



Haines Comprehensive Plan Revision

Housing Stakeholder Dialogue

1:30 – 3:30 PM, June 21st, 2023

Relocated from Aspen Hotel Meeting Room to Haines Borough Assembly Chambers due to connectivity issues.

Stakeholders invited: Haines Borough, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, members of Haines Borough Housing Working Group, Haines Economic Development Corporation, Chilkoot Indian Association, Henry Construction, Salvation Army, Haines Real Estate, Reservations by Randa, Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL), Roger Schnabel.

Stakeholders present: Haines Borough (Annette Kreitzer, Doug Olerud, Diana Lapham, Alekka Fullerton, Richard Clement), Members of Haines Borough Housing Working Group, Haines Economic Development Corporation (Cindy Zuluaga Jimenez), Chilkoot Indian Association (Harriet Brouillette), Reservation by Randa (Randa Szymanski), Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) (Sierra Jimenez).

Other stakeholders and residents present in person or online: Richard Clement, Carol Tuynman, Diana Lapham, Tom and Liz Heywood, and others.

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

Purpose

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

1. What work on housing planning already exists? What efforts can we build on for the comprehensive plan update?

- Haines Economic Development Corporation recently conducted a “HEDC Housing Survey Report 2022-2023.”
 - This study did not include Klukwan, as they are working on their own housing survey. The survey report focuses on three major sections: Demographics, Housing Needs, and What Projects are Planned.
- **Key Points from the HEDC survey:**
 - The community’s housing needs are not in dire straits but still has a high need for more housing.
 - It’s predicted Haines needs 92-293 new housing units by 2030 depending on population growth.

- Zoning revisions are needed to utilize more land for housing or to increase density of housing on existing housing areas, including adding units to existing single family units.
- Extending utilities to new areas makes it unaffordable, need to focus on in-fill development.
- Housing costs are increasing and nearing the 30% threshold.
- Most of the existing housing stock does not meet the needs of the elderly or other accessibility needs. New units not being developed for this group.
- Seasonal housing is increasing annually and impacting available housing.
- Currently the Borough is reviewing 12 permits (housing and commercial).
- Ideal housing for Haines is generally 1-2 bedrooms, less than 1,500 sq ft and close to town.
- The needs of seasonal workers is not understood. Their season is extending, and basic amenities should be included. The type of worker housing varies in the Borough.

2. Discussion (presented by topic):

Borough/government involvement in housing:

- Housing is not an authority or power granted by the borough charter for the borough government to address. The comprehensive plan needs to identify if the borough charter needs to be amended to give this authority to the borough and what policies are needed to facilitate the borough as a housing partner, if desired.
- The borough needs more resources to effectively enforce the regulations already in code. Should the borough do more to have building codes and inspection to do enforcement and provide inspections as part of borough services? This would help address the building quality issues some banks have with finances home purchases in Haines.
- What incentives can the borough create to stimulate housing development?
- There is a need for more partnerships where borough land is leveraged with other entities who have development funding and can be used to build more housing.
- The borough's Housing Working Group has identified key locations for housing development. This should be included in the comprehensive plan.

Regulations

- There is a need to understand priorities, requirements, and policies related to housing by others charged with housing (like Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Tlingit-Haida Housing Authority, etc.)
- People do not know about accessory unit regulations (less than 600 sq ft) and many feel they are too restrictive. There needs to be more education about what possibilities exist already.
- More research or advocacy is needed to understand why Alaska Housing Vouchers are not available to Haines. Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) has tried to find an answer to this issue.

Short-Term Rentals

- See Randa Szymanski's full comments (attached on PDF version.)
- There are currently 54 short-term housing units in Haines; these are high end housing units, often closed in the winter, so they shouldn't be a factor in the overall housing issue.

Diversity of Need

- The 2020 storm displaced several residents, and this illustrated the need for affordable housing in the community, especially those with special needs or limited resources.
- Housing challenges directly impacts the ability to attract new people to the community and fill essential jobs. Many are well paid jobs, but housing - both rental and for sale - is limited across most income levels.
- Mobile home parks are a solution for housing but many need assistance with upgrades. Utilities can be a high expense born by owner. The utilities are not allowed to be in the renter's name, so the park owner often incurs those costs when renters fall behind.
- People will move further up the valley if housing is cheaper outside town, but industrial activities up the valley are also impacting housing and some desire to live there.
- The lack of public transportation creates challenges for those without their own transportation; those with lower incomes can sometimes find housing further from town, but then they lack the resources to get to town for work and essentials.

Haines Housing Stats (presented by Meilani Schijvens):

- 29 percent of housing is not occupied (statewide average is 19 percent.) 69 percent of the vacant homes are summer use only.
- 28 percent of the stock is rental housing in Haines (statewide average is 33 percent.)
- 86 percent of homes are single family. Only 4 percent are duplexes or multi-family units.
- A larger percentage of homes do not carry a mortgage.

Upcoming Known Projects

- A 4-unit subdivision is currently going through the planning and permitting phase (Szymanski subdivision).
- Five new tiny homes are being developed behind Eagle's Nest.
- Hilltop subdivision (in progress.)

Randa Szymanski

Reservations By Randa

Serving Haines since 1986

June 15, 2023

I've been handling vacation rental reservations since 2014. There are some people in the borough who feel vacation rentals are causing a shortage of long-term rentals and therefore should be limited.

I disagree with this thinking. Let the market determine what is "enough".

If you restrict the number of vacation rentals to what is currently available then you miss out on a potential high-end rental opening up and you keep the low-end rentals in business. Guests vote with their feet. If a new rental opens up that is nicer than what was previously available, guests will move to the nicer, more expensive, one, generating more sales tax for the borough. As the low-end rentals get fewer bookings, the owners will decide it's not worth the effort and will either sell or switch to long term rentals. I have been in business here in Haines since 1986 and have been handling vacation rentals since 2014. I have seen this happen several times.

Here is a list of the rentals I currently manage. As you can see, most were never intended for the long-term rental market.

Alaska Guardhouse: 4 rooms in a private home, one they have been trying to rent out as long-term rental with limited success

Blue Heron: private home, owner lives in it when it's not rented

Chilkat Tower: built for vacation rental, not taking away from the long-term rental market

Chilkoot Haven: built for tourist lodging, not taking away from the long-term rental market

Cozy Chilkat: built for tourist lodging, not taking away from the long-term rental market

Cozy Cove Cottage: owner lives in this when it's not rented out, bought it so he could have housing while working in Haines. Previous owner built it for his father to live in.

Picture Point Seaside Flat: built for their friends and family to stay in, rented out when it's not being used by them

Ripinski Retreat: tried to rent as a long-term rental, renters destroyed the interior, had to replace furniture, repaint, recarpet, fix kitchen. Went back to vacation rental

Snappers Inn: owners live there in the winter, vacation rental in the summer

The Attic: was long term rental, switched to vacation rental when it was purchased by the new owner

The Cottage: was long term rental, switched to vacation rental when it was purchased by the new owner

View at Oceanside: built for vacation rental, not taking away from the long-term rental market

Viking Cove: built for vacation rental, not taking away from the long-term rental market.

The Aerie: owners live downstairs, rent out the upstairs during the summer

I do agree that there is a housing shortage in Haines. But I think we need to clarify if there is a shortage of affordable homes to purchase or if there is a shortage of apartments. These places have all been converted from short-term rentals to apartments so we now have more apartments available than ever before:

Thunderbird Motel to Veterans housing

Mountain View Motel to apartments

Eagles Nest Motel to apartments

Clayton Place to apartments

Bear Creek camp changed from a nightly hostel to seasonal guide housing

These are vacation rentals that I used to manage that are now private homes and/or long-term rentals:

Beverly House

Highland Haven

Ravens Nest

Su Casa

Cannery Cabin

Hidden Cove Farm House

Island View

Paradise West

Sea Rose Cottage

Swan View Cabins

Nest at Newton Cove

High Tide

Riley Ridge

Bear Trail Inn

The Alders

I think what people are feeling is that there is a shortage of affordable homes to purchase and that I completely agree with.

I would like to see the borough partner with the school and bring back the Trades & Industries house program where the voc/tech students build a small, affordable, house over the school year. This was done with great success for several years.

Thank you for your time.

Randa Szymanski

907 314-0466

info@reservationsbyranda.com

www.reservationsbyranda.com