



Sitka



*Sitka*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2030

ROUGH DRAFT- MARCH 2018

# SITKA

This comprehensive plan legally applies within the City and Borough of Sitka boundaries.

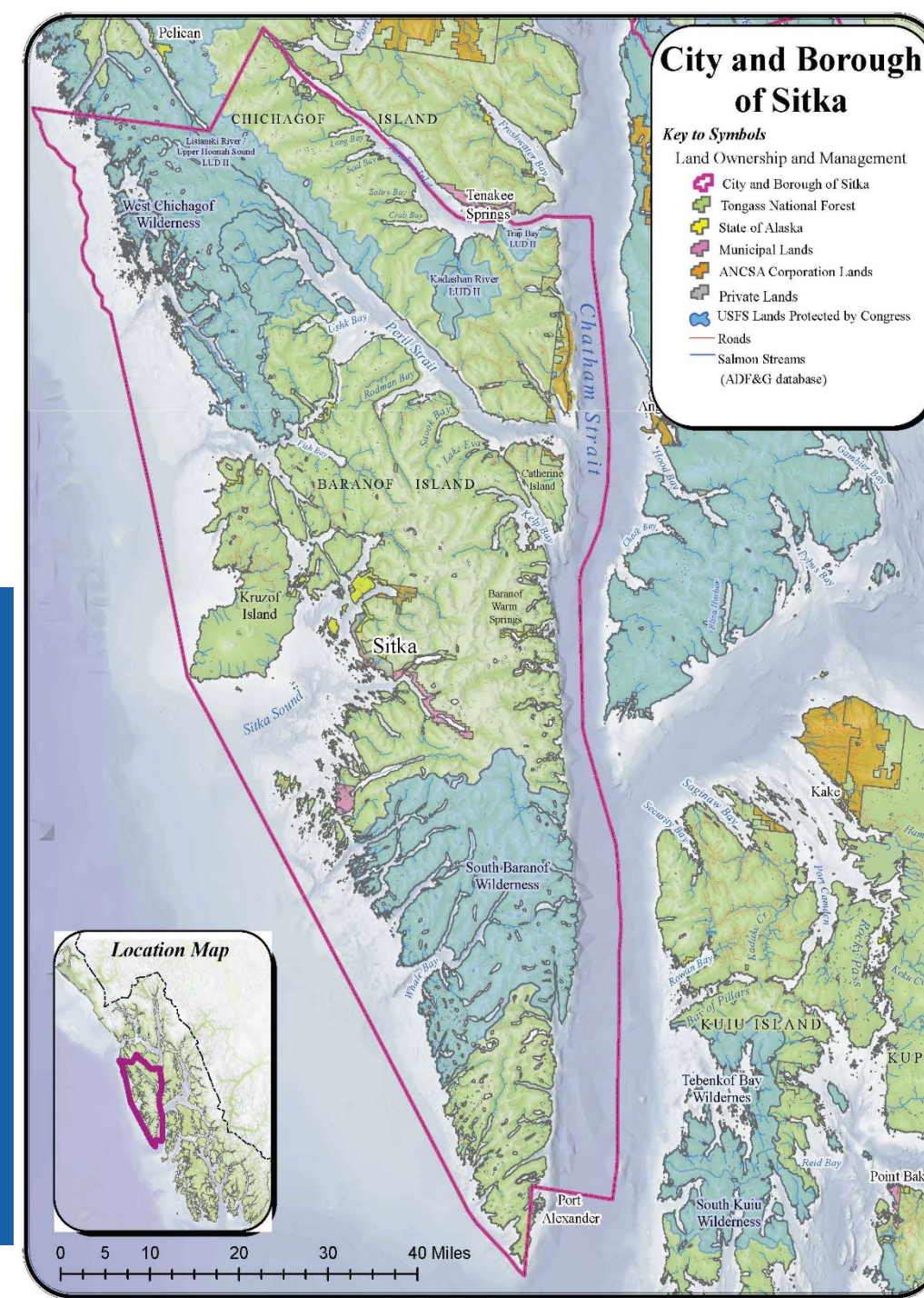


## Mission Statement:

To assure quality public services that provide for the well-being of the citizens of the City and Borough of Sitka. To provide the best service, budget management, and planning for the future of our community.

The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 promotes the community vision of a small town atmosphere, with a high quality of life and sustained economic opportunity.

With the adoption of the Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030, the City and Borough of Sitka can proceed with optimism and resiliency, towards the path outlined by citizen participation.



# What is a Comprehensive Plan?

## The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030:

- Summarizes current conditions and data.
- Reviews challenges and opportunities, by topic to address over the next 10-15 years.
- Uses the challenges and opportunities to:
  - Establish broad **GOALS** that set overall direction.
    - Identify specific **OBJECTIVES**, which are the policies to achieve over time.
    - Sets out **ACTIONS** to chart a path to achieve the goals and objectives.
  - Develops Future Growth Maps and 14 specific Focus Areas to guide development and zoning.



Implementing this plan will help Sitka leverage local resources, promote economic vitality and adaptability, and retain valued aspects of the community into the future. Accomplishing the Sitka Comprehensive Plan's vision and doing the work outlined will take more than just the efforts of the City and Borough of Sitka Assembly, Planning Commission, and staff. In order for the objectives and actions in this plan to happen, it will require collaboration from residents, land and business owners, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, state and federal agencies, and many Sitka civic groups. Together we can focus on coordinated positive action.



Photo courtesy Don Kluting, Sitka Scenes Photography

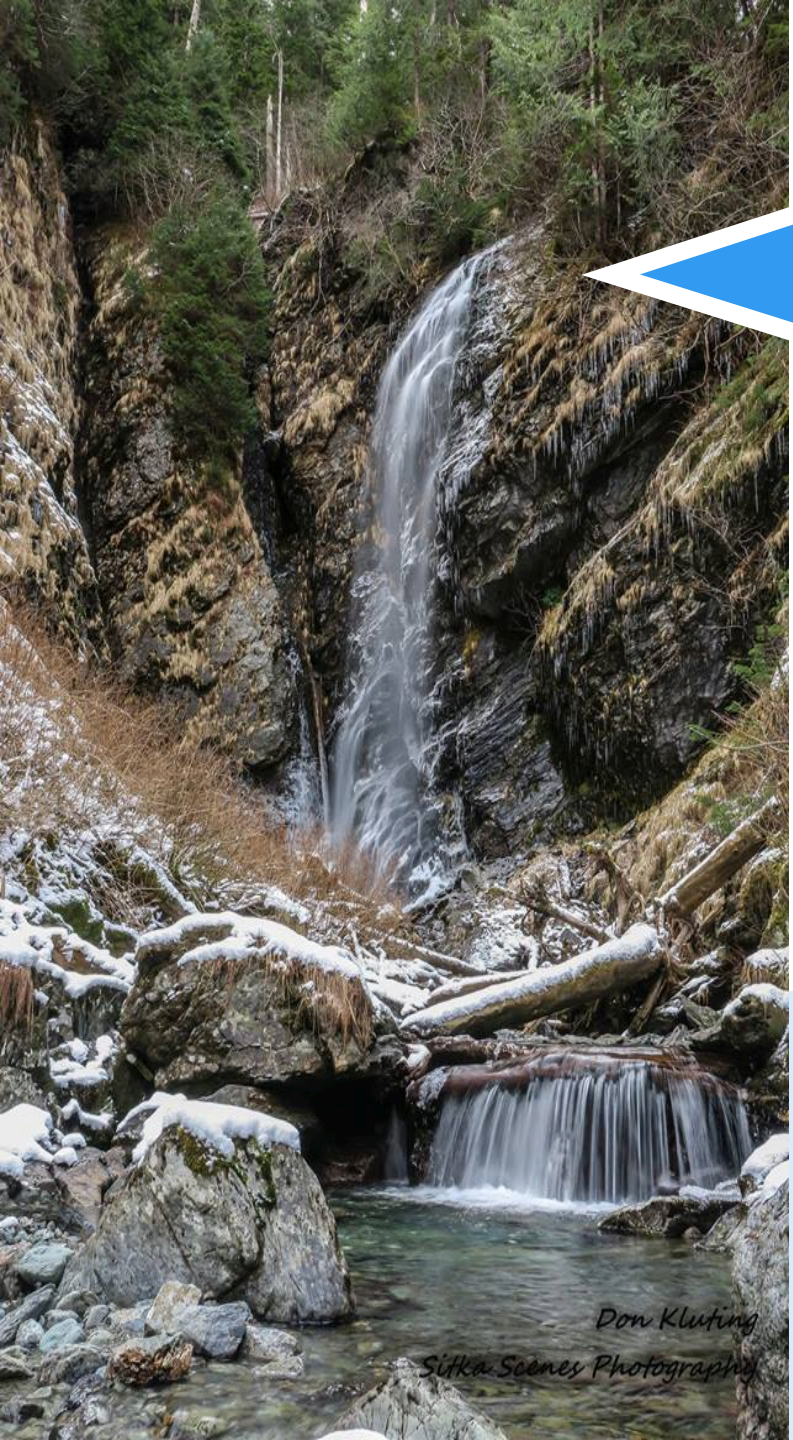
**The actions in this plan will take many years to accomplish, but do chart a path to a desired future.** Key is determining the community's top or strategic priorities for action every year or two, and then staying the course.

Some of the ways to use the Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 are:

- Review of proposed development projects, issuing local permits, and updating Sitka municipal codes and zoning maps.
- Setting annual priorities.
- Providing guidance when making day-to-day decisions to help ensure development moves forward on a consistent path.
- Support grant applications and legislative requests.
- Help prepare comments and conditions for development plans and permits on proposed municipal, state, federal, and private actions and projects.

The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 provides the framework for addressing these issues and problems in ways that will allow our community to achieve our aspirations to:

- Enhance the places where we live, work and play;
- Support and attract businesses and promote entrepreneurship;
- Enhance our resiliency and independence;
- Do all of these things in a fiscally efficient manner, leveraging our assets and turning challenges into opportunities.



**Sitka's Comprehensive Plan 2030** is intended as a framework to guide development and strategic community investment over the next 10-15 years. It represents a broad community vision defined by residents during a two and a half year (2015-2018) public process. This document also provides the legal basis under state law for adopting land use regulations.

There are two documents that comprise the Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030:

### ***Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030***

**1**

The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 summarizes key data and offers abbreviated versions of issues and challenges to address including Goals, Objectives, Priority Actions, and Future Growth Maps and Focus Area Narrative. The Comprehensive Plan will likely be the main document used by the City and Borough of Sitka Assembly, Planning Commission and the public, while the Technical Plan will become the source for context and a deeper understanding of material.

### ***Technical Plan***

**2**

The Technical Plan includes all plan data, references, sources, and a detailed review of background and contextual material as well as issues and challenges to address. The Technical Plan also includes a Community Profile that covers local History; Demographic, Migration, and Community Income data; the Physical Environment; Natural Hazards; and Coastal Management.



# Public Participation

## Shapes Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030

The City and Borough of Sitka **Planning Commission** served as the steering committee to oversee development of the Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030. They were assisted by municipal staff and by the organizations and individuals who attended meetings, offered comments, and provided information during plan development. Work on the plan occurred from December 2015 through final Assembly adoption in May 2018.



**Logo Competition**

Winner Alyssa Henshaw

13 year Sitka Resident

# Sitkans engage Public Process

**Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030** was developed through a citizen-centered process that encouraged the entire community to contribute to solutions for Sitka's future. Interactive public forums, workshops, open houses, portable meetings in a box, community events and commission meetings provided approximately 200 opportunities for direct citizen interaction and unprecedented dialogue. Complementary outreach ranging from phone calls, online surveys, e-blasts, social media, and many other tools broadened participation opportunities..



**"Planning, Planning why? We must think to the Future, And love today now!"**

Haiku Contest Winner Brinnen Carter

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## GOAL:

**Increase year round employment and population in Sitka by:**

- **Supporting local business**
- **Attracting new sustainable businesses**
- **Supporting efforts and enterprises that keep residents' money "local"**

Like many Alaskan towns off the road system, Sitkans face higher costs and are affected by seasonal and global market shifts. However, we have access to critical services such as harbor infrastructure, daily commercial jet service, and marine highway service. Many of these critical services are vulnerable as state and federal support declines. The best strategy to sustain and even expand the quality of these services is to increase local demand. Sustaining the current population and being innovative as we look to the future, is important so the municipality maintains a strong tax base and the fiscal capacity to support local public services such as police, fire, education and senior services.





# CURRENT ECONOMIC STATUS

Based on historic patterns of births, deaths, and in and out migrants to Sitka, AKDOLWD is projecting that after a five-year period of steady population – which Sitka is in now – the population will begin a slow, steady decline. Projected population decline in Sitka is based on two trends: 1) A shrinking number of child-bearing age residents and children in Sitka- resulting in more deaths than births in the future and 2) More people are moving away rather than moving to Sitka. In addition, the number of Sitkans age 65 and older, and especially those age 80+, is projected to grow rapidly over the next 25 years.

Sitka residents earned approximately \$568 million in total personal income in 2015. This is a 4% increase over 2014 community income of \$545 million. When sources of income are tallied and divided by the total population, Sitka had the 5th highest per capital personal income in Alaska at \$64,122 (2015). The majority of Sitka's income, 66%, came from work earnings, wages, and benefits. Approximately 12% of Sitka's income came from retirement and other benefits. Another 21% of Sitka's total income was generated from dividends, interests, and rents. Finally, 1% came from payments from state and federal social

assistance programs like SSI and SNAP, and just 0.2% was unemployment benefits.

An estimated 30% of Sitkans are struggling to make ends meet. According to tax returns filed in 2014, over half of the personal income came from the top 17% of Sitka's earners and these tax filers all earned \$100,000 or more per year. One-third (32%) of all Sitka tax filers made only \$25,000 or less.

Approximately 9% of all Sitkans had income below poverty level in the past 12 months. And, 22% of Sitkan Alaska Natives had income below poverty level ( $\pm 6\%$ ). About 10% of Sitkans ( $\pm 2\%$ ) received Food Stamps/SNAP benefits in last 12 months. In the Sitka School District in 2016, 381 students had low enough household income to qualify for a free lunch and 130 qualified for a reduced fee lunch; together this is 35% of the student body.

Commerce in Sitka is driven by retail sales, construction, and services. Together, these three accounted for just over 80% of gross business sales in Sitka in 2016. Sitka's workforce (2016/2015) is 54% private sector, 23% self-employed business proprietors, 6% state government, 5% federal government, and 2% local government. There were 4,228 average annual employees in Sitka in 2016; this ranged from a high

in August of 5,127 to a low in January of 3,652. An estimated 40% of Sitka workers are not Sitka residents (2015). Total wages in 2016 was \$183.5 million. The average monthly wage in Sitka was \$3,616.

There were about 60 fewer (1%) employees in 2016 compared to 2015. Since 2006, Sitka has shed about 200 average annual jobs, led by a drop in federal jobs and private service-providing jobs. There were 1,327 self-employed small business owners with no employees in 2015 whose business receipts topped \$71 million. About 44% are self-employed fishermen, another 9% offer professional or technical services, and 6% run small construction and carpentry businesses. When Sitka's maritime work is pulled together, approximately 3 out of 10 jobs are "Blue Jobs" and they account for about one-third of all work income in Sitka. Sitka has a higher concentration of manufacturing jobs than does Ketchikan or Juneau.

Top industries include maritime both commercial and charter fishing, manufacturing, government, tourism, Healthcare and social assistance, and education, science and arts.

## KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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- Manufacturing is a strength of the Sitka economy and it may have a potential for further development.
- Diversify Sitka's maritime work - the ocean is Sitka's primary economic driver.
- Support the strong relationship between the almost 200 USCG personnel and civilians and their families is important. Potential exists for expansion.
- Maintain a healthy natural environment as this gives Sitka a competitive advantage in attracting related businesses, visitors, and investment.
- A robust government sector (23% of local workforce) accounts for almost one-quarter of all work in town providing stable, well paying jobs.
- Build economic development partnership and networks.
- Diversify tourism.
- Sitka's many healthcare resources could position the community as a regional healthcare hub.
- Build upon Sitka's educational, arts and science assets.
- Workforce development and youth engagement is needed to create qualified workers with technical skills to meet the needs of the local economy.
- Investment in Sitka's internet capacity if needed.
- Cost of living creates significant challenges for many Sitkans.
- Convert some seasonal workers to resident workers.
- The aging population creates the market for additional eldercare services.

The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 presents a key opportunity to align economic strategies within the broader community planning context. As a result, the economic development element of the plan identifies challenges and opportunities for the future of the municipality as it relates to investment and job growth. Municipally-supported economic development efforts serve to maintain a wide-ranging employment base so our local economy can endure fluctuations in the market and local revenues can adequately fund services and schools.

**ECONOMIC  
CHAPTER  
OBJECTIVES**

Respond  
Effectively  
to Changes  
in the  
Economic  
Climate

Support and  
Grow  
Existing  
Businesses

Maintain  
Essential  
Infrastructure

Maintain  
Sitka's  
Vibrant  
Downtown

Leverage  
Natural and  
Municipal  
Assets

Develop  
Sitka's  
Workforce

Promote  
Innovation,  
Entrepreneurship,  
and Partnerships

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION**

**Responsible Agency**

**Time Frame**

**Funds Needed**

**Completed**

**ED 1.5**

Monitor parking needs for commercial uses, set requirements at lowest level to meet needs.



**ST**

**L**

**ED 2.1**

Develop municipally-owned land management plan.  
*Cross reference with action LU1.1*



**MT**

**L**

**ED 2.3**

Structure utility rates to incentivize high-using businesses to Sitka.



**ST**

**L**

**ED 2.7**

Limit amount of residential development in the commercial, industrial, and waterfront zones to preserve economic lands for economic uses.



**ST**

**L**

**ED 4.2**

Support public-private partnerships to achieve economic objectives and business growth.



**OG**

**L**

**ED 5.3**

Maintain well-functioning infrastructure upon which commerce and economic activity depend.



**OG**

**U**

**ED 6.3**

Develop a Marine Center at Gary Paxton Industrial Park to support Sitka's fishing and marine transportation fleets and businesses.



**LT**

**U**

**ED 6.5**

Support growth of Sitka's independent, cruise-related, and heritage tourism work and enterprises.



**OG**

**L**

**ED 6.6**

Market the newly renovated Harrigan Centennial Hall nationwide for conferences and conventions.  
*Cross reference with action HCA 4.1*



**ST**

**L**

**ED 6.7**

Support growth of manufacturing businesses that add value to sustainably developed local resources.



**OG**

**L**

**ED 6.16**

Provide more options through zoning, for assisted living and long-term care in Sitka.



**ST**

**L**

**PRIORITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS**

Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Funds Needed
City and Borough of Sitka	ST Short-term (0-2 years)	L Low (\$0-99,999)
Collaboration	MT Mid-term (3-5 years)	M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999)
	LT Long-term (5-10 years)	H High (\$1,000,000+)
	OG Ongoing	U Unknown
		GF Grant Funded

# HOUSING

## GOAL:

**Expand the range, affordability, and quality of housing in Sitka while maintaining attractive, livable neighborhoods**

Sitka has a broad range of diverse neighborhoods that contribute to the City's community feel and residential character. As primary places of residence, neighborhoods and housing units have significant impact on resident's daily activities and are the foundation of a safe, enjoyable community in which to live. Providing high quality, affordable, and diverse housing choices throughout the City is essential to the future prosperity of Sitka.

The Comprehensive Plan chapter on housing provides detailed data and analysis of current conditions, challenges, and opportunities. The action plan summarizes those and provides the Goals, Objectives and Action to implement the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.



# CURRENT HOUSING STATUS

The current best estimate for housing units is approximately 4,246 dwelling units. Figures provide data trends for 2000–2016. Occupied units are estimated at 3,472. Further, there are breakdowns of dwelling units by housing type. The data shows a trend of dwelling units increasing by 596 units over that time.

160 units were constructed between 2010 and 2016. During this period, housing stocks outpaced population growth by 3.5%. The overall trend for new units has been trending down, though 2015 show a unique peak that had not occurred since 2008.

The vacancy rate for 2017 was estimated at 7.5%, which fell from the year prior from 8.3% before creating a tighter market. A 5-year survey and estimate for 2011–2015 put rental vacancy rates at 6.1% and non-rentals at 3.6%. Compared to the state and national averages Sitka has slightly more vacant housing stock (.2 to 1.1% more).

The median value of an owner-occupied home was \$338,600 in 2015, which is the highest in Alaska by 35%. The multi-listing service recorded

an average price of \$359,866 for 54 single-family homes in 2016. The national median value is \$178,000 and the median state value is \$250,000. The section provides more data on Southeast Alaska median home values for various communities, distribution of housing price ranges, and data for single-family homes sold from 2011 through 2016.

The median adjusted rent which includes utilities was \$1,227 for Sitka in March 2017. This is 7% higher than the state and southeast Alaska, except for Juneau. The HUD Fair Market Rent estimates for 2017 were \$989 for 1 bedroom, and \$1,984 for a 4 bedroom. Since 2014, the FMR has risen. Further data is provided for median rent measurements for Sitka as well as select locations; FMR data for southeast Alaska; and FMR trends for Sitka from 2010 through 2017.

The general rule of thumb for the percentage of income a household should devote to housing costs is 30%, which is supported by the HUD, US Census Bureau, and AHFC. This applies more so to households with lower incomes as compared to households with more disposable income. Since 2006 through 2015, the percentage of homeowners over-burdened by costs rose from 37% to 47% and during that same time span the percentage of renters over-burdened by costs

decreased from 66% to 44%. Further data and calculations are provided to consider what Sitkans can afford based on Fair Market Rent estimates, wages, various housing types, median home value, mortgage and rent estimates across housing types.

There is a need for low cost housing, transitional housing, temporary housing and shelters to meet the needs of low-income families, and those experiencing homelessness and other life challenges that includes providing for all potential populations especially those at risk or in need.

# KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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- Highest median home value.
- Higher median rent than most places.
- Lack of diverse housing options.
- Lack of incentives and market drive to provide lower cost housing.
- Housing conditions and quality.
- Aging population.
- Lack of transitional housing and homeless shelter.
- Critical need for more affordable housing for sale and rent.
- Monitor and regulate short-term rentals.
- Increase land supply for affordable housing.
- Offer incentives for affordable housing for sale and rent.
- Reduce lot size requirements to reduce cost of land and facilitate smaller homes.
- Reduce parking requirements.
- Code changes to encourage small construction options.
- Streamline ADU permits through administrative process.
- Encourage more long-term rentals and track.
- Mobile home park study to address options to improve housing quality.
- Explore how to meet needs of senior population for housing, transportation, and various living options.
- Explore housing options and cooperative programs for at-risk populations.

The City and Borough of Sitka has a vibrant residential life, but a decreasing stock of diverse available housing opportunities. Though housing is generally adequate and suitable of current and future needs, the plan presents several issues which may be critical for long term housing adequacy. These issues involve housing affordability, and housing availability.

# HOUSING

## CHAPTER OBJECTIVES



Increase Range of  
Housing and  
Affordability















Promote  
Housing Quality






Share Housing  
Information



	<b>HOUSING ACTION</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Funds Needed</b>	<b>Completed</b>
<b>H 1.1a</b>	Allow, encourage, and promote Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by right in more zones.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.1b</b>	Minimize prevalence of variances by amending development standards, such as setbacks.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.1c</b>	Reduce minimum lot sizes. <i>Cross reference with LU 8.2</i>		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.1e</b>	Encourage higher density development.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.1f</b>	Reduce aesthetic and design standards in float home regulations.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.1i</b>	Create clear development standards for Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and Cluster Home Subdivisions.		<b>MT</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.2e</b>	Create an affordable housing fund to offer development incentives.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.2g</b>	Increase tax on short-term rentals.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.2h</b>	Seek grant funding to support affordable housing development.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 1.2i</b>	Create housing for the homeless through public-private partnerships.		<b>OG</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 2.1</b>	Collaborate with mobile home owners and park owners to encourage/require park upkeep in a manner that does not cause undue hardship to homeowners.		<b>MT</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>H 2.4</b>	Encourage housing stock rehabilitation.		<b>OG</b>	<b>L</b>	

# PRIORITY HOUSING ACTIONS

 Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Funds Needed
 City and Borough of Sitka	ST Short-term (0-2 years)	L Low (\$0-99,999)
 Collaboration	MT Mid-term (3-5 years)	M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999)
	LT Long-term (5-10 years)	H High (\$1,000,000+)
	OG Ongoing	U Unknown
		GF Grant Funded



## **GOAL:**

**Celebrate Sitka's historic, cultural, and art resources, which are:**

- **Ethnically, religiously, and racially diverse**
- **Highly valued and essential to defining Sitka and local quality of life**
- **Integral to the economic base of the community**



# **HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND ARTS RESOURCES**

Sitka is a historically, culturally, and artistically rich community. Sitka's story continues to be told through its historic sites, significant structures, artifacts, work of artisans, oral history, and most importantly, its people. A wide spectrum of arts, ranging from carving to dancing and everywhere in between, enriches the lives of locals and tourists alike. Sitka's rich history and wide range of creative artistry are the cornerstone of this vibrant community. The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 gives the community an opportunity to regroup and revisit priorities. The community's strong support for historic, cultural, and arts resources will impact decisions regarding land use, economics, and other sectors. Through the identified action steps, historic, cultural, and arts protection and promotion will serve to enhance the lives of locals and appeal to visitors to our community for decades to

# CURRENT HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND ARTS RESOURCES STATUS

Historic, cultural, and arts resources overlap and strengthen each other. During the development of the Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030, participants stated appreciation for such features as a “very strong local arts scene,” “rich pre and post contact history,” and the “culturally and economically diverse community.”

Sitka currently has 21 listings on the National Register of Historic Places, including 8 National Historic Landmarks (a small group recognized for their outstanding historical significance) and 13 listed National Historic Places (the official federal government list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed worthy of preservation). There are more than 20 cemeteries and sacred burial sites within the borough and more than 1,000 important cultural and archaeological sites in the City and Borough of Sitka as listed on the DNR confidential Alaska Heritage Resource Survey database.

The City and Borough of Sitka is a longtime supporter and participant in historic preservation efforts. The threat of demolition of Sitka’s downtown U.S. Post Office built in 1934 led to a grassroots effort to protect Sitka’s historic buildings. The City and Borough of Sitka began work and qualified as a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 1994, then prepared its first Sitka Historic Preservation Plan in 1995. As one of 13 Certified Local Governments in Alaska, the

City and Borough of Sitka is eligible for federal Historic Preservation Grants. Since 1995, there have been many federal Historic Preservation Grants awarded to Sitka entities. The most recent awards were in 2015 and 2017 to the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society for work on the Japonski Island Boathouse and in 2014–2017 for repairs to Sheldon Jackson College campus facades on North Pacific Hall, Whitmore Hall, and Fraser Hall as well as Fraser Hall’s south wall.

Arts have had a meaningful role in the Sitka economy for thousands of years. The totems, canoes, masks, regalia, and architecture of Sitka Tlingit reflect area culture, ancestry, and collective histories as much as they are works of art.

Sitka’s historic, cultural, and arts resources directly strengthen the economy. For example, in 2016 the Sitka Summer Music Festival hosted 13 ticketed events, 23 free public events, and 11 educational presentations in Sitka, and had a total audience of nearly 3,900 people – many of whom were independent tourists. Previous visitor industry studies have estimated that the Sitka Summer Music Festival brings \$1.5 million in independent tourist dollars to Sitka each year. Another example from 2016 is the Sitka Fine Arts Camp (SFAC), which had 765 unique registrants including 20% from Sitka, 67% from other places in Alaska, and 13% from out-of-state.

The camp’s workforce that year included 17 full-time employees, 64 local part-time and seasonal employees. Over \$105,000 (self-reported) was spent in the Sitka community by visiting camp parents. Over 1,200 visitors came to town during SFAC summer programs or linked to year-round rentals and programs. Approximately \$19,400 in sales tax was collected and paid to the City. Capital spending in 2016 year totaled \$599,900. These are just some of the quantified economic benefits.

A total of almost 500 visitors to Sitka, were interviewed as part of the May 2017 Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP, McDowell Group). Of these visitors, 4 in 10 said they participated in a culture or history activity while in Sitka. These types of activities were the most popular in Sitka, and the 39% doing a cultural/history experience in Sitka was a higher percentage than in Alaska as a whole or in any other place in Southeast Alaska.

# KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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- Adopt and keep current a Sitka Historic Preservation Plan.
- Strike a balance between older historic buildings and sites and newer design and function.
- Protect sacred sites and resources.
- Support and expand heritage and cultural tourism.
- Increase public awareness of historic preservation opportunities, tax incentives, and grants available to rehabilitate properties.
- Continue to return tribal artifacts to Sitka Tribe of Alaska.
- Support National Register Historic District status for Sitka Indian Village (Katlian Avenue area), Sitka Historic Business District (Lincoln Street), and a Mission District (Russian Bishop's House, Saint Gregory's Catholic Church, St. Peter's Episcopal Church).
- Rehabilitate as needed, celebrate, and respect clan houses.
- Integrate Sitka Tlingit place names into community facilities, services and places.
- Support development of a Sitka Tribal Museum.
- Diversify funding streams for the historic, cultural, and arts organizations.
- Provide training and support to allow historic, cultural, and arts organizations to better document their social and economic contributions to Sitka.
- Support visual and performing arts in Sitka.
- Maintain and improve community facilities where historic, cultural, and arts programming and performances occur, are taught, and where art and artifacts are archived and stored.

# HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND ARTS RESOURCES



Celebrate  
Sitka's Rich  
and Diverse  
Heritage



Promote  
Availability of  
Funding for  
Historic  
Property  
Renovation













Support Visual  
and  
Performing  
Arts in Sitka






Fully Utilize  
and Market  
Arts  
Performance  
Facilities



Promote  
Cultural  
Heritage  
Tourism

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND ARTS RESOURCES ACTION		Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Funds Needed	Completed
HCA 1.1a	Develop, adopt and implement a Sitka Historic Preservation Plan.		ST	L	
HCA 1.1b	Facilitate and support CLG grants to obtain National Register Historic District status for eligible districts.		OG	L	
HCA 1.1c	Coordinate and collaborate with interested parties to compile cemetery information.		ST	L	
HCA 1.1h	Create a memorial and naming policy to integrate place names that are representative of Sitka's diverse history into community facilities, services, places and streets. <i>Cross reference with T 5.2.</i>		ST	L	
HCA 1.1i	Develop a Master Plan for Katlian/Kaagwantaan area in collaboration with Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Alaska Native Brotherhood & Sisterhood, property owners, and other interested parties. <i>Cross reference with LU 3.5.</i>		MT	L	
HCA 2.1	Advertise historic preservation opportunities, tax incentives, and grants available to rehabilitate historic properties, sites and within districts.		OG	L	
HCA 3.2	Develop temporary use permits that promote opportunity for visual and performing arts.		ST	L	
HCA 4.1a	Market and promote use of Harrigan Centennial Hall and Sitka History Museum. <i>Cross reference with ED 6.6.</i>		ST	L	
HCA 4.1c	Create a historical zoning district or overlay for the Sheldon Jackson Campus allowing for a broader range of uses. <i>Cross reference with LU 3.2.</i>		ST	L	
HCA 5.1c	Encourage the display of interpretive signs for historic structures through zoning code provisions and other appropriate means.		ST	L	

PRIORITY HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND ARTS RESOURCES ACTIONS

 Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Funds Needed
 City and Borough of Sitka	ST Short-term (0-2 years)	L Low (\$0-99,999)
 Collaboration	MT Mid-term (3-5 years)	M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999)
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	OG Ongoing	U Unknown
		GF Grant Funded

# BOROUGH FACILITIES

## GOAL:

**Provide desirable community facilities and services in an efficient and cost effective manner to meet the need of Sitka's residents, businesses, and visitors**

The City and Borough of Sitka provides a wide range of services for the community. Basic services focus on public safety and essential activities under the City and Borough of Sitka's charter. In addition, the City maintains public assets and infrastructure to a high standard. Also provided are enterprise services on a cost recovery basis, including the harbor, water and wastewater and electric utilities. This ensures that agencies, private sector businesses and residents all have the basic services and water, power and access they need at fair prices.

Times of funding decreases and aging infrastructure lead to community contention over budget shortfalls. To address these matters, Sitka has completed extensive fiscal modeling and a systematic look at the state of its facilities and infrastructure to determine its capital project funding needs. In addition, Sitka has prepared a 5-10 year schedule of incremental utility rate increases. All of these measures are designed to spread costs out over time rather than incur unexpected, large, emergency costs to repair catastrophic breaks. Funding predictability will ensure that services continue to be available.



# CURRENT BOROUGH FACILITIES STATUS

The City and Borough of Sitka maintains a complex and well-developed suite of infrastructure and services for its citizens and visitors. These include drinking water, wastewater, public sewer and stormwater drainage, electric services and systems, oversight of solid waste collection and disposal services, road and sidewalk improvement and maintenance, harbor infrastructure and services, a seaplane base, an airport terminal, parks recreation and trail facilities, services and programming, police, fire, emergency medical, search and rescue, animal control, public library, civic and convention center services and facilities, building operations and maintenance for the Swan Lake Senior Center, the Gary Paxton Industrial Park, Marine Service Center, education services through the Sitka School District and the Sitka Community Hospital.

Residents value the varied services and community infrastructure that the City currently provides. They also understand the need for a sustainable funding approach so the community can withstand economic shifts and ensure continuity.

The major fiscal trends facing Sitka are that over the last five years, state and federal revenue has

shrunk and state funding that formerly was available as grants is now available primarily as loans. Reductions in state and federal revenue are likely to continue for the next decade. At the same time, Sitka's aging infrastructure requires increasing capital improvement funding for repair and replacement. Sitka's municipal strategies to address these pressures are to achieve internal efficiencies; selectively reduce services, personnel, and spending; delay some infrastructure projects and look for ways to extend use before full replacement is required; increase local revenues (taxes, fees); and carefully increase use of savings.

Local tax revenue comes from property, sales, bed, and tobacco taxes. Revenue collected from property taxes has been relatively flat over the last five years, while the contribution from sales tax has been rising. In FY 2018, of the \$18.7 million expected in local tax revenue, 39% is from sales tax, 22% from property tax, 3% from tobacco excise tax, and 2% from bed tax.

The fund types and spending that allows day-to-day municipal operations and services and which most directly impact local tax rates and spending from savings are General Fund + General Fund related Capital Improvements, and Internal Service Fund + Internal Service Fund Capital Improvements. Adding spending from these funds together, the FY 2014 total was \$30.5 million while

the FY 2018 total is \$31.1 million. Over the last five years the spending high was in 2015; spending levels have declined by \$4.9 million or -14% since 2015. Spending reductions have been achieved through some less frequent services, less capital project spending, elimination (FY 2018) of a full-time police officer, no temporary employees for capital project management, and reductions to training, supplies, and contracted services. This followed the FY 2017 general fund budget that eliminated 4.5 municipal positions.

Since about 2010, Sitka has been at a financial crossroads. Sitkans recognize that Sitka is a small town with big town amenities; however, the public infrastructure that citizens have come to expect and enjoy is rapidly aging and deteriorating. Like many places in Alaska that have been dependent on state and federal funding, local taxes, user fees, and available fund balances (savings) are not enough to pay for repair and replacement of infrastructure. Funding decisions for capital project maintenance and improvements sometimes yields to other priorities. Given current shortfalls, a pattern is developing of deferring capital project maintenance and improvement funding and delaying projects to the next year's budget. However, this is creating ever-growing future capital project shortfalls thereby avoiding the need to address sustainable capital project spending, and potentially making things more expensive due to inflation and rising interest rates.



# KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

- State and Federal funding have dramatically declined since 2014.
- Predictability is needed by municipal departments in the form of a multi-year capital project strategy.
- Recognize that the sale of municipal land to support housing and other development require major road and utility costs.
- Securing a secondary water source is imperative to protect the community. There is only an 8-hour water storage capability from Blue Lake.
- There is an ongoing need to improve, repair and replace Sitka's aging water distribution system pipes to keep water flowing to consumers. Emergency repairs cost more the planned maintenance.
- Reduce the threat of significant power outages by following the 10-year capital plan to renew key transmission and distribution systems, approved by the Assembly in 2016.
- Electrical rates will be positively affected by increasing the number of consumers and demand.
- The newly renovated Harrigan Centennial Hall has the opportunity to become self-sustaining.
- Sitka Police Department dispatch and jail staffing levels are insufficient for continued and effective coverage.
- Increasing the Sitka School District local funding contribution to support schools near the maximum "cap" allowed by the State.
- Prepare for infrastructure renewal and replacement in the Sitka School District.



CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

# BOROUGH FACILITIES

Provide Public Safety Services in a Fair and Equitable Manner

Foster Educational Excellence

Develop a Capital Projects Strategic Plan

Use Low Impact Design, Construction, Operations and Maintenance Techniques to Reduce Pollution and Lower Costs of Operation













Maintain Sitka's Civic Facilities, which Contribute to Quality of Life

Providers of Publicly Used Facilities, Infrastructure, and Services are Encouraged to Cooperate

Increase Public Communication, Outreach and Notice of Pending Actions



Maximize Use of Existing Infrastructure Before Building New

Ensure Utilities have the Capacity to Reliably Meet Demand

BOROUGH FACILITIES ACTION		Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Funds Needed	Completed
<b>BFS 2.4</b>	Maximize government to government relations between the City and Borough of Sitka and Sitka Tribe of Alaska.		<b>OG</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 3.1</b>	Develop a Capital Projects Strategic Plan to provide predictable improvement and maintenance funding for CBS facilities, infrastructure, and utilities.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 2.2</b>	Continue to provide public notice on pending matters and explore new opportunities to increase public awareness and involvement.		<b>OG</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 3.4</b>	Generate funding for infrastructure development by levying impact review fees that are comparable to similar locales.		<b>MT</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 3.6</b>	Monitor Legislative and Congressional support for critical revenue sources and lobby for Sitka's fair share of funding.		<b>OG</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 5.2</b>	Study, design and construct a secondary water supply.		<b>ST</b>	<b>H/GF</b>	
<b>BFS 5.3</b>	Continue a systematic program to replace aging water pipe infrastructure.		<b>OG</b>	<b>H</b>	
<b>BFS 5.5</b>	Continue systematic repair of wastewater collection segments in poor condition.		<b>OG</b>	<b>H</b>	
<b>BFS 7.2</b>	Continue systematic documentation of seasonal use of Sitka Public Library facilities and internet.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 7.4</b>	Track the number of out-of-town attendees at conferences and other events at Harrigan Centennial Hall to better demonstrate its economic benefit.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 8.8e</b>	Continue ongoing crime prevention and personal safety education, including bicycle and pedestrian safety programs for children, driver's education, and crime prevention through community and environmental design.		<b>ST</b>	<b>L</b>	
<b>BFS 9.1</b>	Partner with the Sitka School District to develop a sustainable funding model to collaboratively maximize funding for the school system.		<b>OG</b>	<b>H</b>	

**PRIORITY BOROUGH FACILITIES ACTIONS**

Responsible Agency


-  City and Borough of Sitka
-  Collaboration

Time Frame

- ST Short-term (0-2 years)
- MT Mid-term (3-5 years)
- LT Long-term (5-10 years)
- OG Ongoing

Funds Needed

- L Low (\$0-99,999)
- M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999)
- H High (\$1,000,000+)
- U Unknown
- GF Grant Funded



Sitka's remote location provides unique challenges for the transportation of people and resources to and from the community. Transportation plays a crucial role in the success of the community, including enabling tourists to discover Sitka, assisting Sitkans and other Southeast Alaskans to access healthcare services, and ensuring the regular delivery of food and other goods. In response to these realities, Sitka has developed a wide array of transportation infrastructure to serve a variety of air, land, and water based transit modes.

The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 considers the significant transportation challenges experienced by Sitkans and the existing and potential solutions to surmount those challenges. In such slim economic times, government bodies are challenged to meet the true needs of their constituents while simultaneously reducing spending. Municipally supported transportation efforts serve to maintain existing transportation infrastructure facilities while pursuing outside funding for repairs, upgrades, and replacements as necessary.

**GOAL:**  
**Sustain an equitable,  
efficient, and affordable  
transportation system**

# TRANSPORTATION

# CURRENT TRANSPORTATION STATUS

Given its remote island location, Sitka's transportation infrastructure including the airport and seaplane base, barge landing facilities, ports and harbors, road network, and public transportation are critical infrastructure that together ensures security, public health and safety, unimpeded economic trade, and public confidence.

CBS has five harbors, with a total of 1,293 boat stalls and 4,380 lineal feet for transient moorage. Harbor moorage is 85-90% capacity and there are multi-year waiting lists for certain size vessels. There is more demand for commercial fishing workspace than is available. CBS also owns and maintains a 350-foot port wall adjacent to the city's Marine Service Center, as well as a dock at Baranof Warm Springs and a state-funded floating dock is being constructed at Gary Paxton Industrial Park.

State ferries heading north and south call on Sitka. Approximately 11-13 ferries currently stop in Sitka each month, and sailing frequency continues to decrease.

Access by air to Sitka is primarily serviced by the state-owned Rocky Gutierrez Airport (Terminal is a

CBS facility). Between 2011 and 2016, the number of air travelers on scheduled aircraft to and from Sitka increased by 22%, from 129,650 passengers in 2011 to 135,850 in 2016. New air carriers have left little available counter space in the terminal. Seaplane access is primarily via the CBS-owned seaplane docks adjacent to Katlian Avenue and at Baranof Warm Springs. The expected lifespan of the seaplane base is now only about five years. In addition, the facility has insufficient capacity and the FAA will not allow expansion at the current location due to the congested sea lane and conflicts with boat traffic and birds. Because of these multiple issues, use has decreased over time. If replacement and regular maintenance does not occur, fly-in fishing and lodge businesses, small surrounding communities, and CBS could experience economic loss.

There are approximately 76 miles of roads in Sitka, including 24 miles owned and maintained by CBS and 52 miles owned and maintained by the State. Sitka has 24 miles of sidewalks under municipal and State ownership. Sitka has over 9 miles of paved bike or bike/walk paths. In addition, the Sitka Cross Trail is used for transportation as well as for recreational use. The busiest road segment in Sitka is Halibut Point Road between the intersection with Kashevaroff and the traffic circle at Lake Street (11,626 AADT in 2015). 23% of Sitkans walk or bike to work, which is significantly higher than nationwide (3%) and

statewide (9%) figures. Sitka has been designated a national Bike Friendly Community since 2008 and a Walk Friendly community since 2013.

CBS owns and maintains approximately 20.7 acres of surface parking lots, with 5.6 acres in or near the Central Business District. Public transportation in Sitka includes The RIDE Transit and paratransit services, funded by user fees and grant funding awarded to Center for Community, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and Catholic Community Services. FY 2016 patrons of The Ride and Care-a-Van public transit numbered 66,586, including 52,791 rides on the fixed route service and 13,795 on paratransit vans.

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) and CBS signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1998 to recognize areas of mutual concern, establish a framework for cooperative relations, and promote government to government relationships. Transportation is one of several areas of cooperation. Through an MOA signed in 2011, STA transportation funding enabled CBS to complete the Indian River Road Improvement Project. STA used additional funding to complete both the pre-construction (environmental, historical, archaeological and design) and the construction of the bus pullout/turnaround and parking lot at the Indian River Trailhead. The land at the trailhead is owned by the CBS, STA paid for the project, and CBS agreed to maintain the site after construction.

# KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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- Provide predictability by preparing a capital projects strategic spending plan/strategy.
- Need for additional lease lots at Sitka's Rocky Gutierrez Airport to meet demand.
- Expand and improve the airport terminal.
- Investigate whether Sitka taking full ownership or management of the airport could generate more funding and economic benefit for the community.
- Replace Sitka's deteriorating seaplane base to maintain the economic and transportation benefits upon which Sitka residents, businesses, and visitors depend.
- Maintain and expand harbor infrastructure and commercial marine work space.
- Market to harbor facilities to attract more independent boaters.
- Construct road access to east Baranof Island and seek more frequent ferry service.
- Support 9-mile extension of Halibut Point Road to Katlian Bay.
- Work collaboratively with interested agencies to address parking, solid waste management, mitigation spending and projects linked to road construction/wetlands impacts, water access points, and trail and recreation improvements.
- Maximize use of existing infrastructure before building new roads and utilities for residential development.
- Improve pedestrian crossings in school zones, through downtown, and at other heavily used intersections.
- Coordinate CBS Public Works and ADOT/PF to identify priority routes for winter sidewalk maintenance.
- Reduce Katlian Avenue pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle congestion by extending the seawalk along Katlian Avenue.
- Extend public transit hours to serve more community members.
- Conduct downtown parking inventory counts seasonally and use this quantitative data to assist in updating parking policies, options and standards.

# TRANSPORTATION

## Chapter Objectives

Maintain and Improve Sitka's Land Based Transit Infrastructure, such as Streets and Sidewalks

Adopt and Implement a Sitka Complete Streets Policy

Implement an Evidence-based Parking Strategy

Maintain and Improve Sitka's Air Based Transit

Maintain and Improve Sitka's Water Based Transit

Maximize Use of Existing Infrastructure Before Building New

Support and Promote Public Transit

Enhance Resilience

**TRANSPORTATION ACTION**

**Responsible Agency**

**Time Frame**

**Funds Needed**

**Completed**

**T 1.1a**

Develop more airport lease lots to address economic and transportation needs and demand.



**MT**

**U**

**T 2.1d**

Increase visitor/transient vessels by marketing Sitka’s Harbor facilities and amenities.



**ST**

**L**

**T 2.1i**

Investigate whether a Port Authority to manage Sitka’s harbors, airport, the Gary Paxton Industrial Park, the Marine Service Center, and specific municipally owned waterfront parcels would be a more responsive and efficient management structure.



**OG**

**L**

**T 3.3**

Reduce wear and tear and enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety by lowering the speed limit from 25 to 20 miles per hour on streets without sidewalks, in denser residential areas, and through downtown.



**MT**

**L**

**T 3.4**

Encourage increased use of public transit in order to reduce wear and tear on roads.



**OG**

**L**

**T 7.1**

Study and adopt parking mechanisms that promote and encourage efficient use of existing parking facilities to best meet demand.



**ST**

**L**

**T 8.4**

Maintain Sitka’s Clean Harbors certification.



**OG**

**L**

**PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION ACTIONS**

City and Borough of Sitka	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	ST Short-term (0-2 years)	<b>Time Frame</b>	L Low (\$0-99,999)	<b>Funds Needed</b>
Collaboration		MT Mid-term (3-5 years)		M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999)	
		LT Long-term (5-10 years)		H High (\$1,000,000+)	
		OG Ongoing		U Unknown	
				GF Grant Funded	





# PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION

## GOAL:

### **Maintain and expand Sitka's diverse recreational opportunities**

Sitka possesses unparalleled scenic landscapes and natural resources. Unsurprisingly, locals and tourists alike seek to recreate outdoors and explore the numerous ecosystems in the vicinity. An abundance of land and water is owned by the federal, state and municipal government, and available for public enjoyment, while private recreation facilities are also accessible to interested parties. Regardless of the season, Sitkans certainly do not experience a lack of

recreation venues and activity options. The Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030 development process gauges the values of the community, assesses the fiscal environment, and combines these factors into a framework with which to guide future development. While the community deeply values recreation, budget cuts have resulted in reductions in maintenance funding for recreation facilities. While reductions are unfortunate, scarcity can spur creative solutions and collaborative efforts.

# CURRENT PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION STATUS

Sitkans highly value their well-developed system of parks, trails, and recreation facilities and opportunities. "Proximity to scenic and pristine areas where these forms of recreation (fishing, beachcombing, picnicking, hunting, camping, etc.) can be enjoyed is one of the principal assets of living in Sitka" stated the Sitka Coastal Management Plan.

During adoption of the City and Borough of Sitka's 2012 Sustainable Outdoor Recreation Action Plan, the business community recognized the importance of recreation and its link to a strong local economy when the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce noted that, "Recreation and tourism are strong segments of the Sitka economy..."

Less "wild" but equally valued are organized recreation and sports programming and facilities provided by the City and Borough of Sitka, Sitka School District, Community Schools, Sitka Fine Arts Camp and other non-profit organizations, clubs and leagues. Such activities include adult and youth basketball, softball, volleyball, family roller skating, and swim clubs. Many of these activities are hosted in public school buildings and in municipal parks.

The City and Borough of Sitka manages over 50 developed recreation sites and 100 acres of parks, grounds, sports field, larger parks such as the 22 acres at Swan Lake, as well as municipal landscaping and trees. In addition, CBS crews maintain approximately 11 lineal miles of trails and seawalk. This work is completed by 2.5 full time employees as well as a seasonal grounds crew.

Given this work load it is not surprising that benchmarks established by a 2016 National Park and Recreation Association review of 950 park and recreation agencies around the U.S. shows that, on a per capita basis: 1) Sitka exceeds the average amount of parks and recreation acreage; 2) Sitka could generate more revenue from its parks, trails and recreation assets; 3) Other communities appear to spend more on parks and recreation, but USFS and related Sitka municipal contracting should be included for a full analysis, and 4) There are far fewer CBS parks and recreation staff compared to other communities, suggesting more duties and work than can easily be managed.

Through efforts of many citizens and local coalitions, Sitka has achieved status as both a national Bike Friendly Community and a Walk Friendly Community. Sitka's sidewalks, bike lanes, and seawalk are used for recreation, access to Sitka's multi-use trail system, and for

transportation between destinations. Walking and bicycling area a valued part of Sitkans healthy lifestyles.

Sitka is surrounded by the Tongass National Forest. The USFS issues outfitter/guide permits for commercial use of public lands in the Sitka Ranger District. There were 79 permitted commercial outfitter/guides operating in the Sitka Ranger District during 2011-2015. During this period they collectively led approximately 10,100 clients on average annually on commercial trips.

The USFS tracks the number of hikers on 10 trails in Sitka, as well as the number of people using and nights occupied for 25 cabins and campgrounds in the borough. In 2015-2016, depending on the trail, an average of 5 (Salmon Lake) to close to 90 (Thimbleberry Heart Lake) hikers used local trails per day. Herring Cove trail, Thimbleberry Heart Lake trail, and along Harbor Mountain-Gavan trail each experienced peaks of over 150 hikers on a single day. Over 6,200 people used a cabin or campground site in 2016, which is up 15% since 2009.

# KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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- State Parks in Sitka are not staffed.
- Funding does not match the high value the community places on recreation.
- Growing senior population requires different recreation needs than existing facilities provide.
- Some playground equipment on municipal playgrounds does not meet current safety standards.
- Collaboration is critical for managing recreational resources.
- Facilities used to access sites off the road system, such as boat launches, require ongoing maintenance.
- Private/public partnerships can be developed to fill in the gap for underfunded government park facilities. This may include maintenance volunteerism and economic opportunities (i.e. food vendors for events).
- Sitka's aging population may result in additional retirees who wish to volunteer their time to such projects as trail beautification and flowerbed maintenance.
- Alpine and other uplands provide the possibility for future recreation development.
- Sitka currently has many recreational resources, and these can be maintained to serve future generations.
- Sitka has maintained the Tree City USA designation since 2003 due to the beauty of its landscaping, flowers, and trees. According to the CBS Urban Forest Management Plan (2013), trees boost property values, sustain fisheries, support retail activity, enhance tourism and visitor experiences, improve municipal health, protect water quality, reduce storm water runoff, counter climate change, and ensure roadway safety.
- Numerous governmental entities, private organizations, and individuals are invested in Sitka's recreational resources.
- Community members have worked since Fall 2016 to raise funds for a safe and accessible playground to be installed along the Seawalk adjacent Crescent Harbor.
- Sitka Trail Works is working toward a Cross Trail expansion.
- The State of Alaska plans a 9-mile expansion of Halibut Point Road to Katlian Bay for recreational and subsistence use.

# PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION

## Chapter Objectives

- Maintenance is Top Priority
- Access for all Abilities to Recreation Facilities and Programming
- Coordinate and Communicate Regularly with Recreation Providers about Funding, Programming and Maintenance
- Sitkans Place a High Value on Recreation
- Recognize the high use of Sitka Trails both for Recreation and as Secondary Routes
- Expand and Facilitate Community Use of Parks, Trails and Recreation

**PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ACTION**

**Responsible Agency**

**Time Frame**

**Funds Needed**

**Completed**

**PTR 1.1**

Maintaining existing parks, trails, fields, and recreation facilities is a higher priority than building new.



**OG**

**U**

**PTR 2.1g**

Allow community gardens in undeveloped municipal park space.



**ST**

**L**

**PTR 3.1**

Collaborate and seek service efficiencies to keep parks, trails, and recreation sites safe, useable, and well-landscaped. Think creatively.



**OG**

**L**

**PTR 5.3**

As subdivision and platting occurs, retain rights-of-way and easements to provide future access to trails, recreation, and open space.



**MT**

**L**

**PTR 6.1**

Develop use permitting procedures for commercial use of recreational facilities, including but not limited to temporary food vendors and recreation equipment rentals.



**OG**

**L**

- Responsible Agency
- City and Borough of Sitka
  - Collaboration

- Time Frame
- ST Short-term (0-2 years)
  - MT Mid-term (3-5 years)
  - LT Long-term (5-10 years)
  - OG Ongoing

- Funds Needed
- L Low (\$0-99,999)
  - M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999)
  - H High (\$1,000,000+)
  - U Unknown
  - GF Grant Funded

**PRIORITY PARKS,  
TRAILS AND  
RECREATION  
ACTIONS**

Sitka is located among the forests of Southeast Alaska nestled between mountains and ocean. It offers land and water with profound beauty and bountiful harvests. Its isolation offers pristine scenery and unique geographical challenges. Its history and future are dependent upon working together.

Based on public input, a preferred growth scenario was selected, one that reverses the trend of spreading out in a disconnected or "unharmonious" fashion, and instead focuses on growth and development infill. These infill corridors will provide greater access to transit, jobs, walkable neighborhoods and parks and recreation. The "preferred scenario" also uses less land, reduces costs associated with road, water and sewer extensions, and encourages walkable, mixed-use development patterns, which can lead to more affordable development.




# LAND USE

## **GOAL:**

**Guide the orderly and efficient use of private and public land in a manner that:**

- **Fosters economic opportunity**
- **Maintain's Sitka's small town atmosphere and rural lifestyle**
- **Recognizes the natural environment and**
- **Enhances the quality of life for present and future generations**

# CURRENT LAND USE STATUS



Sitka is the largest City in the United States when measured by total land area and total area combining land and water, including 1,300 miles of coastline. Comparatively, the land area is about the size of the state of Delaware. Sitka is located on Baranof Island (10th Largest Island in the United States) in the northern part of the Alexander Archipelago in the Alaska Panhandle; and is partially sheltered from the Gulf of Alaska by Kruzof Island, which hosts the iconic dormant volcano Mount Edgecumbe.

On Baranof Island are the highest mountains of the archipelago. Most of municipal boundaries of land are found within the Tongass National Forest, which is comparable to most of Southeast Alaska.

The United States Forest Service recently updated its Tongass Land Management Plan including various Land Use Designations (LUD), which are primarily focused on recreation, tourism, and natural resource management. In addition to the Tongass National Forest, there are several congressionally designated wilderness areas within the boundaries of Sitka.

Land ownership is broad. The main public ownership includes various governmental entities including the City and Borough of Sitka, the United States Forest Service, State of Alaska, (generally managed by DNR and ADFG), the University of Alaska, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the National Park Service, and US Geodetic Survey. Major private land owners include Coastal Development Company, Baranof Island Housing Authority, Andrew Jack, Benjamin Rindge, Dixie McClintock, Haida Corporation, Charlie Bower, Bert Stedman, Avrum Gross, Alaska Arts Southeast, Inc., William Goertzen, Paul White, and SEARHC.

Current mapping of natural hazards is occurring through several programs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently updating the National Flood Insurance Program's Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Base Flood Elevations. Adoption of the maps would be required to continue to be a part of the NFIP, and this is anticipated for a decision around spring/summer of 2019.

FEMA is also sponsoring the updating of a Multi-Hazard Risk Report, in addition to Sitka's update to the Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, as well as partnering with the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey to further study and map landslide risks along the road system that should be completed at the end of

2018. All of these mapping projects could have positive impacts by providing the best information to date on known multi-hazard risks, but could also have unintended consequences such as impacts to mortgages and insurance policies as well as decreased value of land or increased costs for safe development.

# KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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- Declining population and demographic shift will pose numerous challenges and opportunities. Conservative residential land development may be best considering projected population decline and costs of infrastructure expansion. Quality, accessible, and affordable housing options that meets the changing needs of older populations and the next generation should be the focus.
- Promoting economic growth and job growth that is sustainable will be critical to meeting the future needs. Sustainable, living wage jobs and industries that attract young families and younger demographics should be a focus.
- Infrastructure development should consider maximizing most efficient use within current footprint, and best return on investment including economic growth opportunities when deciding to expand infrastructure.
- Current residential zoning districts have a wide mix of existing residential and commercial uses. Often, current code and current conditions are not inline. New residential zoning districts should be considered that best preserve neighborhood character and promote affordable and quality housing options. Mixed-use zones should be used to buffer single family residential from heavier commercial uses. Other design and development standards should be considered in rezoning to promote harmony of use between heavy commercial/industrial uses from more sensitive residential uses.
- Many existing developed lots do not meet existing development standards for lot size, setbacks, or use. Consider new development standards inline with existing conditions and desire for more affordable development.
- Residential and light commercial mixed-uses are located adjacent to heavy commercial and industrial uses creating disharmony of uses and affecting both residential uses and business uses. A master plan for key areas such as Jarvis, Price, and Smith streets that addresses options to protect industrial heavy commercial uses while protecting residential and residential/light commercial uses should be pursued.
- Dilapidated mobile home parks along prime waterfront offer the opportunity to seek creative solutions to improve quality of park housing and best use of developed land.
- Commercial freight and barge operations are not centrally located and are inefficiently spread out.
- Rock source is needed for current and future development.
- Water-dependent Uses are at risk of not having land to develop.
- Develop vacant and underutilized property. Affordable housing and development costs are challenges that need a variety of approaches to reduce costs and provide creative solutions.



# LAND USE

## Chapter Objectives

- Strategically Manage Municipal Land
- Maintain downtown's Central Business District's compact, walkable charm
- Enhance development in Greater Downtown and Future Growth Focus Areas
- Promote Social Interaction
- Maintain Environmental Quality
- Prevent Incompatible Land Use
- Strategically Plan for Future Growth
- Maximize Efficient use of existing infrastructure before building new
- Enhance Resilience
- Special Focus on Waterfront

**LAND USE AND FUTURE GROWTH ACTION**

**Responsible Agency**

**Time Frame**

**Funds Needed**

**Completed**

**LU 1.1** Prepare a municipal land management plan to include an inventory of municipal land and make recommendations to retain, lease or dispose.  
*Cross reference with ED 2.1.*



**MT**

**L**

**LU 2.1** Promote multi-story development in the CBD with retail and commercial uses on lower floors and residential or office uses upstairs.



**OG**

**L**

**LU 3.1** Support light commercial-professional services development along Halibut Point Road and Lake Street, from Marine Street to DeGroff Street.



**MT**

**L**

**LU 3.2** In the former Sheldon Jackson Campus area, encourage uses that support Sitka's education, arts and sciences economy, while preserving and enhancing the historic character.



**ST**

**L**

**LU 3.5** Develop a Master Plan for the Katlian/Kaagwaantaan area in collaboration with Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, property owners, local business owners and other interested parties.  
*Cross reference HCA 1.1i*



**LT**

**M**

**LU 6.1** Transition to a more harmonious land use in the Price/Smith Street area and Granite Creek/No Name Mountain Area.



**LT**

**L**

**LU 6.2** Prevent future incompatible land use between residential, light commercial, heavy commercial and industrial uses.



**MT**

**L**

**LU 7.8** Review zoning code to explore changes to allow urban horticultural and agricultural uses more broadly in existing zoning districts.



**ST**

**L**

**LU 8.2** Amend development standards to promote affordable development including increasing height, decreasing minimum lot size and width, establishing lot and structure maximums in specific zones, and reducing parking requirements as appropriate.  
*Cross reference H 1.1a-H1.1e*



**MT**

**U**

**LU 9.2** Maintain an up-to-date Hazard Mitigation Plan that identifies response plans for a variety of disasters and emergencies such as earthquake, tsunami, flood, landslide and other.



**OG**

**L/GF**

**LU 9.6** Consider how to best address development in moderate to high risk areas via means such as increased geotechnical analysis, mitigation, and other risk allocation or mitigation measures.



**OG**

**U**

**PRIORITY LAND USE ACTIONS**

Responsible Agency	Time Frame	Funds Needed
City and Borough of Sitka	ST Short-term (0-2 years)	L Low (\$0-99,999)
Collaboration	MT Mid-term (3-5 years)	M Mid (\$100,000-\$999,999)
	LT Long-term (5-10 years)	H High (\$1,000,000+)
	OG Ongoing	U Unknown
		GF Grant Funded

# FUTURE GROWTH AND FOCUS AREAS

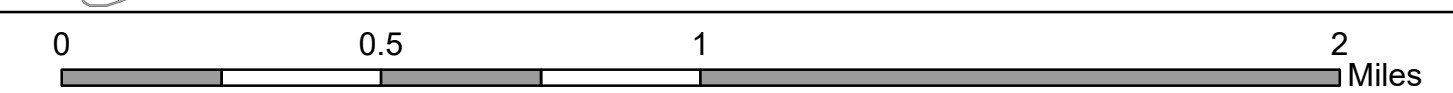
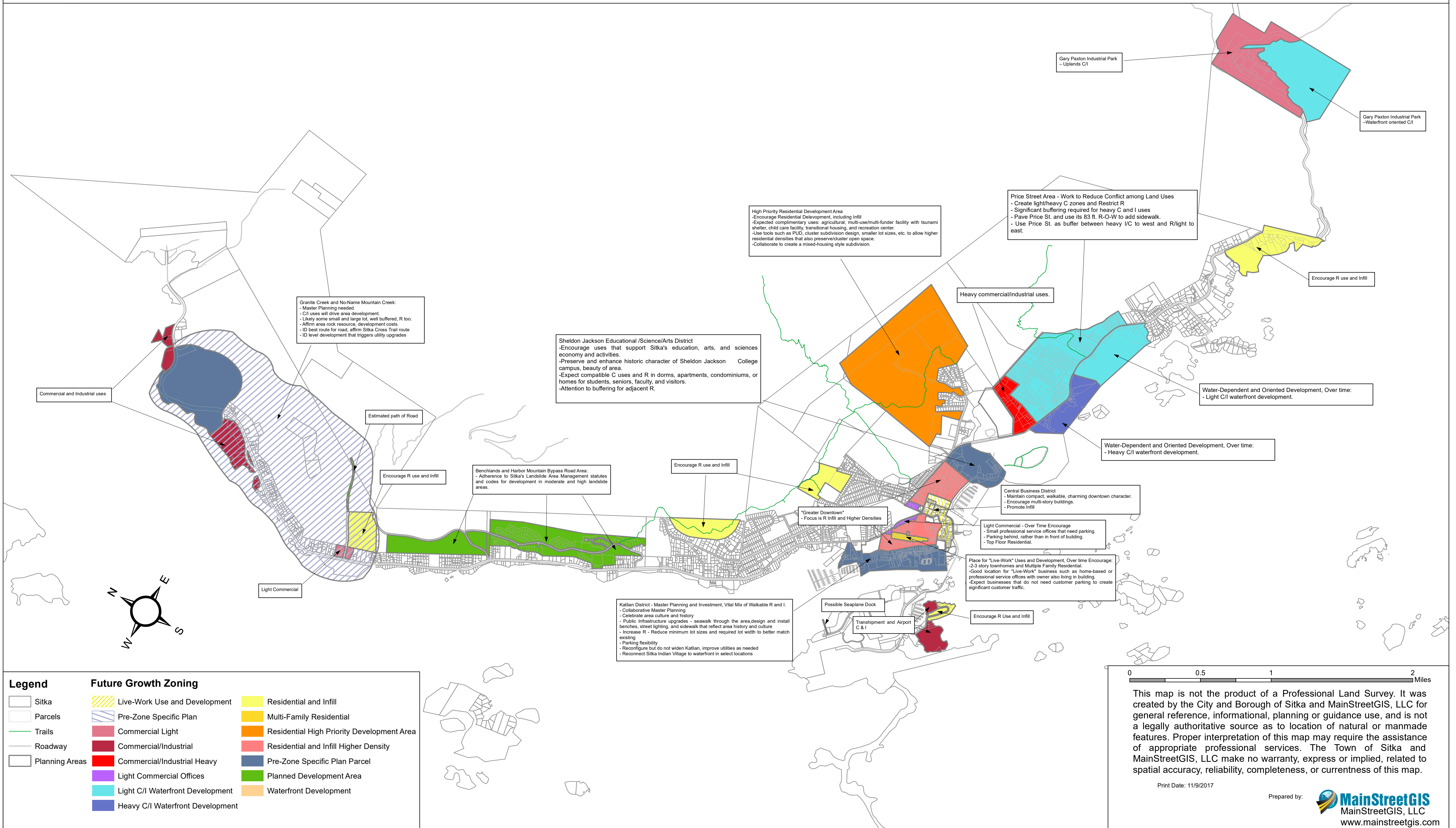




# City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska

## Sitka 2030 Comprehensive Plan

# Future Growth Map



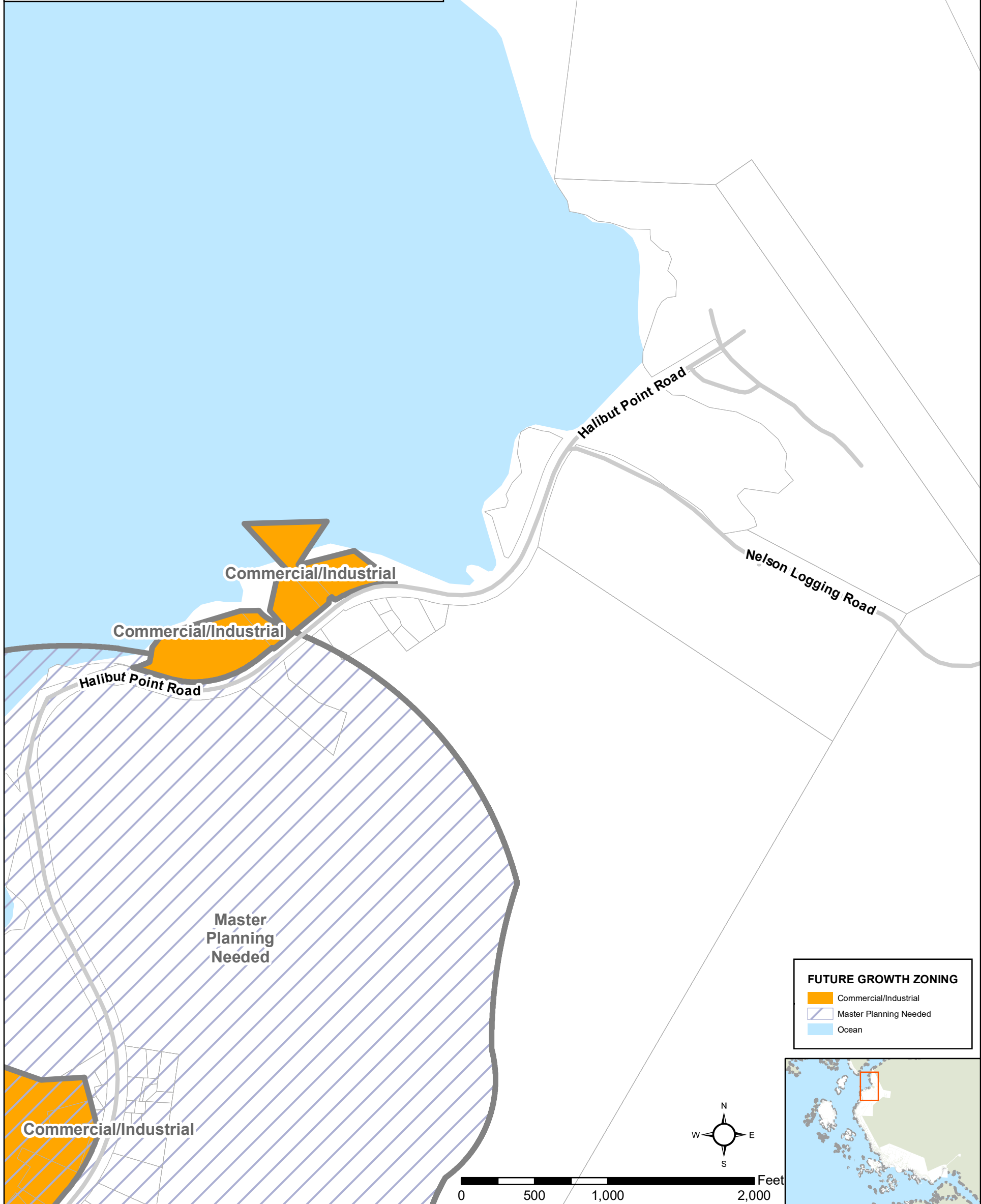
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# Future Growth Map Starrigavan and North

An area rich in history and resources. A variety of federal, state, and local recreational uses exist in this area. A state 9-mile one lane road will begin construction in early 2018 that will extend access to recreational opportunities and US Forest Service and Shee Atika Incorporated lands.

Further planning study and work among the CBS, the USFS, and SAI, and other interested parties will be needed to address parking, waste management, mitigation spending, secondary water source opportunities, and other aspects of development within this area. Access and recreational improvements are the main focus of development here.



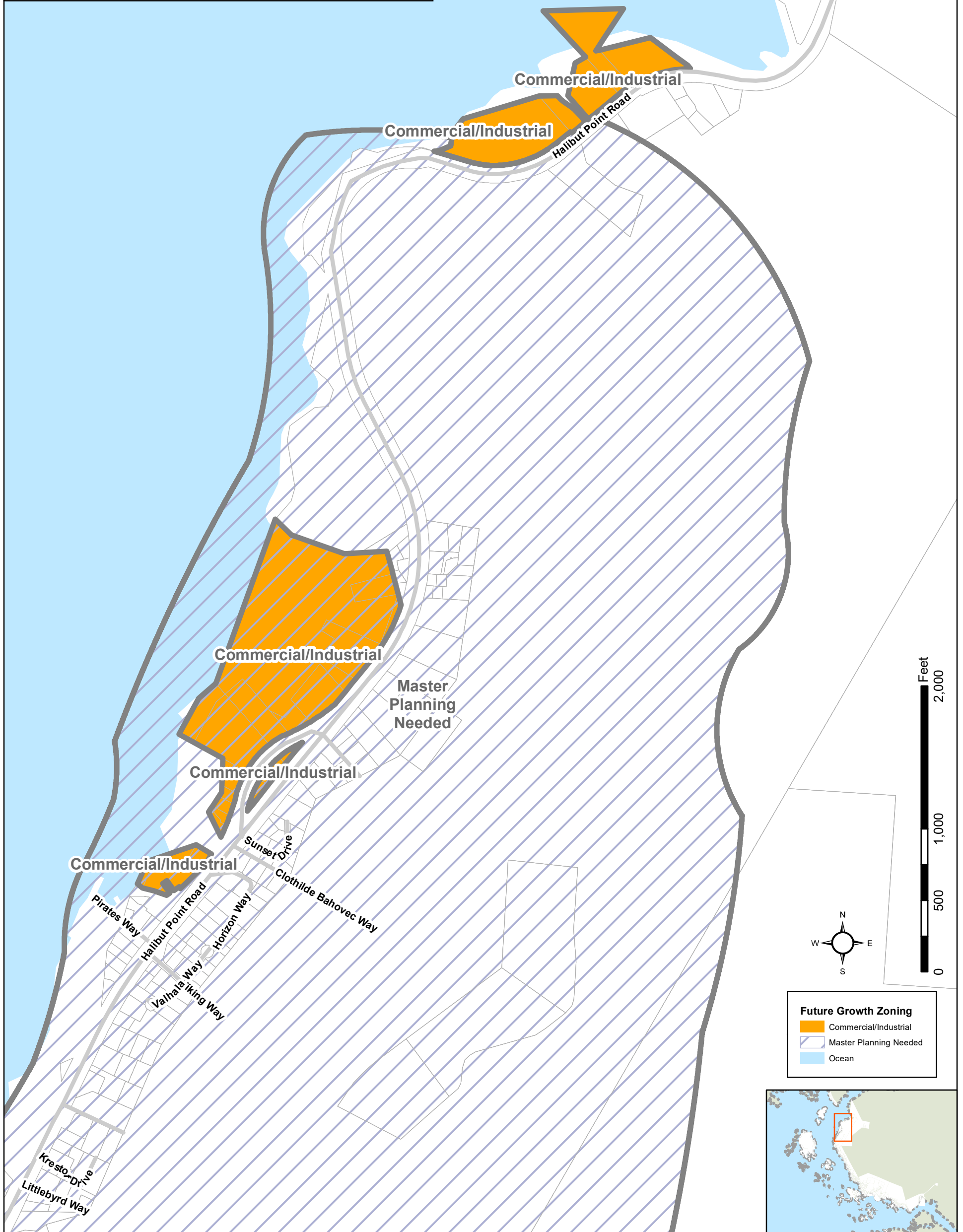
**FUTURE GROWTH ZONING**

- Commercial/Industrial
- Master Planning Needed
- Ocean

# Future Growth Map

## Granite Creek and No Name Mountain

Between Granite Creek and No Name Creek are approximately 800 acres of municipally owned land adjacent to additional federal land. A Master Plan is recommended for options for development. In addition, a master plan could be coupled with a Request for Proposals from commercial developers that could provide a complete development plan for best utilizing the rock resource as well as future use and development. A mix of land uses and development is expected and a Master Plan/RFP is highly recommended to best develop rock and land resources.



# Future Growth Map

## Old Harbor Mountain Road

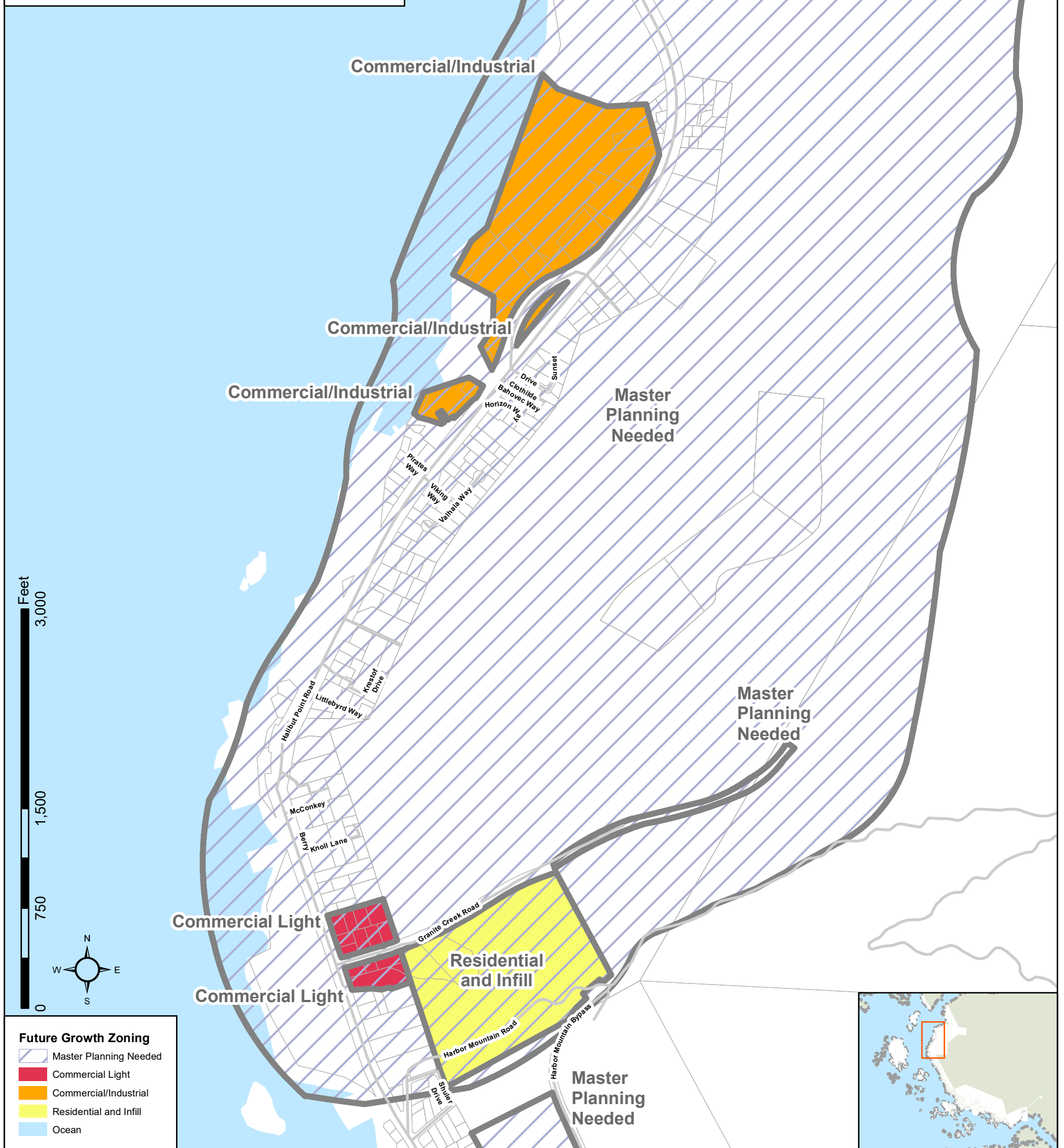
Between Granite Creek and Harbor Mountain Road there is a bypass road near the USFS parking lot that provides access to over 10 acres of undeveloped CBS land. This area could support a variety of uses, such as residential and agriculture, and it could also act like buffering between different uses if the area or adjacent areas were developed for more intense uses such as industrial or commercial.



# Future Growth Map

## Waterfront between Ferry Terminal and Halibut Point State Recreation Area

The approximate 1 mile strip of water front land between the ferry terminal and the state park has a mix of water front uses from purely residential, recreational, to mixed use with residential and light commercial, to heavy commercial and industrial uses and deep water docks. Adjacent to the terminal and deep water dock, there are 17 acres of property on a knob that could support the growing and consolidation of local water-dependent commercial and industrial development. Consolidation may offer savings and benefits from consolidated economies of scale. Most importantly, this area could be impacted by or could be critical to the development of the No Name Mountain area rock source and land use development. It would be prudent to incorporate the planned use of this area with the Master Plan and development of the No Name Mountain area.





# Future Growth Map

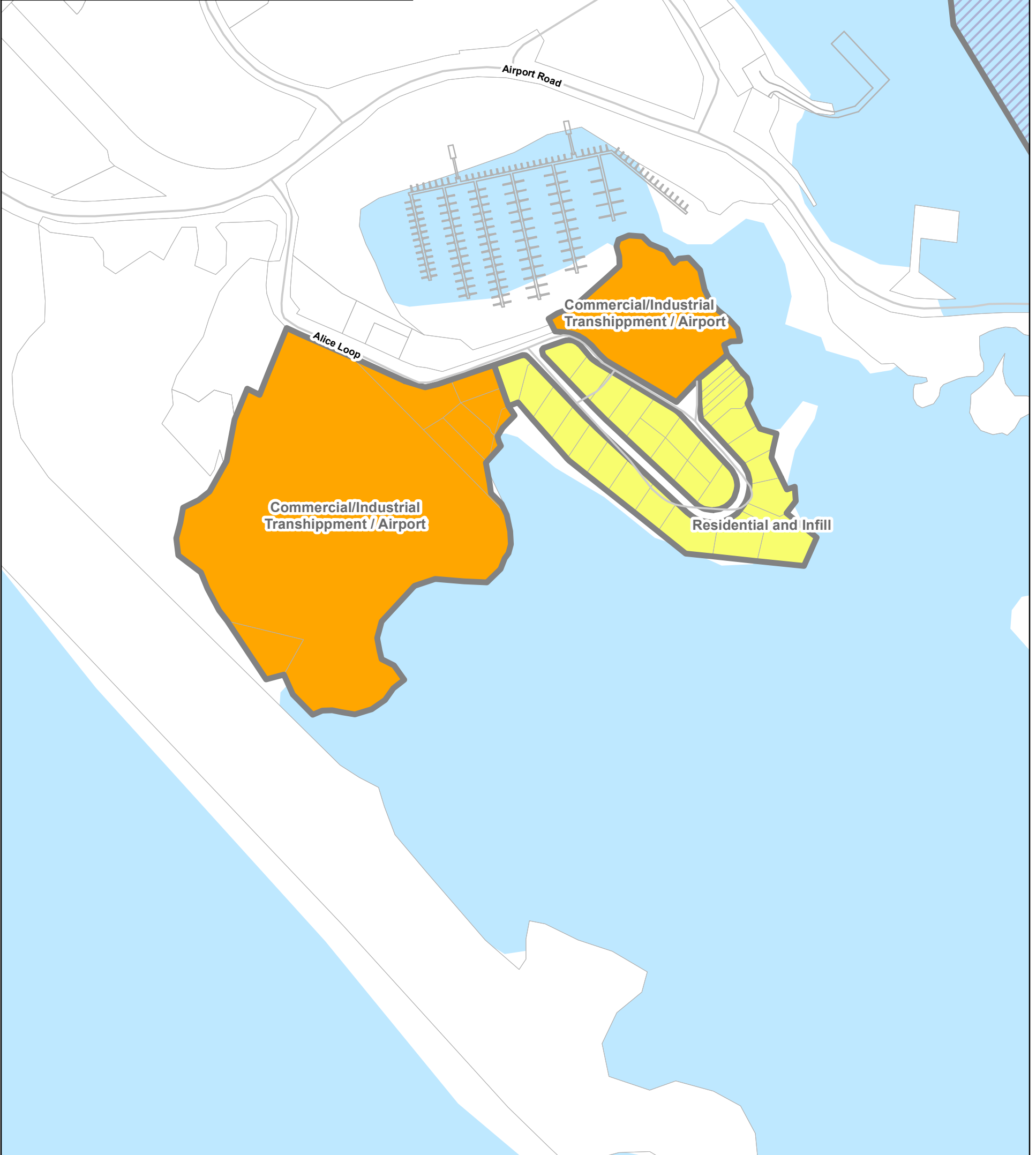
## Benchlands and Mountain Bypass Road Area

Further development of this area and mountain bypass area could occur, but should take into account known risks, provide reasonable development opportunities, and cost effective mitigation measures where appropriate. Such development could include low density residential, agriculture, horticulture, open space, trails, and other buffering uses.







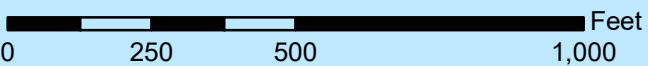
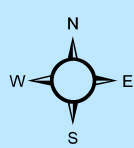
# Future Growth Map East of Airport

Charcoal Island is a prospective location for future development that could be geared towards marine related commercial and industrial growth, mixed use that supports adjacent commercial and residential uses, and provides a buffer to the adjacent Alice Loop residential development. Other areas on Japonski Island should be evaluated for further expansion of uses including but not limited to airport, marine/commercial, USCG, SEARHC, MEHS, municipal facilities, harbors, and additional mixed use development.



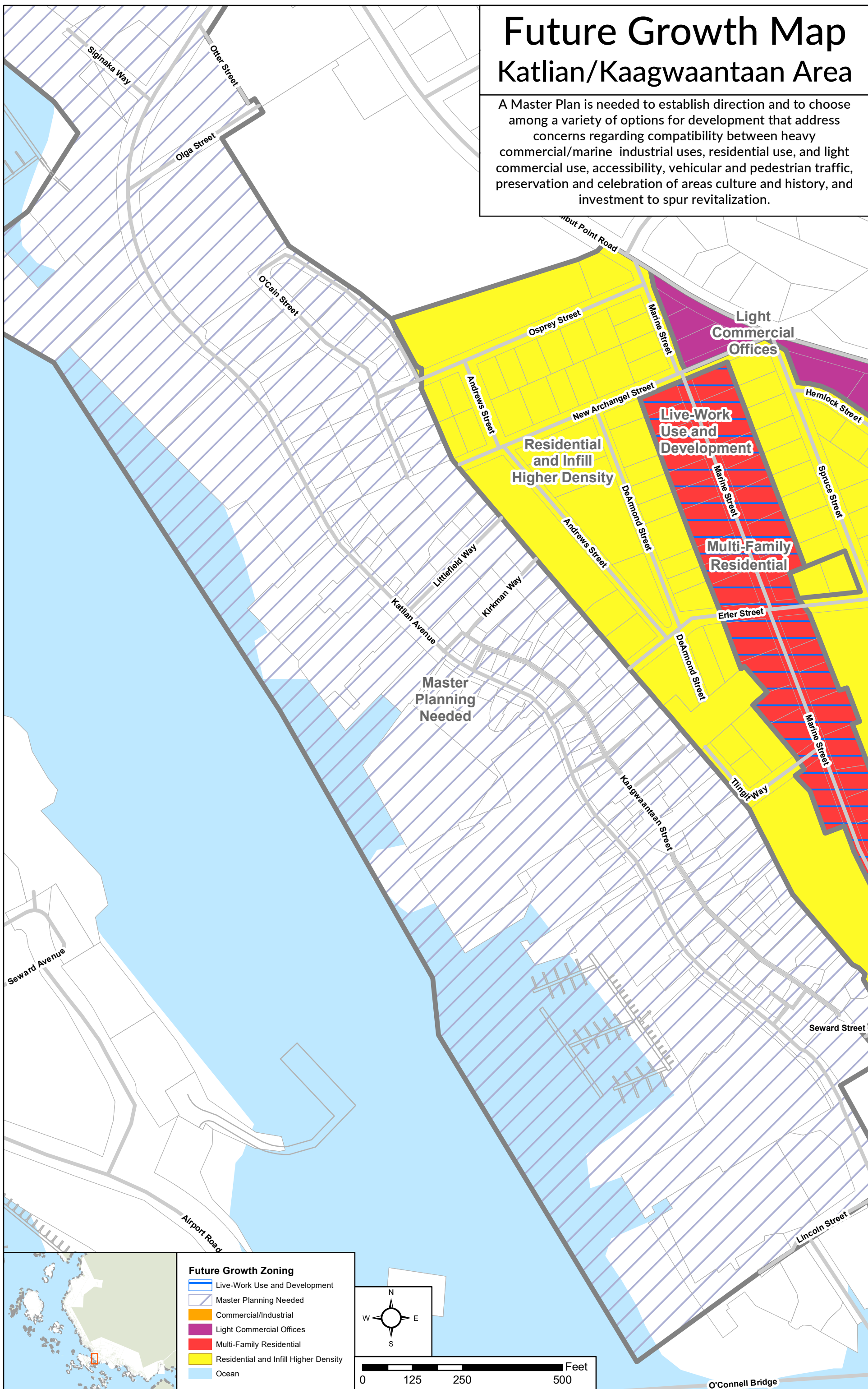
## Future Growth Zoning

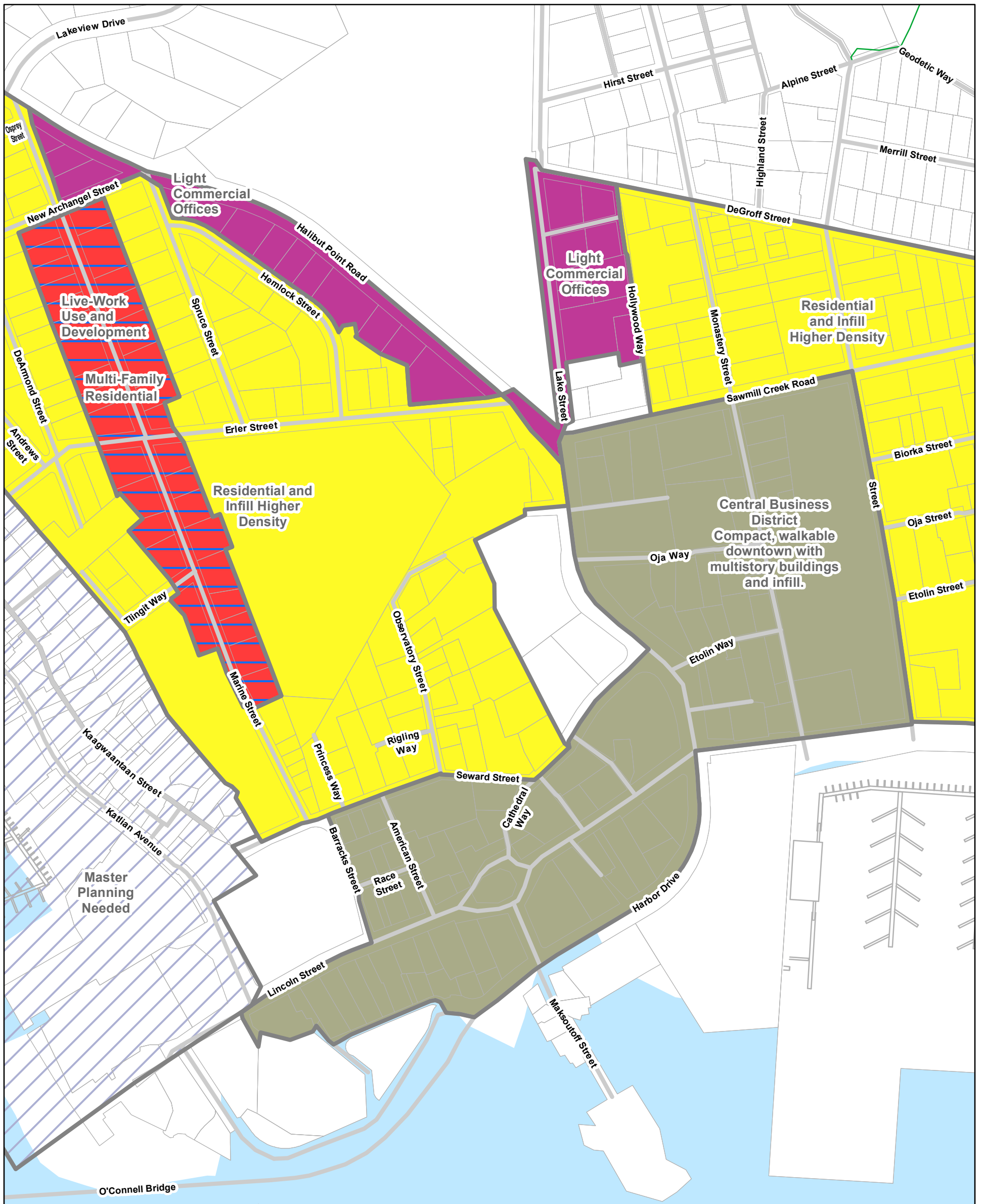
-  Master Planning Needed
-  Commercial/Industrial
-  Residential and Infill
-  Ocean








# Future Growth Map Katlian/Kaagwaantaan Area

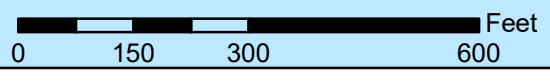
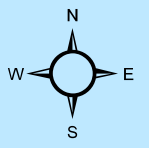
A Master Plan is needed to establish direction and to choose among a variety of options for development that address concerns regarding compatibility between heavy commercial/marine industrial uses, residential use, and light commercial use, accessibility, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, preservation and celebration of areas culture and history, and investment to spur revitalization.





**Future Growth Zoning**

-  Live-Work Use and Development
-  Central Business District
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Master Planning Needed
-  Residential and Infill Higher Density
-  Light Commercial Offices



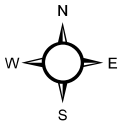
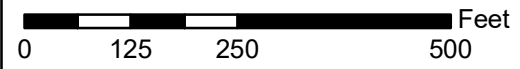
# Future Growth Map Central Business District (CBD)

Maintain the compact, walkable, charming character of the downtown's Central Business District, while promoting infill, higher density redevelopment, and preserving the historical context of the area and key structures. Areas within walking distance are also prime for compact development, infill, and higher density development that would help support and vibrant downtown. Further specific planning should explore options to promote and incentivize historic preservation, rehabilitation, higher density redevelopment, efficient use of area parking, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, use of placemaking along the downtown corridor, signage, visibility, and uses and events that promote a vibrant downtown.

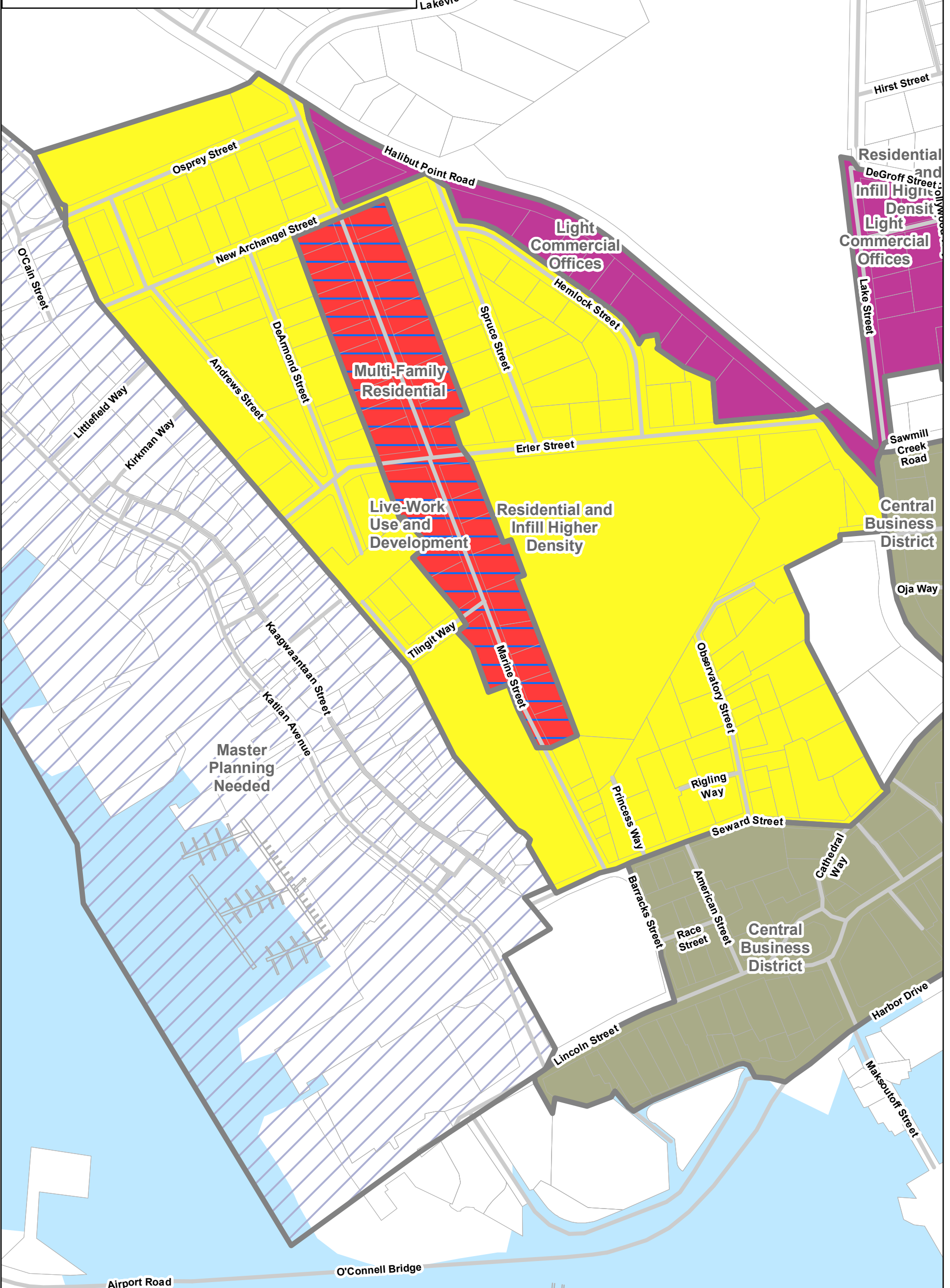
# Future Growth Map

## HPR/Swan Lake from Marine to DeGroff

The current residential zoning is not exactly in line with the current professional office use. The current use and the central location along a major thoroughfare are typically better utilized as professional offices and other uses that can adapt well to residential structures or among residential uses. Often these uses include professional offices (attorney, doctor, dentists, finance). Parking options and mixed uses with residential should be explored.



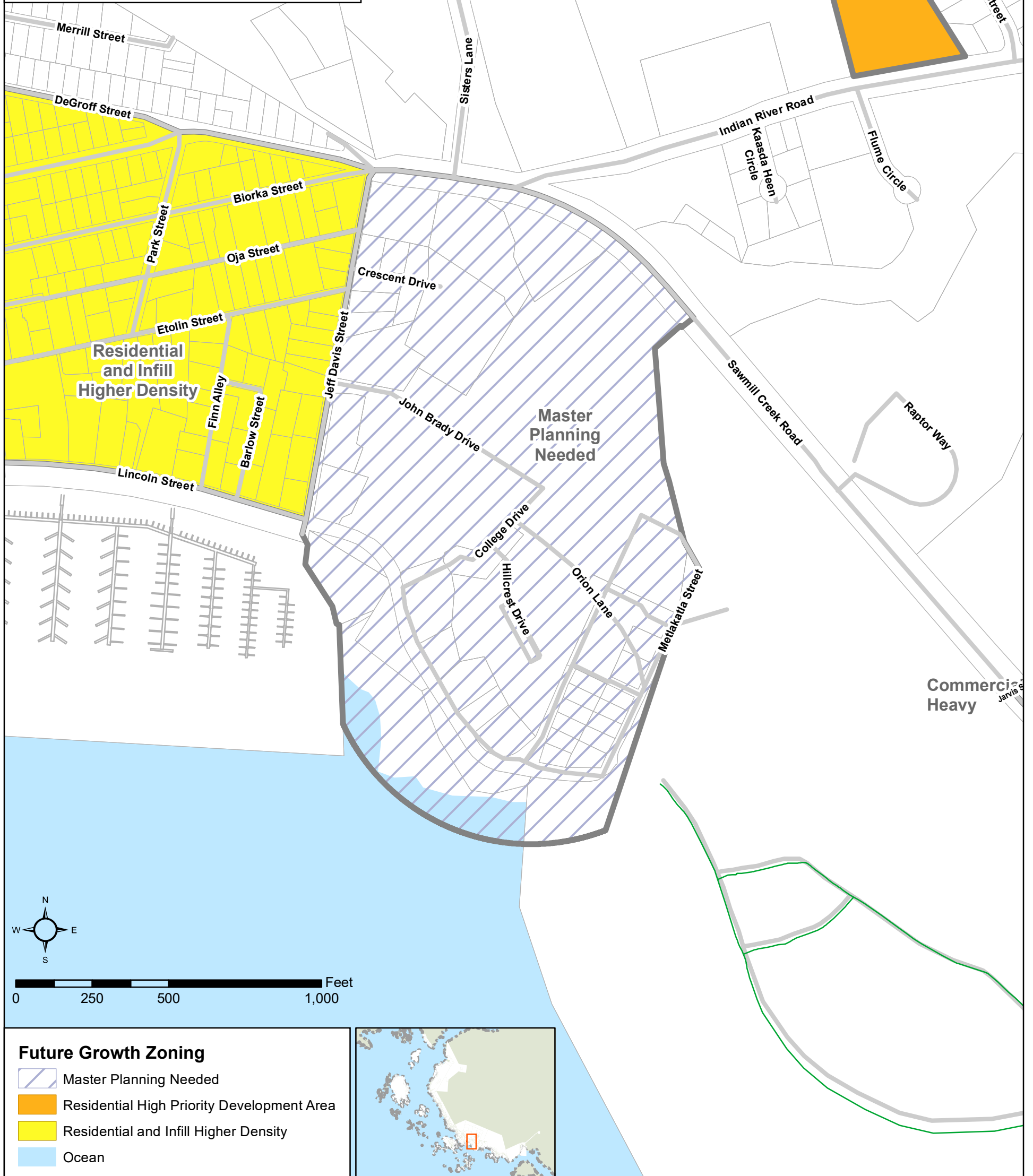
- Future Growth Zoning**
- ▬ Live-Work Use and Development
  - ▬ Central Business District
  - ▬ Master Planning Needed
  - ▬ Light Commercial Offices
  - ▬ Multi-Family Residential
  - ▬ Residential and Infill Higher Density
  - ▬ Ocean



# Future Growth Map

## Sheldon Jackson Vicinity









The current multi-family residential zoning (R-2) is not in sync with the actual historic and existing use of the land. The historic use of the land was as the Sheldon Jackson College campus and has since evolved into a multi-use of Alaska Arts Southeast, Hames Center, the Sitka Sound Science Center, the Sheldon Jackson Museum, the Sitka Youth Advocates, Sitka Fine Arts Camp, and The Sitka Counseling Association. It could be said the use change from a higher education use with support facilities to a community based educational use with various professional and educational services. In addition, the land and location are important historic, aesthetic, and recreational resources that supplement the local community and neighborhoods.

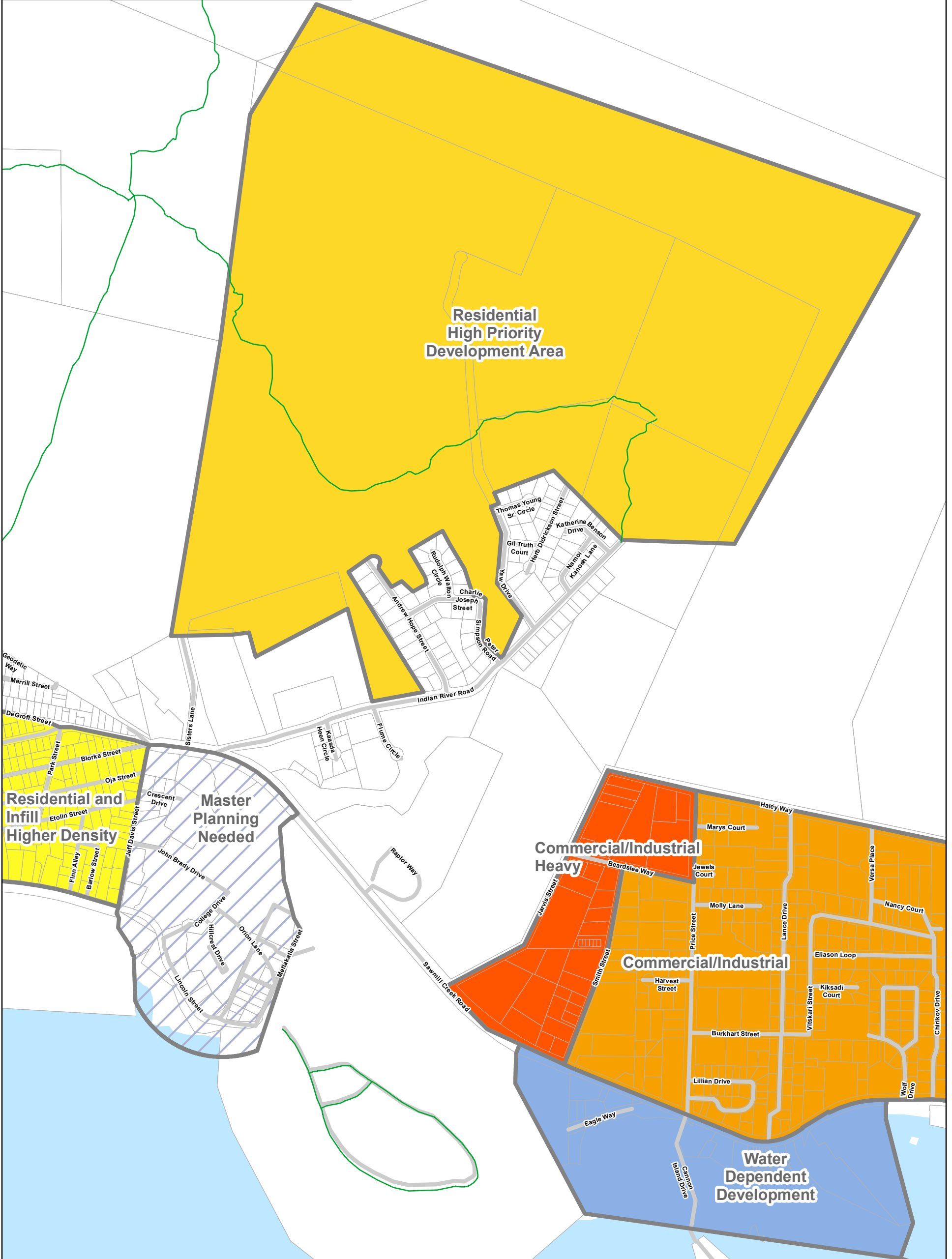
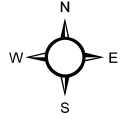
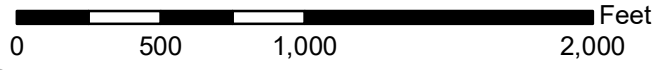
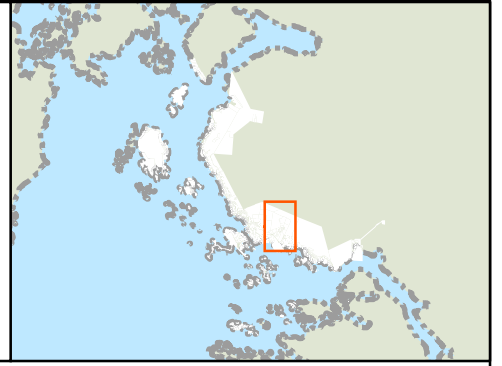


# Future Growth Map Indian River

This area is a high priority for housing development. Development should encourage residential uses, but may also consider complimentary uses such as agricultural, multiuse, emergency shelters, child and elder care facilities, recreation centers, shared work space, and coffee shops.

## Future Growth Zoning

-  Master Planning Needed
-  Commercial/Industrial
-  Commercial/Industrial Heavy
-  Heavy C/I Waterfront Development
-  Water Dependent Development
-  Residential High Priority Development Area
-  Residential and Infill Higher Density
-  Ocean



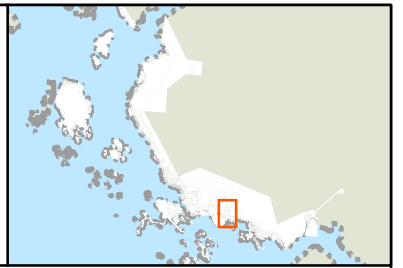
# Future Growth Map

## Jarvis/Smith/Price Area

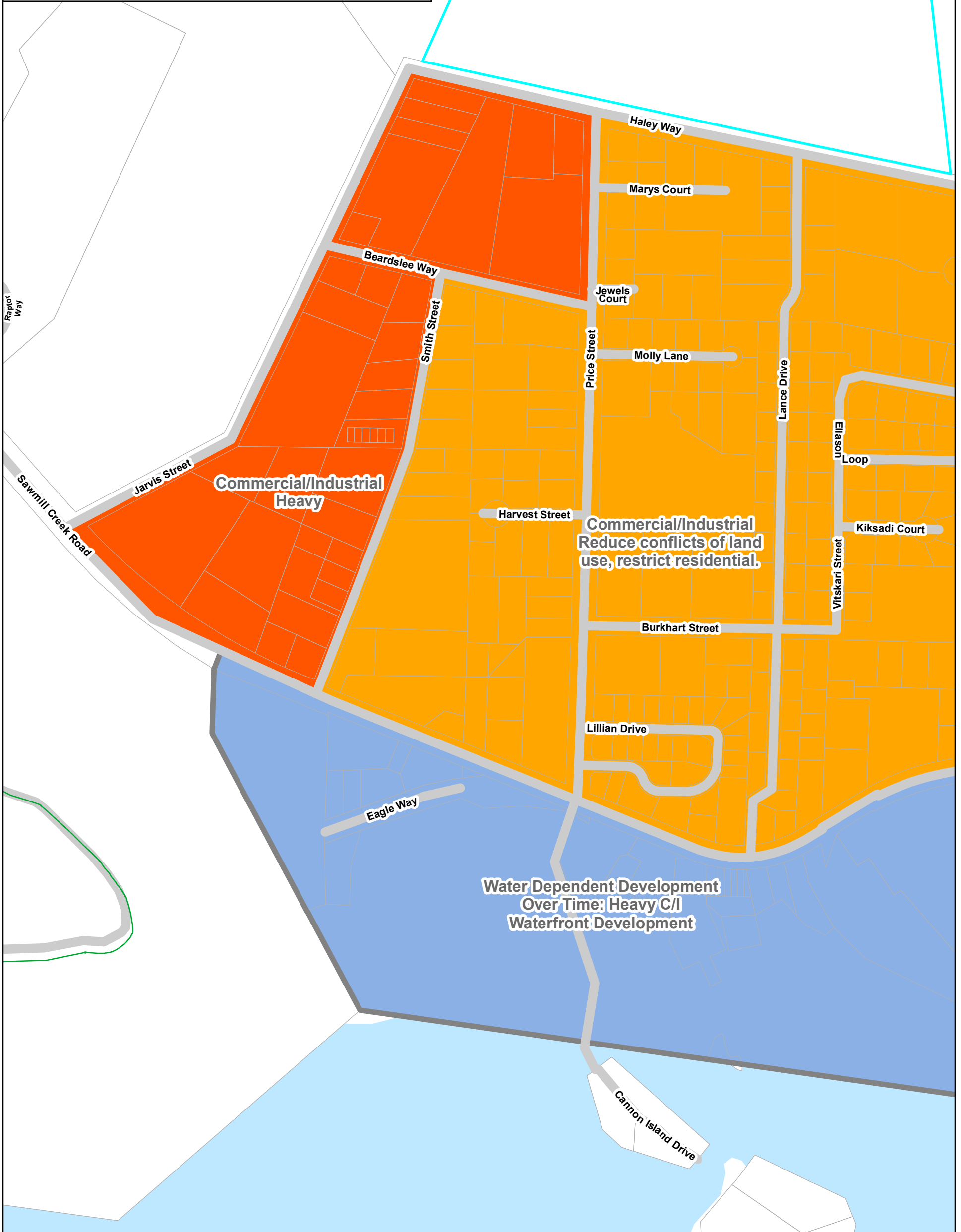
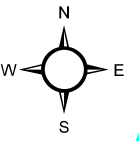
This area has a mix of uses stemming from overbroad land use designations, and the allowable permitted uses, conditional uses, and legal nonconforming existing uses within those zoning districts. The end result is that there is residential next to heavy commercial and other industrial uses that are incompatible and have impacts to all uses. The solution is to perform a Master Plan that takes a look a revising zoning districts, permitted uses and conditional uses allowed in those districts, and other options such as buffers, setbacks, open space, screening, and transition of uses to move the area towards harmony of uses.

### Future Growth Zoning

- Commercial/Industrial
- Commercial/Industrial Heavy
- Water Dependent Development
- Ocean



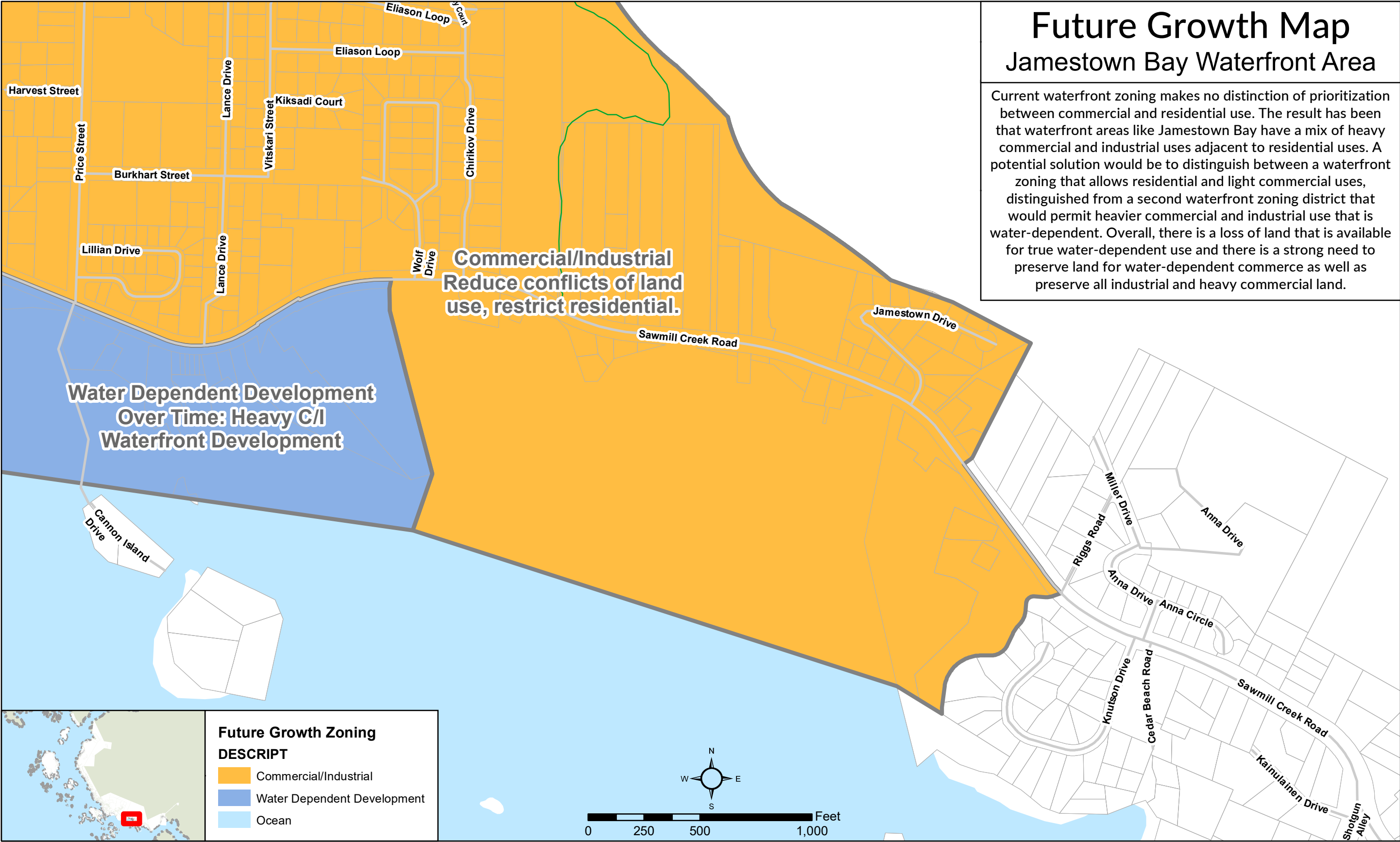
0 250 500 1,000 Feet





# Future Growth Map Jamestown Bay Waterfront Area

Current waterfront zoning makes no distinction of prioritization between commercial and residential use. The result has been that waterfront areas like Jamestown Bay have a mix of heavy commercial and industrial uses adjacent to residential uses. A potential solution would be to distinguish between a waterfront zoning that allows residential and light commercial uses, distinguished from a second waterfront zoning district that would permit heavier commercial and industrial use that is water-dependent. Overall, there is a loss of land that is available for true water-dependent use and there is a strong need to preserve land for water-dependent commerce as well as preserve all industrial and heavy commercial land.



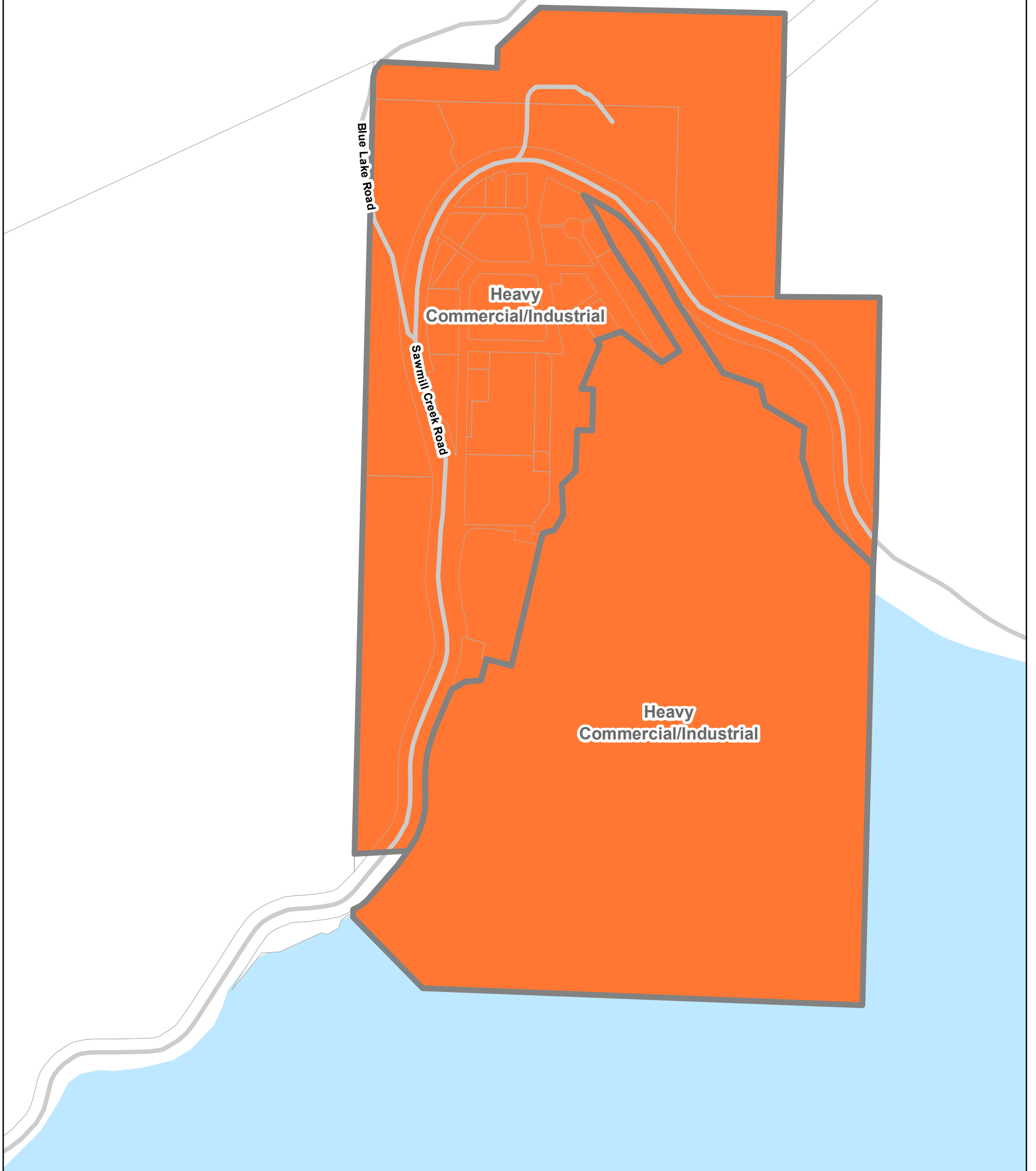
**Future Growth Zoning**  
**DESCRIPT**

- Commercial/Industrial
- Water Dependent Development
- Ocean

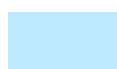
# Future Growth Map

## Gary Paxton Industrial Park Area

The priority is to continue economic development and job creation at GPIP. The location has competitive economic advantages of deep-water access, access to bulk water, at accessible land, full road and utility access, and a new deep water multi-use dock.



### Future Growth Zoning

-  Heavy Commercial/Industrial
-  Ocean

