mixed use development
- c. Design standards
- d. Create bike and walk friendly downtown
- e. Create master plan for downtown

## III. Economic Development

- a. Address nonconforming lots, setbacks, and development standards (explore contextual standards)
- b. Study parking and explore various options
- c. Create master plans for Jarvis/Price/Smith, Katlian, Downtown, Sheldon Jackson Campus, etc.
- d. Update planned unit development standards
- e. Protect commercial and industrial uses and areas

Staff have reviewed the recommendations and presented this information to the Planning Commission and Administrator. Staff have suggested the following broad 9 month game plan to address some issues quickly (low-hanging fruit) that could have major positive impact but also offer less negative impacts, controversy, or major dedication of time or other resources. In essence, these are the short-term, easier means to make some powerful changes. This plan is open-ended and each topic will be more fully vetted and will include City Assembly discussion and ultimate approval. The following has received the blessing of the City Assembly, Planning Commission, and the City Administrator.

Planning and Community Development Department Prospective Timeline for Next Steps

- 1. January February 2018:
  - a. Title 21: Subdivision Required Monumentation of Plats.
    - i. This is a proposed amendment to Title 21 that would reduce and simplify the monumentation and flagging requirements for subdivisions. This could save a developer anywhere from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for most subdivisions, while also adequately 'marking' surveys and property lines. This would reduce the cost of developing land without material impact to property rights or survey quality.
  - b. Title 22: Zoning Code Administration (Due Process Required Notice)
    - i. This is an amendment to administrative provisions of Title 22 concerning due process notice requirements that aim to reduce advertising costs, increase use of social media, and increase overall notice to community and affected properties of proposed developments or actions. This would decrease costs to the City by about \$10,000 a year and increase notice through various media including newer media such as websites, email, and various social media.

#### 2. February - March 2018:

- a. Title 22: Development Standards.
  - i. Reduce **lot size and setbacks** in various zones to meet more realistic lot size and create a **formulaic setback** (slightly different from recommended "contextual setback") for existing nonconforming lots of record. This will reduce lot development costs, increase density, promote affordable housing and compact design, and will save a lot of staff time that can be refocused on other community development topics.
- b. Parking Survey.

- i. Staff would conduct a parking code audit and parking survey of downtown, present suggested options to make efficient use of current available parking, and present potential code changes for various zones and uses, and other options.
  - 1. The Title 22 zoning parking standards will be suggested to be reduced for ADUs, multi-family, and overall reduction and simplification of parking requirements per type of use and gross floor area. This will increase the highest and best use of limited land resources, reduce development costs, and increase property value.
- 3. March April 2018:

### a. Promote ADUs.

i. Propose amending ADU code to allow those in more zones as a permitted use, and remove barriers of 14 pre-conditions. This would including amending parking standard for ADUs. This change will increase potential for ADUs, reduce housing costs, increasing housing choices, and reduce staff time and municipal costs.

### 4. April - May 2018:

- a. Horticulture in Industrial zone and Small Animal Codes.
  - i. The industrial zone appears to be a place perfect for horticulture and it will be recommended to add this use to this zone as a permitted use (not agriculture that includes animals). While not a recommendation of SGA, staff feel this code change will promote local food production that will have various positive impacts to a sustainable community.
  - ii. In addition, there is the need to revisit our small animal code to address existing issues and attempt to provide a reasonable local food production options that work for Sitka's community, while addressing potential negative impacts.
- 5. May June 2018:

### a. Review of CBD and Public Lands Zoning Districts and Uses

- i. Propose adding temporary uses such as **Community and Pop-Up Type** Uses.
  - 1. Staff would like to present options for temporary conditional uses such as 1 day farmer's/artisan markets on Lincoln, temporary popups, other community uses of core community space that would create vibrant downtown experiences and provide entrepreneurial development opportunity.

### b. Explore options for STR and LTR tracking, monitoring, and enforcement.

i. Staff have already begun tracking STR as best as current data can provide. Staff will explore changes to administration of STR and LTR that would assist in future tracking and enforcement as well as provide better information to decision makers regarding STRs and the potential impacts.

- 6. July August 2018. Review of Business, Commercial, and Industrial Zoning Districts and Uses
  - **a.** Staff will make suggestions for adoption to promote business development, protect commercial and industrial uses, and address disharmony of uses between residential, mixed use, and higher commercial/industrial uses (i.e. CBD, C-1, C-2, I, and GP zoning districts).
  - b. This may entail greater study and master planning of the Jarvis/Price/Smith area.

#### 7. September 2018. Master Plans/Complex Planning Topics

- **a.** Staff will begin laying out strategy and timeline to address the following complex topics:
  - i. Downtown Master Plan and Proposed Changes to Development Standards and Uses
  - ii. Sheldon Jackson Master Plan
  - iii. Review and Amend PUD standards and incentives
  - iv. Katlian Avenue/Marine Street Master Plan

Finally, as we kick of the start of our implementation strategy, CBS staff and the Sitka Community are very thankful for the opportunity to work with Smart Growth America and we look forward to a bright year ahead. This opportunity is made possible through funding from the US EPA and it is greatly appreciated.