

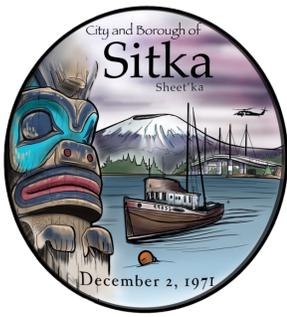


Tourism Commission Agenda

Thursday, February 19, 2026, 6:00 PM
Harrigan Centennial Hall, 330 Harbor Drive

Members: Jeremy Plank, Bethany Lowrance, Carol Bryant-Martin, Devon Calvin,
Vaughn Hazel, Sherri Blankenship, Lillian Feldpausch
Katie O'Neill (ex officio), Amy Ainslie (ex officio), Judson Rusk (ex officio)

- I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**
- II. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA**
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
None
- IV. NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. Status update of Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program
 - B. Discussion and recommendations on Lincoln Street closure and other city operations for the 2026 visitor season
 - C. Review of code changes for cruise ship docks
- V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD** *(For items ON or OFF the agenda – not to exceed 3 minutes)*
- VI. ADJOURNMENT**



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

A COAST GUARD CITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Plank and Tourism Commission Members

From: Judson Rusk, Tourism Manager

Date: February 9, 2026

Subject: Recommendations for Lincoln Street Operations, 2026 Season

Background

At the January 15, 2026 meeting, the Tourism Commission did not make a recommendation regarding the potential closure of Lincoln Street during the 2026 cruise season. Commissioners expressed interest in reevaluating the one-way closure options outlined in the Short-Term Tourism Plan.

During the 2022, 2023, and 2024 cruise seasons, Lincoln Street was closed to vehicular traffic on days when lower berth cruise passenger volumes reached or exceeded 5,000. In contrast, during the 2025 season Lincoln Street remained open to vehicular traffic on all days, regardless of cruise passenger volumes.

Analysis

On February 2, 2026, representatives the Planning, Public Works, Administration, Fire and Police departments met to evaluate the one-way closure options identified in the Short-Term Tourism Plan.

The group reviewed full eastbound and full westbound lane closures, as well as partial closure options. The evaluation considered pedestrian and vehicle safety, parking impacts, emergency service access, business impacts including bank drive-throughs, feeder street logistics, and traffic redirection patterns.

Following discussion, participants unanimously concluded that the most viable partial closure option would *maintain westbound vehicle traffic from Lake Street to Katlian Street while converting the eastbound lane to pedestrian use*. This option was determined to:

- Minimize impacts on emergency services
- Reduce the need for additional feeder street (i.e. Cathedral Way, American and

Barracks streets as well as other alleys) closures

- Limit impacts to adjacent businesses

Infrastructure Requirements

Implementation of this option would require additional resources, most notably temporary water-filled barriers to physically separate the westbound vehicle lane from the pedestrian lane.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) recommends positive protection — physical separation between vehicles and pedestrians — when the consequences of a vehicle leaving the travel lane are high. Given the anticipated pedestrian volumes and the absence of a curb, such protection would be necessary. These barriers would also provide a detectable edge for visually impaired pedestrians.

Cost Estimate

Public Works estimates that approximately 1,100 linear feet of roadway would require barriers. At six feet per barrier, 184 units would be required. This estimate has been rounded up to 200 units to allow for contingency replacements.

Cost projections are as follows based on upper and lower cost estimates per unit:

- \$399 per barrier × 200 units = \$79,800
 - 20% contingency (shipping, inflation, etc.) = **\$95,760**
- \$498 per barrier × 200 units = \$99,600
 - 20% contingency (shipping, inflation, etc.) = **\$119,520**

Additional Cost Considerations

Additional costs and operational considerations include:

- One-way and directional signage
- Installation and removal (estimated 30–40 labor hours for setup and 30–40 hours for takedown)
- Weekly inspections and adjustments of signage and channelizing devices
- Post-storm or incident repairs
- Off-season storage of barriers (no direct cost, but logistical consideration)

Timeline and Operational Constraints

Due to material procurement timelines, barrier delivery would conservatively occur in late May. Following delivery, inspection and installation would take place immediately. As a result, the modified traffic pattern would not be fully operational until early to mid-

June. Because the barriers are water-filled, heavy, and designed for longer-term deployment, they are not practical for daily installation or removal. If implemented, this configuration would remain in place for the duration of the 2026 cruise season, regardless of daily passenger volumes.

Recommendation

Given the projected costs, implementation timeline, and operational limitations, CBS staff strongly recommend that the Tourism Commission recommend keeping Lincoln Street open to vehicular traffic for the 2026 cruise season, operating in the same manner as during the 2025 season.

However, staff identified that the 2027 season may be prime for a trial one-way configuration that would mimic potential Lincoln Street redesign. The additional time would allow for adequate public review and comment, finer level of detail for traffic control planning, and potential striping realignments that would not constrain the one-way option to currently designated lanes.

Modified Gateway Options 1 and 2

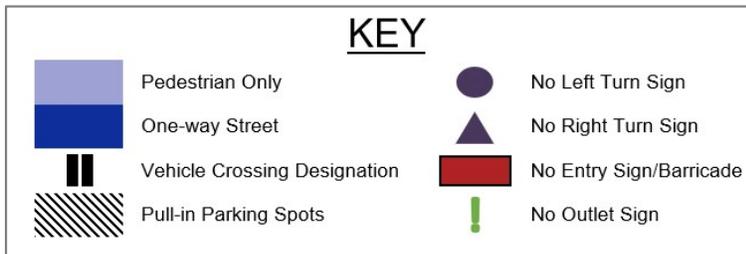


Pros

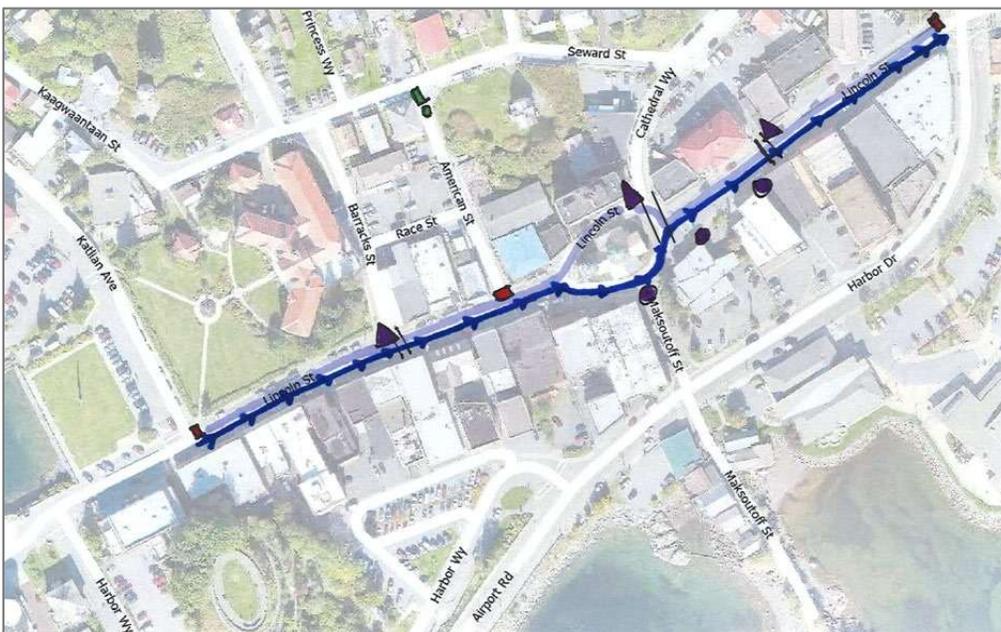
- Maintains vehicular access to bank drive-thrus
- Could maintain some downtown parking
- Opens pedestrian space on the west end of Lincoln

Cons

- Adds left-turn traffic to Lake/Lincoln intersection
- Intensive to mobilize and demobilize regularly



Modified Gateway Option 3



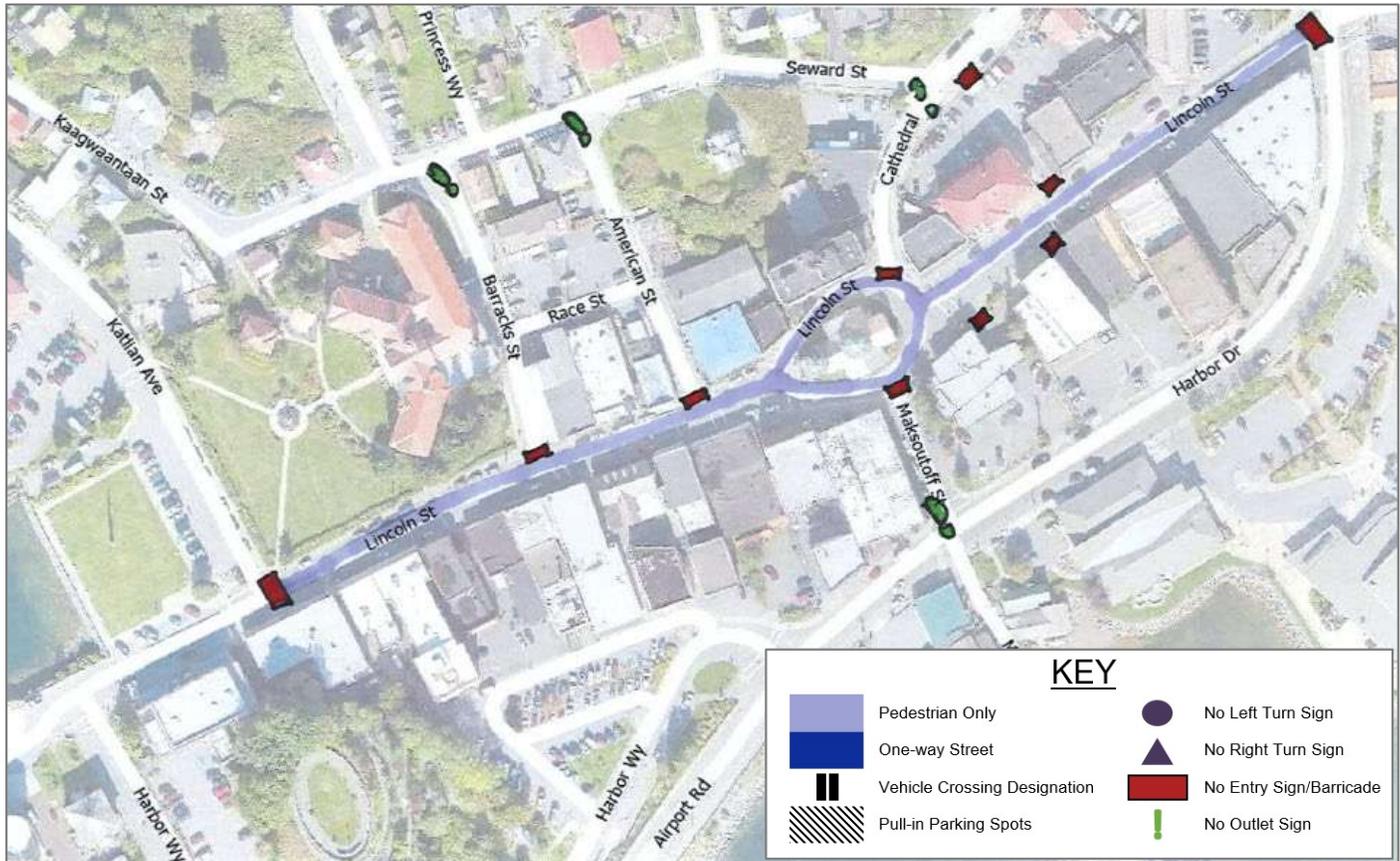
Pros

- Maintains vehicular access on bank drive-thru and pharmacy side of street
- Maintains some downtown parking
- Opens pedestrian/amenity/vending space in west bound lane

Cons

- Adds left turn traffic at Lake/Lincoln intersection
- More streets (Cathedral, American, Barracks) either need to be closed or will have to cut across pedestrian space

Full Closure Option



Description

- Lincoln Street is closed to vehicles from the Lake/Lincoln Intersection to the Lincoln/Katlian Intersection
- Feeder routes (Barracks, American, Maksudoff, Cathedral, and other unnamed alleys) blocked from entry
- Closures could be on a consistent schedule (M-F) or based on daily passenger count

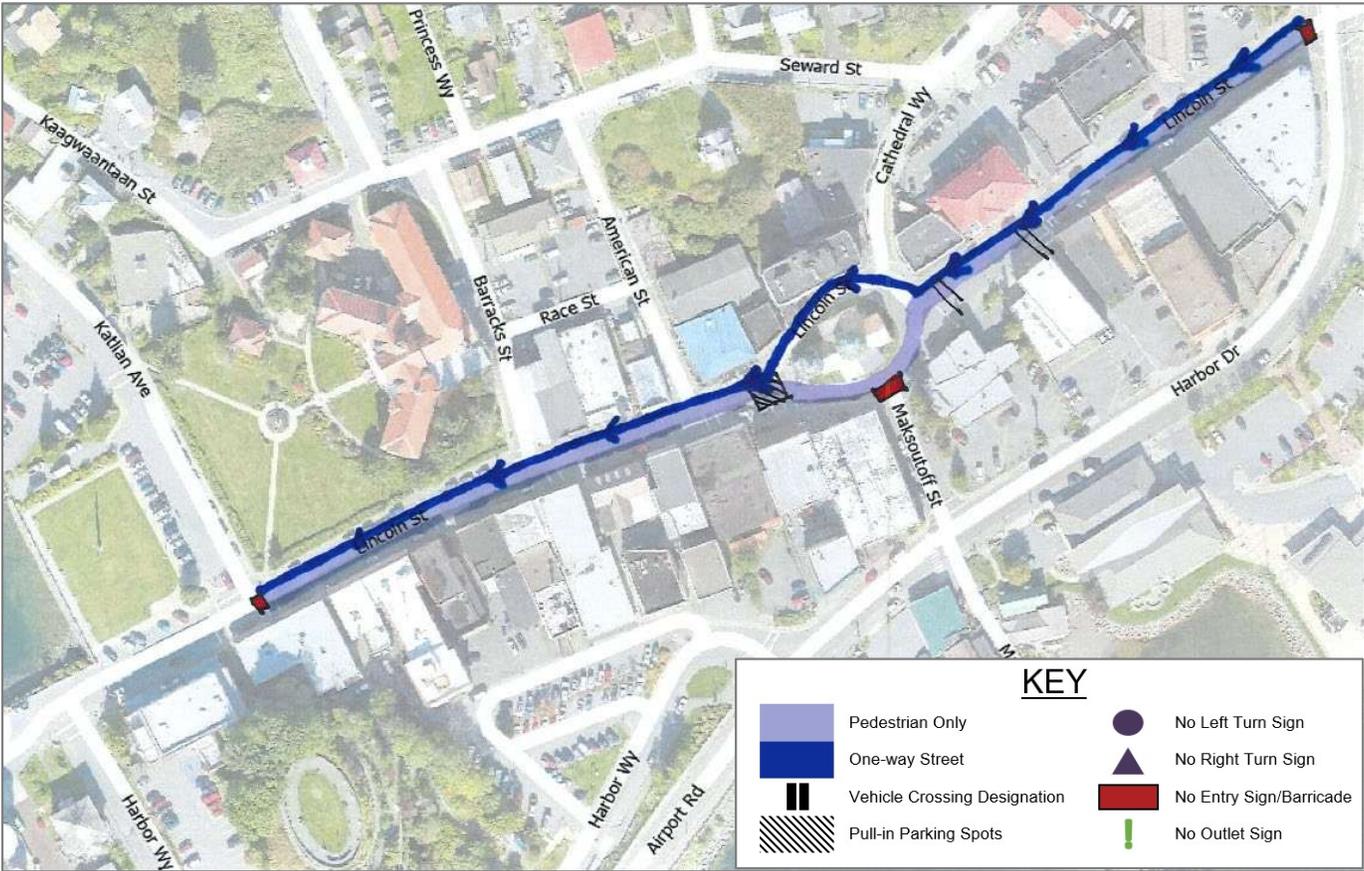
Pros

- Allows maximum pedestrian space and clearly separates pedestrians from vehicles
- Opens maximum spaces for amenities (benches, water stations, garbage cans, potentially vending, etc.)
- Equitable for both ends/sides of Lincoln Street merchants/entities

Cons

- Maximum loss of parking
- Maximum impact on vehicular access to locally demanded services (primarily pharmacy and bank drive-thrus)
- Complicates Pioneer Home emergency access
- Necessitates new downtown stop for The Ride
- Congestion remains around Totem Square/end of Lincoln

One-Way Option



Description

- Lincoln Street remains open to vehicular traffic one-way westbound
- Pedestrian space and amenity/vending staging can take place in the eastbound traffic/parking lanes. Amenities/vending could potentially be staged for the whole season. This would decrease labor needs for daily mobilization/demobilization and allow locals and independent travelers to partake in off-hours
- “Vehicle crossing designations” available at bank drive-thrus
- A temporary median would be needed to separate pedestrians and vehicles
- Pull-in parking spaces designated near churches
- Would be in place all season (too labor/storage intensive to mobilize/demobilize daily)

Pros

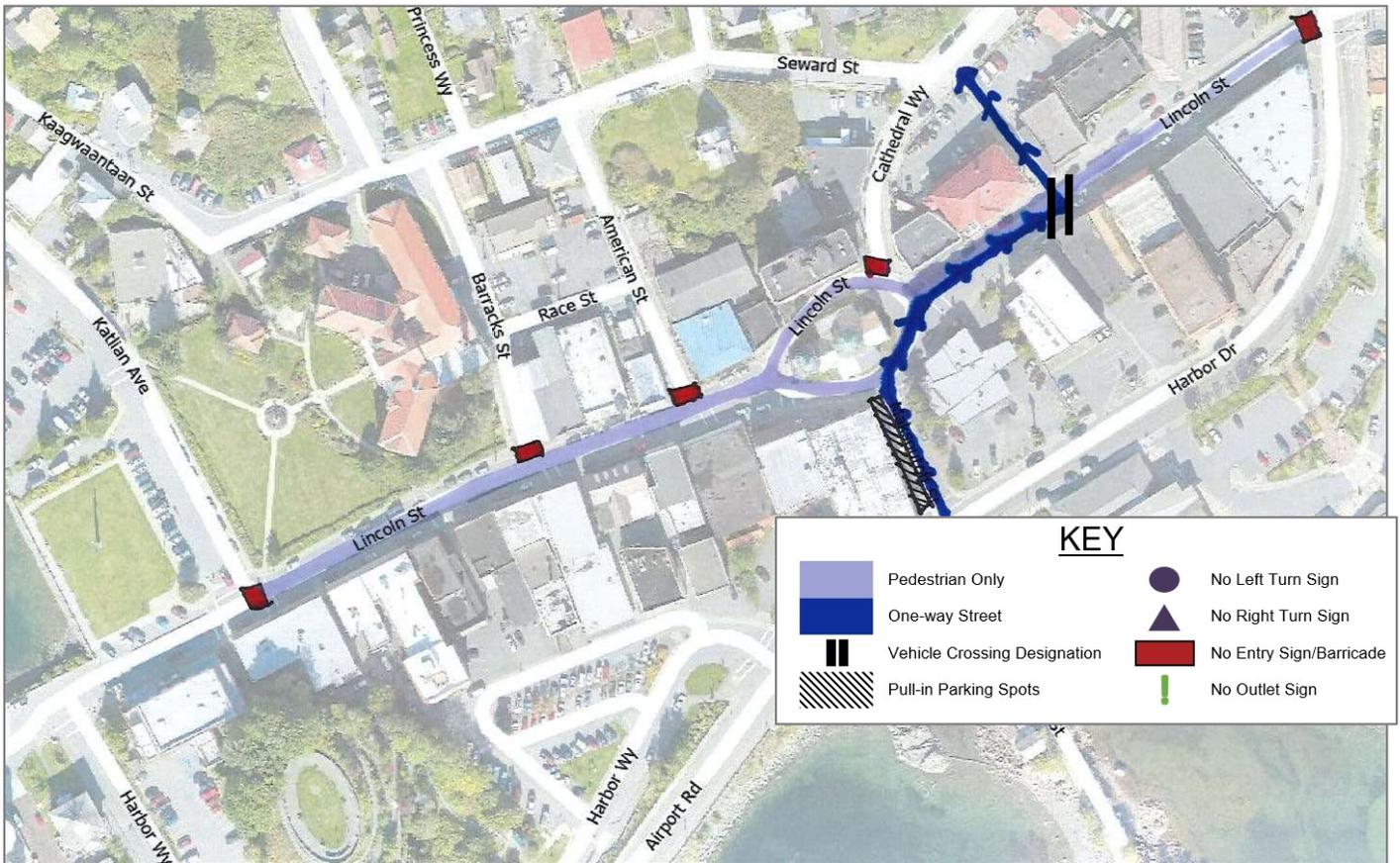
- Allows more vehicular access to Lincoln Street while reducing pedestrian and vehicle conflict
- Maintains vehicular access to downtown amenities & use of bank drive-thrus
- Lower loss of parking
- Provides for better emergency access to Pioneer Home
- Possible reduction in jaywalking due to median barriers

Cons

- Less space opened for pedestrians and other amenities
- Vehicles and pedestrians still intermingled to some degree
- Necessitates new downtown stop for The Ride
- Congestion remains around Totem Square/end of Lincoln
- North side of street gets vehicular access but less pedestrian space, vice versa for the south

A **Hybrid Option** was also proposed as a recommended option. Lincoln could be fully closed when needed (perhaps based on passenger volume) but staged to re-open as the One-Way Option. This would allow for amenities and potential vending to be staged in the east bound lane for the whole season and not have to demobilize when the street is reopened. This provides more flexibility to accommodate moderate and high passenger count days. However, it comes with the pros and cons of both options when in place and would be more labor intensive than the One-Way Option alone.

A **Full Closure Modification** was also sketched to address accessibility for bank drive-thrus. The design below allows one-way traffic up Maksoutoff St., in part of the eastbound lane of Lincoln, and then directs traffic up the unnamed alley between 315 and 321 Lincoln. This would create proper vehicle alignment to utilize all three of the downtown bank drive-thrus, accommodate for ADA access from Lincoln Street, and it would also open the opportunity to add pull-in parking along Maksoutoff Street in the unused lane. However, the crossing from the eastbound lane to the westbound lane to access the alley will be difficult to design. Traffic movement onto Seward Street will increase use of the uncontrolled intersection at Seward and Lake Streets, while not included in the plan recommendations, a traffic conductor may be needed if this option is selected.



The level of service analysis was then updated to include the two main recommended options along with a comparison matrix.

Pedestrians supported at each LOS

	Total pedestrian S.F. available	Pedestrians supported at each LOS					
		LOS A	LOS B	LOS C	LOS D	LOS E	LOS F
No closure – sidewalk space only	13,000	213	317	520	813	1,444	1,625
Full Closure Option	65,000	1,066	1,585	2,600	4,063	7,222	8,125
One-Way Option	39,000	639	951	1,560	2,438	4,333	4,875

Option Comparison Matrix

Factors	Full Closure Option	One-Way Option
Parking	✗ Highest impact on parking	✓ Moderate impact on parking
Convenience	✗ Highest impact on vehicular access to downtown retail and services	✓ Lesser impact on vehicular access to downtown retail and services
Pedestrian Safety	✓ Best separation of vehicles and pedestrians	✗ Some intermingling of vehicles and pedestrians
Visitor Experience	✓ Maximum pedestrian and amenity space	✗ Moderate pedestrian and amenity space
Logistics	✗ Very labor intensive for set-up and take down on a daily/weekly basis	✗ Needs most equipment for temporary medians/fencing
Flexibility	✓ Provides flexibility to be fully open in off-hours/days and change with passenger levels	✗ Has to stay in place season-long – too labor and storage intensive to demobilize regularly
Amenities/Vending	✗ No opportunity to permanently stage amenities/vending for season	✓ Opportunity to permanently stage amenities/vending for full season and offers off-hour enjoyment opportunities

✓ Comparative Advantage ✗ Comparative Disadvantage

After consideration of these options and hearing public comment, the Planning Commission voted 4-1 to recommend the Full Closure Option from 10am to 4pm on days with 3,000 or more cruise passengers with the stipulation that efforts to find downtown parking solutions be prioritized.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-XX

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA AMENDING TITLE 20, "ENVIRONMENT" OF THE SITKA GENERAL CODE TO REGULATE THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF CRUISE SHIP DOCKS WITHIN THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA.

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 regulate the construction and operation of cruise ship docks within the City and Borough of Sitka on both zoned and unzoned lands within the municipality.

4. ENACTMENT. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka that the Sitka General Code Title 20 be amended by adding Chapter 20.10 "Cruise Ship Docks" to read as follows (deleted language stricken, new language underlined):

Title 20 ENVIRONMENT

Chapters:

- 20.05 Floodplain Management
20.10 Coastal Management
20.15 Cruise Ship Docks

Chapter 20.15 Cruise Ship Docks

- 20.15.010 Purpose
20.15.020 Definitions
20.15.030 Permit Required for Cruise Ship Docks
20.15.040 Cruise Ship Dock Permit Application Requirements
20.15.050 Cruise Ship Dock Permit Procedures
20.15.060 Moratorium on Major Cruise Ship Docks?

20.15.010 Purpose
The purpose of this chapter is to regulate the use of land for construction and operation of cruise ship docks within the city and borough of Sitka. The municipality recognizes the importance of

51 protecting the social, economic, and environmental well-being of its residents in relation to
52 responsible management of the cruise visitor industry. These regulations are designed to:

- 53
- 54 A. Recognize the unique characteristics of cruise ship visitation and non-localized impacts,
55 etc.
- 56
- 57 B. Orderly & efficient development
- 58
- 59 C. Protect public health, safety, and welfare
- 60
- 61 D. Provide adequate public process for consideration of new cruise ship docks
- 62
- 63 E. Conformance to Title 22, Zoning – not contradict
- 64

65 20.15.020 Definitions

- 66
- 67 A. Administrator.
68 Mirror from zoning code
- 69
- 70 B. Cruise ship.
71 “Cruise ship” means a passenger vessel with overnight accommodations for commercial
72 passengers and designed for the purpose of providing pleasure and/or leisure travel,
73 generally stopping at multiple ports on a fixed itinerary. Cruise ships do not include Alaska
74 Marine Highway System ferries.
- 75
- 76 C. Cruise ship dock.
77 “Cruise ship dock” means a fixed or floating structure, including moorings, that serves one
78 or more cruise ships by either berthing cruise ships, or berthing passenger lightering
79 vessels that transport passengers to and from the cruise ship otherwise anchored or
80 berthed at another location.
- 81
- 82 D. Cruise ship dock, minor.
83 “Minor cruise ship dock” means a cruise ship dock that serves one or more cruise ships
84 that singularly, or in combination on a per day basis, have the maximum capacity to
85 accommodate no fewer than 100, but no more than 500, overnight passengers exclusive
86 of the ships’ crew. Docks that serve one or more cruise ships that singularly, or in
87 combination on a per day basis, have the maximum capacity to accommodate fewer than
88 100 overnight guests exclusive of the ships’ crew shall be considered “Commercial docks”
89 in accordance with Title 22 and are hereby not subject to the provisions of this title.
- 90
- 91 E. Cruise ship dock, major.
92 “Major cruise ship dock” means a cruise ship dock that serves one or more cruise ships
93 that singularly, or in combination on a per day basis, have the maximum capacity to
94 accommodate more than 500 overnight passengers exclusive of the ships’ crew.
- 95
- 96 F. Passenger lightering vessel.
97 “Passenger lightering vessel” means any ship, boat, skiff, barge, and/or watercraft of any
98 kind which is used as a means of transporting cruise ship passengers to and from a cruise
99 ship. Passenger lightering vessels do not include touring vessels that incidentally provide

100 passenger transportation to or from a cruise ship, or to and from a cruise ship dock, as a
101 part of a tour.

102
103 G. Upland facilities for cruise ship docks.
104 “Upland facilities for cruise ship docks” means structures and/or other improvements
105 immediately upland of a cruise ship dock that provide amenities for cruise ship passengers
106 disembarking via said cruise ship dock including but not limited to passenger staging
107 and/or waiting areas, transportation staging and/or waiting areas, restroom facilities, and
108 other services such as visitor information, retail, hospitality, and entertainment.

109
110 H. Zoned lands.
111 “Zoned lands” means properties which are identified in use districts as shown on the
112 official zoning maps of the city and borough in accordance with Title 22.

113
114 20.15.030 Permit Required for Cruise Ship Docks

115
116 A. The construction and/or operation of a cruise ship dock and associated upland facilities
117 for cruise ship docks within the city and borough requires a cruise ship dock permit issued
118 by the municipality.

119
120 1. Penalties/injunctive relief for non-permitted construction/operation

121
122 B. Cruise ship docks in operation prior to the passage of this chapter are considered a legal
123 nonconforming use and may apply for a nonconforming use permit.

124
125 1. Nonconforming use permits for cruise ship docks....(mirror from zoning code)

126
127 C. Conformance with Title 22, Zoning. Nothing in this chapter is intended to contradict or
128 contravene zoning provisions for zoned lands. Cruise ship docks are prohibited on zoned
129 lands in which “commercial use docks” are a prohibited use per Title 22 and therefore the
130 municipality shall not accept cruise ship dock permit applications for said zoned lands.
131 Additionally, proposed improvements and/or structures related to cruise ship docks and
132 associated upland facilities on zoned lands are subject to the use restrictions and
133 development standards of Title 22.

134
135 20.15.040 Cruise ship dock permit application requirements

136
137 A. Applications provided/set by administrator – mirror from zoning code (22.10.030 & 090)

138
139 B. Pre-application meeting (mirror 22.10.080)

140
141 C. Consultation with other agencies (in zoning code for CUPs, “may include but not limited
142 to” public works and engineering for sewer/water utilities, state DOT/PF, state DEC,
143 USACE, Sitka fire department, local telephone utility , cable television utility, electric
144 department”)

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146 D. Conceptual permit application requirements

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148 1. Identification of all properties involved in the project

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2. Statement of the objectives expected to be achieved by the project
 3. Detailed description of all aspects of the project including land use, building types and sizes, population density, parking and traffic circulation, building coverage, and any other information the applicant feels would assist in decision making.
 4. Operating plan including:
 - a. Operating hours on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis
 - b. The minimum, average, and maximum number cruise ship passengers to be served by the proposed cruise ship dock on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis
 - c. Provisions for providing port security services
 - d. Access to the site and vessels by emergency services
 - e. Waste disposal plans
 - f. Estimates of supplies and resources purchased and used within the city and borough
 - g. Transportation of cruise passengers to downtown Sitka or other key sites/locations
 5. Site plan and supporting drawings of the proposed project including in-water and upland improvements for a cruise ship dock and upland facilities for a cruise ship dock including:
 - a. Land use layout
 - b. Building locations, sizes, and distances from property lines
 - c. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation
 - d. Parking layout
 - e. Conceptual plat if the proposal necessitates any changes to existing property lines or any subdivision of existing lots, tracts, and/or parcels.
 - f. Schematic water, sewer, and electrical layout
 - g. Site grading and drainage plan include present and proposed topography
 - h. Conceptual drawings of proposed buildings, signs, and other features that may be required by the administrator.

197 6. If development is to be phased over time, operating plans and site plans must
198 demonstrate provisions and design for initial development and final development.
199 If permit is approved, plans are binding.

201 7. A draft schedule for construction of the cruise ship dock and associated upland
202 facilities for the cruise ship dock including anticipated permits needed from other
203 agencies.

204
205 E. Final permit application requirements

206
207 1. Applicant response to agencies and utilities reviewing the project and a statement
208 by the application regarding how they will resolve issues raised through review.

209
210 2. Final operating plan including all the stuff above

211
212 3. Final site plan including all the stuff above

213
214 4. Development schedule from above

215
216 5. For major cruise ship docks, the final permit application shall include a traffic study
217 prepared by an appropriately licensed professional in the state of Alaska showing
218 traffic and trip generation counts; sufficiency of proposed parking; identification of
219 potential hazards and/or traffic inefficiencies and proposed traffic control and/or
220 calming devices or designs adequate to mitigate.

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223
224 20.15.050 Cruise ship dock permit procedures

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226 SEE FLOW CHARTS FOR NOW

227
228 A. Conceptual review and approval.

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230 B. Final review and approval.

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232 C. Appeals.

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234 20.15.060 Moratorium on major cruise ship docks?

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Criteria for Evaluating Impacts

Existing General CUP Criteria for Impacts

- a. Amount of vehicular traffic to be generated and impacts of the traffic on nearby land uses.
- b. Amount of noise to be generated and its impacts on surrounding land uses.
- c. Odors to be generated by the use and their impacts.
- d. Hours of operation.
- e. Location along a major or collector street.
- f. Potential for users or clients to access the site through residential areas or substandard street creating a cut through traffic scenario.
- g. Effects on vehicular and pedestrian safety.
- h. Ability of the police, fire, and EMS personnel to respond to emergency calls on the site.
- i. Logic of the internal traffic layout.
- j. Effects of signage on nearby uses.
- k. Presence of existing or proposed buffers on the site or immediately adjacent the site.
- l. Relationship if the proposed conditional use is in a specific location to the goals, policies, and objectives of the comprehensive plan.
- m. Other criteria that surface through public comments, planning commission, or assembly review.

Potential Criteria for Impacts Changes/Additions

- Modify vehicular criteria for vehicular traffic generation, noise, and pedestrian/vehicular safety to “impacts on.....”
 - Surrounding and nearby land uses;
 - The city and borough road system, with particular attention to proposed transit routes(s) and major and/or collector streets;
 - The central business district; and
 - Tour and attraction sites frequented by visitors outside of the central business district such as historic sites, recreational areas, museums, and other cultural, artistic, scientific, educational, or animal care facilities.
- Clarify that “logic of internal traffic layout” should also address passenger queuing plan & safety
- **Additional criteria: Capacity of community to accommodate additional cruise passenger visitation including impacts on:**
 - Resident access to critical sites and services including public facilities, educational facilities, health care facilities, transportation services and facilities, offices, banks, recreation areas, subsistence areas and resources, and public and private utilities;
 - Public services and infrastructure including but not limited to public safety, transportation, utilities, solid waste disposal, public restrooms, community buildings, recreational sites, and visitor information.
 - Ability of merchants, hospitality providers, commercial transportation providers, and operators of tours and attractions to accommodate additional visitation; and
 - Other impacts that surface through public comments, planning commission, or assembly review.

Capacity of Community Criteria/Finding

Capacity of community to accommodate additional cruise passenger visitation including impacts on:

- Resident access to critical sites and services including public facilities, educational facilities, health care facilities, transportation services and facilities, offices, banks, recreation areas, subsistence areas and resources, and public and private utilities;
- Public services and infrastructure including but not limited to public safety, transportation, utilities, solid waste disposal, public restrooms, community buildings, recreational sites, and visitor information.
- Ability of merchants, hospitality providers, commercial transportation providers, and operators of tours and attractions to accommodate additional visitation; and
- Other impacts that surface through public comments, planning commission, or assembly review.

Process 1: Focus on community capacity for conceptual permit approval

<p>Conceptual review</p>	<p>Planning Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review concept permit application • Make recommended findings on capacity of community 	<p>Tourism Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review concept permit application • Make recommended findings on capacity of community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept PC recs • Modify PC recs • Make different recs 	<p>Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve or deny conceptual permit • Adopt findings on capacity of community
<p>Final review</p>	<p>Planning Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review final permit application • Approve/deny permit • Conditions of approval • Findings 	<p>Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing body for appeal then superior court beyond 	

Process 2: Holistic review for conceptual permit approval

<p>Conceptual review</p>	<p>Planning Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review concept permit application • Recommendation on approval/denial and conditions • Make recommended findings 	<p>Tourism Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review concept permit application • Make recommended findings on capacity of community and any conditions of approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept PC recs • Modify PC recs • Make different recs 	<p>Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve or deny conceptual permit • Approve or modify recommended conditions of approval • Approve or modify recommended findings
<p>Final review</p>	<p>Planning Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review final permit application • Approve/deny permit • Conditions of approval • Findings 	<p>Assembly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing body for appeal then superior court beyond 	