



Haines Comprehensive Plan Revision Transportation Stakeholder Dialogue 9:00 – 10:30 PM, June 22nd, 2023 Haines Borough Assembly Chambers

Stakeholders invited: Alaska Fjordlands, Haines Borough, Alaska Seaplanes, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, Alaska Marine Lines, Haines-Skagway Fast Ferry, Haines Borough Ports & Harbor Advisory Committee.

Stakeholders present: Haines Borough (Doug Olerud, Alekka Fullerton, Richard Clement, Diana Lapham, Reba Hylton, and others), Haines Borough Ports & Harbor Advisory Committee members (Norm Hughes), Alaska Seaplanes (Kent Crawford), Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (Chris Goins, AK DOT&PF Southcoast Director and Matt Boron, Haines area supervisor), Alaska Marine Highway (Craig Tornga, Marine Director), Alaska Marine Lines (Michael Ganey), Haines Borough Ports & Harbor Advisory Committee members (Norm Hughes), and others.

Other stakeholders and residents present in person or online: Chilkoot Indian Association (Harriet Brouillette, Britney Dunbar), Takshanuk Watershed Council (Derick Poinsette, Stacie Evans), Haines Economic Development Corporation (Cindy Zuluaga Jimenez), Lynn Canal Conservation (Jessica Platcha), Erika Merklin, Nick Szatkowski, Norm Smith, Gershon Cohen, Clay Frick, Liz Landis, Carol Tuynman, and others.

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

Purpose

To convene transportation 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 “Transportation Action Summary”).

- **AKDOT&PF (Chris Goins, Southcoast Director)**

- AKDOT will begin Stage 3 of the Haines Highway Improvements this winter, which includes the Chilkat River Bridge replacement. The bridge replacement is listed in the STIP as an approximately \$60 million project, which is nearing the end of its lifespan and needs safety improvements.
- Stage 2 of the Haines Highway Project is nearly done including mitigation on all the slide impact areas.
- Upcoming projects include resurfacing the airport and adding snow equipment building there, ADA improvements in downtown Haines.
- Emergency repairs from 2020 storm continue, including culvert repairs and road repairs along Lutak Road.
- The process for the SE Transportation Plan will be starting in fall.

- **Alaska Seaplanes (Kent Crawford, CEO)**

- Air traffic to Haines is declining over the last year, likely due to high costs. The high cost is due to a national shortage of pilots, mechanics, and equipment. The shortage of ground mechanics is the highest cost for airlines right now. Seaplanes has to offer housing and high wages to attract and keep mechanics. They are reducing the frequency of less popular flights and trying to reduce other costs to try to drop prices.

- **Stakeholder Questions and Discussion (presented by topic):**

- Airport and Air**

- The airport's restrooms are occasionally out of order; it's confusing whose responsibility it is to keep in working order. The restrooms are Alaska Seaplane's responsibility; DOT&PF removed the septic system during the airport project a few years ago and replaced it with storage tanks, but Alaska Seaplanes and DOT&PF are working to understand what affects the restroom maintenance.

- Roads**

- Liz Landis: Spokesperson for the Safe Haines Highway group that was formed by a group of citizens who are impacted by the Haines Highway as a trucking corridor, especially considering the Lutak Dock issues. The group hired an engineer to produce a public report looking at the effects of potential increased traffic from ore shipments along highway corridor and impacts to the environment and safety.
- The borough is putting together a grant for the US DOT Safe Streets for All program. The Chilkoot Indian Association can also apply for safety improvements grant money and could be a partner with the borough for the Safe Streets program.
- More reliable and affordable transportation in and out of Haines is needed. Regarding jet service in and out of Haines, the airspace is likely too restrictive and doesn't have support of Chilkoot Indian Association with it being so close to traditional lands that have already been impacted by the recent airport expansion.
- Road construction is changing the migration of hooligan and herring. Need to evaluate and understand impacts of road, bridge, and culvert construction to fish in the river. This includes road and culvert improvements in the slide (highway) area.

- Other Transportation**

- There is interest in the community to prioritize all forms of transportation, not just vehicles. Some would be especially interested in promoting bike use, providing bicycle facilities, and more bike routes.
- Would like the borough/comprehensive plan to include promoting the use of electric cars and provide support facilities and charging stations. CIA has submitted a grant to install charging stations in Haines.

- **Alaska Marine Highway Service (Craig Tornga, Marine Director)**

- The ferry fleet is aging and needs replacement. A preventative maintenance system is underway.
- The M/V Hubbard recently came online and is providing improved service to Lynn Canal.
- Crew shortages challenges continue to impact the system.

- **Stakeholder Question:** Will one of the two new ferries be home ported in Haines? If a ferry was home ported in Haines it would have local crew support and provide good paying jobs for the community.
 - **Craig Tornnga:** Not aware that the option is being discussed.

Note: A brief discussion continued in the Ports and Harbor Advisory Committee about the committee providing feedback to the planning team about the 2012 comprehensive plan action items regarding the strategies that involved ports and harbors. The committee also decided to provide recommendations for updated action items regarding ports and harbors for consideration in the comprehensive plan update.