



Haines Comprehensive Plan Revision

Utility Stakeholder Dialogue

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, June 21st, 2023

Aspen Hotel Meeting Room

Stakeholders invited: APT Alaska, Haines Borough, GCI, Delta Western, Inside Passage Electric Cooperative, AT&T, Haines Cable, Community Waste Solutions, Haines Friends of Recycling.

Stakeholders present: APT Alaska (Darren Belisle), Haines Borough (Doug Olerud, Annette Kreitzer, Richard Clement), Delta Western (Jake Eckhardt), Inside Passage Electric Cooperative (Jodi Mitchell), Haines Cable (Patty Campbell)

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

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

Purpose

To convene utility 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. Review of transportation action plan from 2012 Comprehensive Plan includes a main goal with several objectives and strategies (see attached “Utilities Action Summary”).

Power, Telephone, and Internet utilities

- **AP&T – Alaska Power and Telephone (Darren Belisle)**
 - AP&T received grants to extend fiber to upper alley, up to the Canada border. The project is still in the planning phases, no installation dates have been set yet.
 - The undersea cable that provides some power to Haines from Skagway’s Goat Lake hydro power was upgraded this summer.
 - Stakeholder Questions & Discussion:
 - What can AP&T do to help increase the capacity of cell service?
 - Darren Belisle: AT&T purchases capacity from AP&T. As demand increases with increases cruise ship passengers and visitors, service is impacted if AT&T doesn’t purchase additional capacity.

- Can the community move toward burying lines to minimize visual impacts?
 - Darren Belisle: Underground lines are expensive due to shallow bedrock; those costs are then passed on to users. It can also make repairs more challenging.
- Is AP&T considering any new hydro sites near Haines? Any new hydro site needs to minimize environmental impacts.
 - Darren Belisle: AP&T is looking at planning for a new hydro facility but it's still in the very early stages. The Walker Lake project is also still a long-term possibility for hydro development.
- A wind farm in the upper valley (Four Winds Ridge) should be considered. It could power the neighborhood and a possible ski hill that is being considered.
 - Darren Belisle: A wind farm could be challenging with the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve nearby.
- Tidal energy should be considered using a tidal turbine. Some testing is being done to see if Haines has any viable sites.
- Power generation should not be operated by a for-profit agency, should be managed and operated by the Borough to bring costs down.
 - Meilani Schijvens: The City and Borough of Juneau did an extensive study and found that city managed power generation was not feasible. Other communities are doing the same.
- Haines Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) has identified that the high cost of power and service extensive as a barrier for new businesses and development.
- Haines Borough is investigating with AP&T how many days the community is on hydro and how many days on diesel.

Fuels Utilities

- **Delta Western (Jake Eckhardt)**
 - The cost of diesel is expected to continue to increase.
 - Haines uses a smaller volume of fuel than other communities, including Skagway, and therefore pays higher rates for shipping and purchase. Bulk purchases can reduce costs.
 - Fuel is shipped to Whitehorse and Fairbanks through Haines.
 - Delta Western would need to have a demand to export at least 10 times the volume it does now to get a reduced rate locally.
 - AP&T has options to purchase diesel from Delta Western or Skagway.

Additional Communication Utilities

- **Haines Cable/Radio Shack – Patty Campbell**

- Haines Cable/Radio Shack provides local cable TV services and pre-paid cell phones through GCI.
- The demand for cable is constant in Haines even with satellite and streaming services.

Additional Cell and Internet Services

- Verizon was interested in providing a tower near Lutak Dock, but the project is on hold.
- Haines school and library internet is provided through the School and Libraries Program (also known as E-rate) through GCI. The rest of the community is served by AP&T internet.
- If Haines is going to attract remote workers, the community needs dependable and appropriate levels of service.
- Chilkoot Indian Association is working with Starlink to establish service in Haines that would be available to community. The project is estimated to be one year out. Some locals are already using Starlink with mostly positive feedback.
- Excursion Inlet has communication challenges. There isn't a dedicated cell tower for EI.

Solid Waste

- There was an effort a few years ago to mandate trash pick-up in the community but it's not a popular idea with those who actively manage their own waste at home. Several Southeast communities ship solid waste to Seattle through a regional barging partnership. This was explored a few years ago in Haines but would have required a mandatory tax or fee to fund it and it wasn't popular.
- Incineration has been considered before, but there are criticisms about the air impacts and economic feasibility. Skagway has an incinerator, but it's prohibitive to ship waste to Skagway to share its use.
- Takshanuk Watershed Council is developing a commercial composting center that could divert up to 40 percent of the waste stream.
- Reducing volume entering waste stream is critical in reducing costs.
- Southeast Conference is working on solid waste issues, but those efforts have been quiet lately.
- Friends of Recycling is looking to develop a recycling facility at the landfill. It is in the planning stages and looking to obtain land from borough to establish facility.

Sewer and Water

- The borough is in the process of developing a sewer and water master plan and will go before Assembly in July.
- Haines is one of several communities that needs sewer improvement as required by the EPA.