



# Haines Comprehensive Plan Update: Upper Valley Community Meeting, July 23, 2023

## *summary of Results*



# Upper Valley Community Meeting

## **Description of activity:**

The planning team hosted an Upper Valley Community Meeting at the Mosquito Lake school building on July 23, 2023, 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Thirty-two people attended and participated in the meeting. The planning team had posters around the room labeled with the five focus areas on the plan update - land use, economic development, utilities, transportation, and housing - and an “other” category.

The planning team opened the meeting with an overview of the comprehensive plan update process, purpose, and timeline and answered questions (detailed in the notes.) Participants were then invited to visit the posters with their ideas or \*star\* those topics they agreed with. Discussions on each topic followed and are captured in the notes.

## Introduction and opening discussion/questions

### **Questions/Discussion about Comprehensive Plan Process**

Comment: I would like this to be a revision of the 2012 plan, not a complete rewrite. There are good things in the current plan. The challenge for some members of the community is that there are entities not following the plan.

Question: Enforcing the plan is a concern. Who enforces it? Who ensures the borough follows the plan? Answer: Essentially the voters must hold borough officials accountable for enforcing or following the plan.

Question: How are subjective and objective inputs weighted in the plan? Answer: It's not “weighted” but all inputs are considered, and prevalent themes come from analyzing and comparing all the inputs for similarities.

Question: What is or isn't included in the plan? For example, can the plan say the community does not want a large scale mine? Answer: The plan should not recommend policies that are illegal or in opposition of the borough charter. Some ideas and recommendations may be out of the scope of what the borough can control, but the plan can express the desires of the community for other entities, like the state or federal agencies, to consider.

## Land Use and Environment – top topics

- Fish first. All land use planning and activities need to place conservation of fisheries foremost.
- Consider the existing uses in General Use zones.
- Listen to residents and enforce the comprehensive plan. An outline of how the comprehensive plan is enforced should be included in the plan.
- Promote renewable energy projects.

### **Additional topics and comments:**

- All land use decisions should recognize the biodiversity of the Chilkat Valley and promote these unique, exceptional values. Activities that irreparably alter ecological function bring a heavy cost that is rarely if ever, justified.
- Clean up junk cars.
- Recreation land uses can be a way of preserving land if done correctly.
- Create agricultural zones where land can support farming. Those areas in the valley could include Chilkat Lake Road and the Covenant Life farm.
- Preserve Mosquito Lake school building for local, community use year round.
- Prevent any motorized commercial use on Mosquito Lake Road.
- Rural residential neighborhoods need to be supported. The planning commission should help neighborhoods create zoning for citizen protection of rights.

- The borough should better represent residents re: public lands.
- Include climate change considerations, hazards, etc. Add acknowledgement of climate change and need for hazard mitigation to all topics.
- Consider carbon credits.
- Native subsistence land uses and traditional areas should be identified on maps.
- Support Chilkat Indian Village and Chilkoot Indian Association “land back” efforts.

## Economic Development – top topics

- Salmon first. Preserve and protect the fisheries economy.
- Discontinue single use, extractive industries (e.g., large scale mining, old-growth logging.) Focus on existing commercial fishing, small scale logging, small scale mining opportunities.
- Recognize a large share of residents’ well-being is derived from non-monetary sources, like subsistence activities.
- Enforce the comprehensive plan.
- Keep helicopter activity at airport.

### **Additional topics and comments:**

- Support and promote sustainable, regenerative economic development activities.
- Incentivize agriculture/growing/providing own food/community food security.
- Prioritize natural assets to draw visitors to area, including wildlife and plants.
- Prioritize localized, circular economic development.
- Make waterfront accessible for multiple uses.
- Support child care and teen resources so parents can participate in the workforce.
- Develop family ski area.
- Promote small scale and winter tourism (but not on level as Skagway.)
- Provide more resources for small/transient boat users at the harbor i.e., showers, bathrooms, boat lift, and other services.
- Promote location neutral work.

## Utilities – top topics

- Prioritize maintenance of power utilities rather than reactions to outages (focus on maintaining the system we have like power to the Upper Valley)
- Create utilities redundancies, especially for emergencies and EMS.
- Encourage alternative energy projects.
- Improve solid waste situation.
- Promote location neutral compatible high quality internet to encourage new job growth.
- Enforce the comprehensive plan.

### **Additional topics and comments:**

- Prioritize utility needs of residents over commercial users, i.e., water use and internet for residents over cruise ships.
- Coordinate with agencies regarding right of ways. The borough has control of its ROWs and it’s one of the avenues and advantages the borough has in working with the state.



- Explore/develop tidal power.
- Provide more planning department staff and code enforcement resources.
- Consider publicly owned utilities.
- Encourage net metering.
- Emphasis reducing what we need to put in landfill.
- Negotiate with Delta Western (petroleum provider) to arrange more fair pricing.
- Help decrease emissions through alternative/renewable energies by tidal power (for example, cruise ship emissions.)
- Improve cell service.
- Don't promote biomass as an energy source; it's not a renewable energy source, feasible, or smart.

## Transportation – top topics

- Prevent any significant increase in commercial trucking on the highway. No ore haul. Increase maintenance.
- Create more opportunities for non-vehicle transportation i.e., bicycles, walking, etc.
- Support Alaska Marine Highway System (as opposed to road to Juneau.)

### **Additional topics and comments:**

- Reference Safe Haines Highway study data in comprehensive plan update.
- Make service area mill rates the same for all property owners.
- Increase safety for high use areas to protect children, families, and wildlife.
- Don't allow heliports in residential neighborhoods.
- Provide consistent public transportations for all, including Upper Valley, elderly, and disabled residents.
- The Haines Highway traverses 40-plus miles of extremely high-value habitat for fish and other wildlife. These values should take precedence over industrial trucking.
- Recognize Indigenous heritage of highway route (it follows Tlingit great trail that was forcibly taken.)
- Increase mapping for avalanches/landslide zones to assist and guide transportation planning.
- Stop planning for an ore dock.

## Housing – top topics

- Protect residential values.
- Provide opportunities for alternative housing, tiny houses, yurts, tents.
- Enforce the comprehensive plan.
- Seek out how to increase affordable construction, i.e., support small scale lumber mills.
- Alleviate unpredictable property tax increases from year to year. The borough's steep increase in taxation on home and land appears aimed at driving out diversity of populations.
- Freeze property taxes on long-term residents. Stop increasing taxes, especially in areas without amenities, like the Upper Valley.

### **Additional topics and comments:**

- Consider socioeconomic equality in developing and incentivizing housing development. Provide opportunities for lower-income housing. There is a dichotomy between those who can afford to develop or build their own housing and those who can't.
- Upcycle plastic for lumber (construction, benches, trim, decks.)

- Balance long term vs short term rentals.
- Promote efficient, low-energy housing in local buildings.
- Partner programs like Habitat for Humanity, Rubicon, federal housing programs, and other organizations to develop affordable, accessible, and alternative housing.
- Provide incentives for affordable housing development.
- Require state recommendations/highest standards (especially for hazard mitigation and climate change impacts) and/or require building codes be followed in any affordable housing development.

## Other – top topics

- No heliports in the neighborhoods. Heliports at the airport only.
- Protect salmon ecology and subsistence habitat.
- Enforce the comprehensive plan.
- No more clear cutting forests; considering climate change and increased residential use.

### ***Additional topics and comments:***

- Prioritize Tribal and Indigenous voices.
- Increase government to government partnerships, collaboration, and communication with CIA and CIV.
- Invest in Mosquito Lake school building as an emergency shelter for all borough residents in case of avalanches, landslides, or other disasters. Maintain emergency supplies and food at building. Invest in more emergency management planning for outside townsite areas.
- Provide mechanisms for more local decision-making and autonomy for Upper Valley (don't continue to allow townsite to control us while discarding our input.)
- Cut down upside down trees in river so I don't have to look at them while traveling to town.
- Provide the same services to people out the road that townsite receives, i.e., ball field maintenance, road maintenance, etc. All residents want to get services for their mill rate. Different areas of the borough prioritize things differently in their areas.