

2012 Haines Comprehensive Plan

Portage Cove Waterfront --excerpts

7.4.2 Portage Cove Waterfront

The community's Portage Cove waterfront with the small boat harbor, cruise ship dock and lightering area for the Skagway-Haines day ferry, and waterfront parks are all in this area. These facilities are shown on 7-3; harbor and dock facilities – including outstanding needs and planned improvements - are detailed in Chapter 6 Transportation.

The Borough is working steadily to develop a walking path, mostly along the waterfront, in this area that will connect with Picture Point and the wide road shoulder along Lutak Road to the north, and to the south, Portage Cove State Recreation Site and then Battery Point. Portions of the Portage Cove waterfront are designated Park, Recreation and Open Space on the Future Growth Map (Figure 7-4) to reflect the community's intent to develop a walkway that connects parks along the waterfront and to keep the viewshed from Front Street out to the water and mountains on the east side of Lynn canal open (also see Recreation Figure 8-1). Two gaps are a widened sidewalk from Main Street to Lutak Road, and, a better way to the beach and formal, but natural, path between the Port Chilkoot Dock, Lookout Park and Small Boat Harbor. This is primary community and tourist use beach area.

There are privately owned parcels on the waterside of Front Street where development that inhibits public use and views out to the water is discouraged. To accomplish this the Borough may want to require height limits, require an easement for a coastal walkway, buy development rights, reduce property taxes, or acquire property. This includes four privately owned tidelands lots next to the Port Chilkoot Dock and several between the small boat harbor and Picture Point. Along the approximately 1,300 feet from the small boat harbor to the last clan house, the path will need to either coincide with a single wider rebuilt (separated) shoulder/sidewalk or use one of the methods listed just above to allow access. Either way, it will be important to work with nearby clan house and Native Allotment owners to develop interpretative and historical signage but still respect privacy.

Underutilized property along Portage Cove is the Chilkat Cruises Dock and uplands across the street. This area is slated for Waterfront Development on the Future Growth Map (Figure 7-4). This could be a good site for water-dependent development that supports the commercial fishing fleet's boat and gear repair as it is close to waterfront and small boat harbor yet development would not block views of waterfront.

Several specific objectives and actions to accomplish are listed and cross-referenced in the Transportation and Recreation chapters.

6.3.1 Harbor and Dock Facilities – Harbors

The 2011 Community Opinion Survey queried level of support or opposition for boat harbor improvements to the south **and found 75% support** (Table 6-1). During the 2012 Alaska Legislative Session \$19.5 million in capital improvement funding for Portage Cove small boat harbor improvements was designated (this included \$15 million in a state bond package subject to voter approval in fall 2012).

Support has coalesced around an option (now called “3A,” see graphic next page) that includes (all phases) a breakwater to protect the harbor from southerly winds and waves, a drive-down work float, additional moorage for 12, 40-foot vessels and 32, 32-foot vessels, about 400 lineal feet of more transient tie-up area, and a relocated seaplane float within the protected area, as well as more vehicle and trailer parking. It would relocate the Fisherman’s Memorial and Lookout Park. A work session and public review of the plan and park relocation options, cohosted by the planning commission, parks and recreation committee, and boat harbor advisory committee should occur soon to advance plans and investment in a timely manner.

The COE is concerned that the extensive environmental and economic review process that previously approved the larger project to the north may need updating or redone to support expansion to the south. This issue is being resolved as this plan goes to print, beginning with a geotechnical drilling program in 2012 to better define the harbor area subsurface and type of breakwater.

Figure 6.3.1 “3A”

