

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Agenda Sustainability Commission

Officers: Chair Aurora Taylor, Vice Chair Elizabeth Bagley, Secretary Erik de Jong

Members: Gerry Hope, Adam Vail

Staff Liaison: Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator

Assembly Liaison: Chris Ystad

Monday, October 5, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

Approve the September 14, 2026 minutes.

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics off the agenda)*

V. SPECIAL REPORTS

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

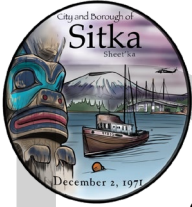
A. Discussion on Zoning Code Provisions for Data Centers

VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics on or off the agenda)*

IX. REPORTS *(Staff, Chair, Assembly, Commissioners)*

X. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

XI. ADJOURNMENT



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

Meeting Minutes Sustainability Commission

Officers: Chair Aurora Taylor, Vice Chair Elizabeth Bagley, Secretary Erik de Jong

Members: Gerry Hope, Adam Vail

Staff Liaison: Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator

Assembly Liaison: Chris Ystad

Monday, September 14, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order at approximately 6:02 p.m.

Present: Aurora Taylor (Chair), Elizabeth Bagley, Gerry Hope, Erik de Jong, Adam Vail

Absent: Chris Ystad (Assembly Liaison)

Staff: Bri Gabel (Sustainability Coordinator)

Public: None.

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA

No changes.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

Approve the May 4, 2026 minutes.

Bagley moved to approve the May 4, 2026 minutes.

Motion PASSED 5-0 by voice vote.

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics off the agenda)*

None.

V. SPECIAL REPORTS

None.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approve the Sitka Community Renewable Energy Strategy (SCRES) Data Quality Benchmarks

Gabel introduced the item and the purpose of the data quality recommendations were to improve the Commission's and Assembly's confidence in the community input on the final strategy and guide engagement efforts.

The recommendations were:

1. Aim for a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

2. Aim for a sample size of between 327 and 367 responses.
3. Aim for a $\pm 5\%$ demographic parity.
4. Target a minimum of 30 responses for high-priority groups.

Proposed high-priority groups were:

- Renters
- Non-white residents
- Potentially high/severely energy-burdened residents/households

Taylor asked clarifying questions regarding the sample size range, how a lower sample size would impact the confidence level and margin of error, and how energy burden demographics would be collected. Gabel responded that a lower sample size would decrease the confidence level and indicated that previous sample sizes ($n \sim 150$) returned an 80% confidence level with Sitka's current population and explained that energy burden demographic would be assumed using annual household income and Sitka's energy burden as estimated with the Department of Energy's energy burden calculations.

Commissioners continued to suggest ways to promote the survey, including speaking at community events, radio, newspaper and social media ads.

de Jong moved to approve the draft SCRES data quality benchmarks as written above.
Motion PASSED 5-0 by voice vote.

VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD *(not to exceed 3 minutes on topics on or off the agenda)*

None.

IX. REPORTS *(Staff, Chair, Assembly, Commissioners)*

Staff: Gabel reported on her trip to Hoonah, Alaska, in June to visit the Hoonah Indian Association's (HIA) community greenhouse, announced that Pacific Northwest National Lab (PNNL) engineers that worked on the Energy-to-Communities (E2C) project secured funding through the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Hydropower and Hydrokinetic Office (H2O) to continue supporting hydropower operations, data management, and develop new forecasting tools over the next three years, and noted her upcoming travel dates for the annual E2C summit in Denver, Colorado.

Chair: Taylor reported on her tour of the Sitka Sound Science Center's fish meal dehydration and composting project.

Commissioners: de Jong announced that Alaska Logistics, a new shipping company, had begun transporting electric vehicles from Seattle to Juneau.

Hope noted his upcoming attendance to Southeast Conference (SEC) in Ketchikan, Alaska.

X. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

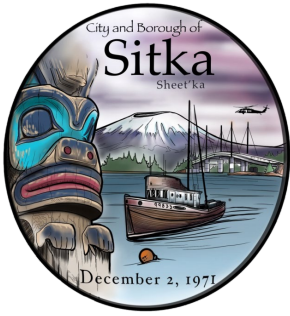
The next meeting was scheduled for October 5, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Harrigan Centennial Hall.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seeing no objection, the meeting ADJOURNED at approximately 6:50 p.m.

Minutes by Erik de Jong, Secretary



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Sustainability Commission Members
From: Aurora Taylor, Chair
Bri Gabel, Sustainability Coordinator 
Date: October 2, 2026
Subject: Discussion on Zoning Code Provisions for Data Centers

Background

While data centers have existed for at least twenty years, the development of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) have spurred rapid growth and expansion of the sector recently. While data centers are often thought of as only large warehouse-like structures that house many data servers (sometimes referred to as hyperscale, typically >20 MW), smaller centers (microscale, 1-5 MW), have become more common with the development of water-cooled, high-density servers. For size comparison, 1 MW can conservatively support between 100-300 high-demand homes¹. The equivalent of a 1 MW data center can vary significantly, with a traditional configuration requiring about 3,000 square feet and high-density center as little as 300 square feet².

As of April 2026, there are over 3,000 operational data centers with more than 1,500 new centers proposed or in development, with two thirds proposed in rural areas³. Southeast Alaska is no exception, with a data center proposed in [Petersburg](#) and recently denied facility in [Wrangell](#). In 2024, a modular [150-kW data center was installed in Cordova's](#) Humpback Creek Hydro Facility. The first-of-its-kind offshore data center has been proposed in [Cook Inlet](#) and the State Department of Natural Resources is considering free land conveyance north of [Wasilla](#), demonstrating increased statewide momentum in the data center industry. Earlier this year, the [Anchorage](#) Assembly passed legislation to proactively establish a framework assessing data centers and other energy-intensive facilities.

Analysis

While data centers do not generate the same impacts as other industries (point-source pollution or

¹ Assuming a 10 kW peak with a moderate load of 3-5 kW. The average U.S. average home consumes ~1.2 kW.

² Assuming 10 servers per rack, with either 1,000 1 kW 4U servers in 100 racks or 100 10 kW 4U servers in 10 racks.

³ Seets, Skyler, and Katlin Radde. *Most New Data Centers in the U.S. Are Coming to Rural Areas*. April 13, 2026.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2026/04/13/most-new-data-centers-in-the-us-are-coming-to-rural-areas/>.

agricultural runoff, e.g.), they can have significant impacts on the communities they are located in. These include intensive energy consumption, high volume water usage for cooling, and operational impacts such as light and noise. As an islanded electric grid supplied entirely by hydroelectric power and developable land at a premium, the possibility of a small footprint, large electric consumption data center being proposed in Sitka is not entirely unlikely⁴.

Currently, “data center” as a land use is not specified in Sitka General Code (SGC). This zoning text amendment does not propose prohibiting data centers but does address the gap within SGC zoning code provisions by defining data centers and assigning use designations (permitted, conditional, prohibited) for all zoning districts within the City and Borough of Sitka. By adding a clear definition and specifying conditional use, any proposed future data center would be subject to community and case-specific considerations.

Recommendations

Review the proposed zoning text amendment and recommend its approval to the Planning Commission and Assembly. Key aspects of the ordinance (enclosed) are summarized below:

22.05.405 Data center.

“Data center” means a facility that primarily contains electronic equipment used to process, store, and transmit digital information accessed by other systems or by users on other devices, which may be a free-standing structure; or a facility within a larger structure, that uses environmental control equipment to maintain the proper conditions for the operation of electronic equipment including: servers, other high-performance computing devices, or data storage devices⁵. A data center is not a server rack or room that is used to store and/or access data that is produced locally in conjunction with other permitted or conditional uses within the City and Borough of Sitka.

Table 22.16.015-5. Manufacturing/Storage Uses

Data centers require a conditional use permit in [Public, Waterfront, Industrial, General Island, Gary Paxton Special Districts](#). Data centers are not permitted in all other districts.

Note: The Planning Commission will likely have additional discussion on the appropriate zoning districts in which this should be considered a conditional use.

⁴ The [Cordova Electric Cooperative](#) has a 150 kW water-cooled edge computing data center the size of a large refrigerator in its hydroplant powerhouse.

⁵ Definition adapted from 42 U.S.C. §17112(a)(1) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB), *Implementation Guidance for the Federal Data Center Enhancement Act*, M-25-03, January 14, 2025, p. 2.

Enclosed:

Sitka Zoning Map

Draft Ordinance of the City and Borough of Sitka Amending Title 22, "Zoning" of the Sitka General Code for Data Centers.

Possible Motion(s)

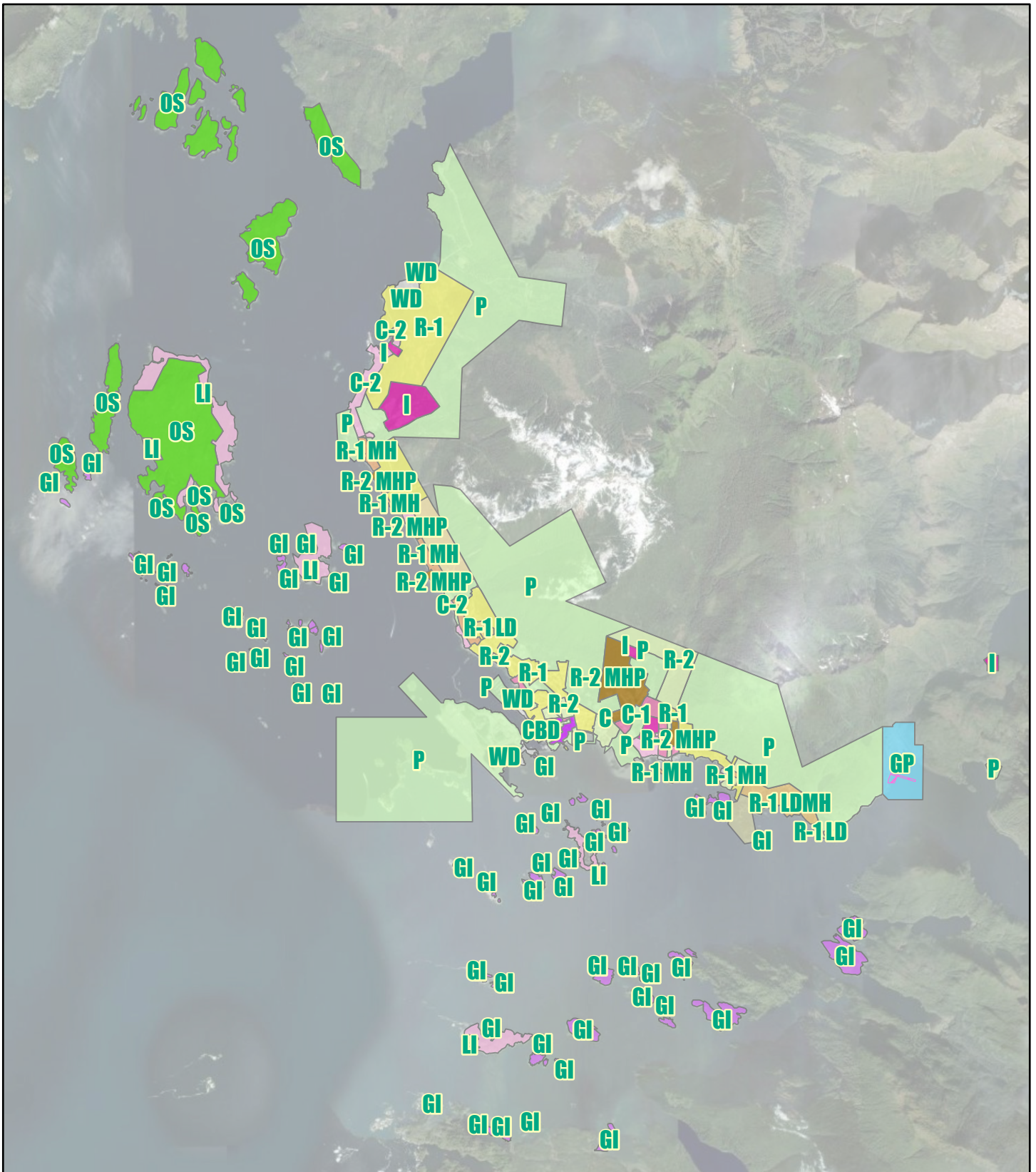
I move to recommend the approval of a zoning text amendment that would amend Title 22 "Zoning" of the Sitka General Code to define data centers and assign use designations for all zoning districts within the City and Borough of Sitka to the Planning Commission and Assembly.

I further move to recommend that data centers only be allowed conditionally in appropriate zoning districts as determined by the Planning Commission, and not be permitted outright in any zoning district.



City & Borough of Sitka, AK

September 30, 2026



Data shown on this map is provided for planning and informational purposes only. The municipality is not responsible for any use for other purposes or misuse or misrepresentation of this map.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-XX

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA AMENDING TITLE 22,
“ZONING” OF THE SITKA GENERAL CODE FOR DATA CENTERS.

1. CLASSIFICATION. This ordinance is of a permanent nature and is intended to become a part of the Sitka General Code (SGC).

2. SEVERABILITY. If any provision of this ordinance or any application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance and application to any person or circumstance shall not be affected.

3. PURPOSE. The purpose of this ordinance is to define data centers and assign use designations (permitted, conditional, prohibited) for all zoning districts within the City and Borough of Sitka.

4. ENACTMENT. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka that the Sitka General Code Title 22 be amended by modifying Chapter 22.05 “Definitions”, and Chapter 22.16 “District Regulations” to read as follows (deleted language stricken, new language underlined):

**Title 22
ZONING**

Chapters:

- 22.05 General Provisions**
- 22.10 Administration**
- 22.15 Zoning Maps and Boundaries**
- 22.16 District Regulations**
- 22.20 Supplemental District Regulations and Development Standards**
- 22.25 Special Use Permits**
- 22.30 Mobile and Manufactured Homes**

* * *

**Chapter 22.05
Article II. Definitions**

* * *

22.05.405 Data center.

“Data center” means a facility that primarily contains electronic equipment used to process, store, and transmit digital information accessed by other systems or by users on other devices, which may be a free-standing structure; or a facility within a larger structure, that uses environmental control equipment to maintain the proper conditions for the operation of electronic equipment including servers and other high-performance computing devices, or data storage

devices. A data center is not a server rack or room that is used to store and/or access data that is produced locally in conjunction with other permitted or conditional uses within the City and Borough of Sitka.

* * *

Chapter 22.16 DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Sections:

22.16.010 Generally.

22.16.015 Permitted, conditional and prohibited uses.

* * *

22.16.015 Permitted, conditional and prohibited uses.

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Table 22.16.015-5. Manufacturing/Storage Uses

ZONES	P(1)	SF	SFLD	R-1	R-1 MH	R-1 LDMH	R-2	R-2 MHP	CBD	C-1	C-2	WD(2)	I(3)	GI(4)	LI(4)	R	OS	GP	C(8)
MANUFACTURING																			
• Food products including seafood processing										C	C	P	P	C	C	C		P	
• Mariculture/aquaculture												P		C	C			P	
• Winery/brewery, small scale									C	C	C	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Textile mill products										C	C	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Apparel and textile products										C	C	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Wood products, except furniture										C	C	P	P	PU/CS	C			P/C (7)	
• Furniture and fixtures										P	P	P	P	P	C			P/C (7)	
• Paper and allied products										C	C	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Petroleum refining and related products										C	C	P	P					C	
• Rubber and plastics products										C	C	P	P					P/C (7)	

ZONES	P(1)	SF	SFLD	R-1	R-1 MH	R-1 LDMH	R-2	R-2 MHP	CBD	C-1	C-2	WD(2)	I(3)	GI(4)	LI(4)	R	OS	GP	C(8)
• Leather and leather goods										P	P	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Tannery										C	C							P/C (7)	
• Stone, clay, glass and concrete products										C	C	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Primary metal products										C	C	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Asphalt plant/concrete batch plant													C						
• Fabricated metal products										C	C	P	P	C				P/C (7)	
• Industrial and commercial machinery										C	C	P	P					P/C (7)	
• Heavy machinery and equipment										C	C	P	P					P/C (7)	
• Computer and office equipment										P	P	P	P	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Electronic and electric equipment										P	P	P	P	PU/CS	C			P/C (7)	
• Miscellaneous vehicle manufacturing										C	C	P	P	C				P/C (7)	
• Boat building										C	C	P(5)	P	C				P	
• Marine equipment										P	P	P	P	PU/CS	C			P	
• Tire retreading										C	C	P	P					P/C (7)	
• Other manufacturing										C	C	P	P(6)	C	C			P/C (7)	
• Marijuana cultivation facility									C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
• Marijuana cultivation facility, limited									C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
• Marijuana product manufacturing facility									C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
• Marijuana product manufacturing facility, extract only									C	C	C	C	C	C	C				

ZONES	P(1)	SF	SFLD	R-1	R-1 MH	R-1 LDMH	R-2	R-2 MHP	CBD	C-1	C-2	WD(2)	I(3)	GI(4)	LI(4)	R	OS	GP	C(8)
STORAGE AND WAREHOUSING													P						
• Marine equipment/commercial fishing gear/material storage										P	P	P	P	PU/CS	C			P	
• Boat storage										P	P	P	P					P	
• Construction materials storage									P	P	P	P	P	C	C	C		P/C (7)	
• Trucking, courier and taxi service facilities									P	P	P	P(5)	P	C	C				
• Warehousing and wholesale trade									P	P	P	P(5)	P	C				P/C (7)	
• Self-service storage									P	P	P	P	P	C					
• Log storage	C									C	C	P	P	C		P		P/C (7)(9)	
• Freight and cargo services									P	P	P	P(5)	P	C				P/C (7)	
• Equipment rental services									P	C	C	P	P	C				P/C (7)	
• Vehicle rental services									P	P	P	P	P	C				P/C (7)	
• Natural resource extraction and mining support facilities												C	C	C	C			C	
• Storage of explosives													C						
• Bulk fuel storage												C						C	
• Data center	C											C	C	C				C	

P: Public Lands District

C-1/C-2: General Commercial and General Commercial/Mobile Home Districts

SF: Single-Family District

WD: Waterfront District

SFLD: Single-Family Low Density District

I: Industrial District

R-1: Single-Family/Duplex District

GI: General Island District

R-1 MH: Single-Family/Duplex/Manufactured Home District

LI: Large Island District

R-1 LDMH: Single-Family/Duplex and Single-Family/Manufactured Home Low Density Districts

R: Recreational District

R-2: Multifamily District

OS: Open Space District

R-2 MHP: Multifamily/Mobile Home District

GP: Gary Paxton Special District

CBD: Central Business District

C: Cemetery District

70 P – Permitted

71 C – Conditional Use Permit Required

72 PU/CS – Permitted on Unsubdivided Islands and Conditional Use on Subdivided Islands

73 G. *Manufacturing/Storage Uses Table 22.16.015-5 Footnotes.*

74 1. Public facilities not otherwise identified may be permitted in the public zone subject to
75 planning commission recommendation and assembly approval subject to findings of fact that
76 show the use is in the public interest, all reasonable safeguards are to be employed to protect
77 the surrounding area, and that there are no reasonable alternative locations for the use.

78 2. All uses in the waterfront district are intended to be water-related or water-dependent except
79 that upland uses may be non-water-related.

80 3. No industrial use shall be of a nature which is noxious or injurious to nearby properties by
81 reason of smoke, emission of dust, refuse matter, odor, gases, fumes, noise, vibration or similar
82 conditions.

83 4. Uses listed as conditional uses in the GI and LI zones may be considered, but not
84 necessarily approved, on a case-by-case basis.

85 5. Ferry terminals, barge freight terminals, docks and harbor facilities including float plane
86 facilities, fueling piers and tank farms and other port facilities are permitted principal uses
87 subject to planning commission review and public hearing and assembly approval of a binding
88 site plan.

89 6. Automobile wrecking yards, salvage yards, and junkyards are conditional uses and shall be
90 set back a minimum of 20 feet from property lines and be enclosed by fences a minimum of
91 eight feet in height. The setback area may be used for customer parking but not for vehicle
92 storage.

93 7. Permitted as an accessory use in conjunction with a permitted principal use; conditional as a
94 sole principal use.

8. All uses in the cemetery district are intended to be cemetery-related and conducted with reverence and respect for those interred.

9. Conditional use on properties outside of the Gary Paxton industrial park core as defined by 22.16.170.C; prohibited on properties within the Gary Paxton industrial core.

5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall become effective on the day after the date of its passage.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, this XXth day of XXX, 2026.

, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sara Peterson, MMC
Municipal Clerk

1st reading: X/XX/2026
2nd and final reading: X/XX/2026