



## Haines Comprehensive Plan Revision

### Economic Development Dialogue

June 20th, 2023, 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Aspen Hotel and via Zoom

**Stakeholders invited:** Haines Borough, Haines Chamber of Commerce, Haines Economic Development Corporation, Chilkoot Indian Association, Sustainable Southeast Partnership, Cruise Lines International Association Alaska, DOWA Alaska, Commercial Fish Advisory Board, Southeast Conference, Haines Borough School District, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, Upper Lynn Canal Fish Committee.

**Stakeholders present:** Haines Borough (Alekkka Fullerton, Annette Kreitzer, Doug Olerud, Andrew Conrad, Rebecca Hylton), Haines Economic Development Corporation (Cindy Zuluaga-Jimenez), Chilkoot Indian Association (Harriet Brouillette), DOWA Alaska (Liz Cornejo), Commercial Fish Advisory Board and Upper Lynn Canal Fish Committee (Norm Hughes), Southeast Conference (Robert Venebles), Haines Borough School District (Roy Getchel), SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (Stephanie Pattison).

**Other stakeholders and residents present in person or online:** Takshanuk Watershed Council (Derick Poinsette, Stacie Evans), Carol Tuynman, William Jurewitz, Tom and Liz Haywood, Ann Myren, Tammy Piper, and others.

**Planning Team:** Shelly Wade (facilitator) and Meg Friedenauer, Agnew::Beck; Meilani Schijvens, Rain Coast Data; Chris Mertl, Corvus Design.

## Purpose

To convene economic development leaders and representatives to identify and discuss key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the Haines Borough. This input will inform revised economic development goals, strategies, and actions in the Haines Borough Comprehensive Plan.

### 1. Opening Discussion with Questions about Timing and Process

- Comment: There are people who cannot make time during the day to attend these meetings so it's important that the information shared during the meetings are available to everyone.
  - Response: Notes, recordings, and other meeting materials will be posted on the project website. The stakeholder meetings are open to the public. There are one-on-one interviews happening with assembly members and planning commission members and other industry stakeholders, but not "private" meetings.
- Comment: The timing of the process causes some lack of trust from the public, especially considering the recent special election that will make the Planning Commission an elected board rather than an appointed board. It also seems like an unnecessarily accelerated timeline.
  - Response: It's not unusual for leadership roles to change during comprehensive planning processes; the most important aspect is to get the public's involvement and support which will drive the approval process by the planning commission and assembly.

**2. What work on economic development planning already exists? What efforts can we build on for the comprehensive plan update?**

- The Haines Economic Development Corporation is updating its Five-Year Economic Development Plan and it provides a good starting point for the comprehensive plan update. HEDC started its community outreach in fall 2021 to review the 2018 economic development plan. HEDC is working with McKinley Group to develop the update and finalize it this summer.

**3. Review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT analysis) in HEDC plan.**

- What **additional** economic SWOT elements from those listed in the draft HEDC plan should be included in the comprehensive plan update?

**Additional strengths:**

- Haines has strong support for the school system and the school programs.
- Haines is attractive to, and has been attracting, location neutral workers. HEDC has an ongoing campaign to attract location neutral workers.
- Outdoor lifestyle is attractive for residents and visitors.
- Commercial fishing is a longstanding and constant industry in Haines and will continue to be. Young people are getting into fishing and many fishermen have diversified and adapted to challenges over the years.
- The number of small businesses and diversity of businesses that are locally owned.
- Possible future expansion of services SEARHC.
- Alaska Marine Highway System continues to be a strength, even with schedule challenges and reduced services. Haines is still a vital port connection for the region and state. AMHS workforce that lives in Haines is a significant internal asset that is often unrecognized and could be developed further.
- Post office economy has grown.
- Subsistence resources continue to be vital for residents.
- Land based opportunities for mineral and resource extraction.
- Diverse economic opportunities – data shows that Haines is not overly dependent on any one industry.
- Manufacturing has grown in Haines.
- Haines' access and proximity to U.S. and Canadian national parks (Glacier Bay National Park, Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park, Kluane National Park and Reserve.)
- It's a great place to grow up in; kids flourish and many leave when they graduate, but they are well prepared academically and from having a good community to grow up in.

**Additional weaknesses:**

- Our guests impact our services, especially internet and cell services on busy cruise ship days. Cell service is especially problematic at times because they are managed by companies outside Haines and with no local presence. It's difficult to partner with these companies or explore ways to make their service better.
- Recent closure of local campgrounds and state recreation facilities. State parks has reduced funding and that has affected state parks services in Haines for both visitors and residents.
- Wages do not keep up with the costs of living in Haines.
- Lack of affordable and accessible housing, especially on the rental market.
- High costs of goods and operation of businesses, including shipping and fuel.

**Additional opportunities:**

- Abundant and diverse coastline throughout the borough, providing recreational access and other possibly opportunities.
- Mining and extraction development continues to be explored within the borough.
- Haines has potential capacity to be trans-shipment hub.
- Unique events that draw visitors and engage residents (races, conferences, arts.)
- Some improvement to internet connectivity with recent fiber upgrades and more plans for fiber extension in Upper Valley. Starlink may also provide improved access when available.

**Additional threats**

- Anything that threatens the health of current industries like fishing and tourism.
- Travel challenges: Alaska Marine Highway's level of service and funding challenges will continue to affect residents and travelers and general quality of life. This also affects the overall cost of transportation; lack of ferry service forces people to rely more on air travel, which is naturally more expensive and has been even more pricey than usual recently. This affects people's ability to travel for essential services, like healthcare.
- Community decisiveness. The process and the people do not make it easy for the community to get things done.
- Economic development at the cost of environmental deterioration affects the community wellbeing and community relationships. Short term development may have long-term impacts on the environment, tourism, subsistence, and recreation.
- We need to acknowledge that there are varying issues and different challenges for different neighborhoods i.e., Upper Valley, Excursion Inlet, Mud Bay, Lutak.

**4. What are some strategies that will affect the success of the community over the next 10 years?**

- Invest in borough staffing that is trained and can best serve the community. Fund these positions to provide the needed capacity to implement plans and projects.
- Improved and consistent access to and from community that is cost effective.
- Assess the type and quality of jobs in the community and train locals to fill those jobs. Encourage jobs that pay a living wage.
- Commercial fishing is a low-hanging fruit for economic opportunities. The borough should continue to support harbor and fishing infrastructure and training.
- Summer seasonal work is often filled by out-of-town youth. How can these jobs be filled by more locals?
- Support economic diversification and support of a variety of industries and economic opportunities.
- Affordable housing for families and new residents.
- Conflict resolution to resolve long-standing issues and promote effective public processes.
- Discover and define “What is the community’s appetite for new development?” (The survey is one tool that will help address this question.)