

2025 Haines Borough Comprehensive Plan Review: Summary of Suggestions from Phase I Action Summary Markup

INTRODUCTION

As part of the comprehensive plan review process, Haines borough staff members, committee members, and other community leaders were asked to review the Appendix A: Action Summary of the 2025 Haines Borough Comprehensive Plan. The Action Summary is a list of goals, objectives, and actions broken down into sections of the comprehensive plan.

There were about 18 responses overall and roughly three commenters per section.

This document represents the results of the first or 'preliminary phase' of the comprehensive plan review. All comments are listed as items that were deemed as **complete**, items that have been suggested for **removal**, and items that might be **added** to the Action Summary.

The goal of the preliminary review was to gather first-glance feedback that might guide the Planning Commission, Assembly, and community in determining how the comprehensive plan could be updated to meet the goals of the next 10 years. The next phase of review will be determined by the responses of these results. The final product of the review will either be a revision to the Action Summary (small) or a revision to whole sections of the Comprehensive Plan (large).

The Comprehensive Plan was written in 2011 and adopted in 2012, prior to the decline of oil revenue to the State and the consequent fiscal crises predicted to take place over the next decade. Currently, roughly 26% of the Haines economy is derived from State government. Therefore, the community is encouraged to review the Action Plan with the budget in mind (e.g. are the goals/objectives actions relevant or financially feasible? Are there some objectives that are more important than others?). In relation to scope of work for each objective, additional considerations should be given to what has already been accomplished over the last five years.

Please send feedback on the review process, this document, or specific actions and/or objectives to Holly Smith, Borough Planner, by emailing her at hsmith@haines.ak.us or by calling (907) 766-2231.

ITEMS LISTED AS "DONE" or "IN PROGRESS"

BOROUGH GOVERNMENT

- Continue to provide public notice in a timely manner (ongoing).
- Continue to keep borough website up-to-date with (1) Assembly, Planning Commission and other committee meeting notices, agenda, and minutes); and (2) information, statistics, and data to allow easy access for local grant writing and funding opportunities (ongoing).
- Occasionally host less formal outreach and engagement efforts to encourage diversity of public contact (ongoing).

- Reach out regularly and maintain communication with local and regional federal and state agency representatives that have regulatory oversight over Haines resources or can provide funding for Haines projects (ongoing).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Conduct survey to learn which community assets attract location-neutral workers, income earners, and business owners in Haines. Take action to fill gaps. (Addressed by BRE program, continue with Chamber.)
- Continue efforts to increase cruise ships visits per week., such as building relationships with key cruise line representatives in Alaska and elsewhere; outreach to shore representatives; and hosting occasional community events for crew such as appreciation barbecues, guided hikes, soccer games and other events to allow crew members to get a sense of the Haines community (ongoing).
- Provide certainty for both businesses and residents by preparing a heli-ski management plan that addresses safety, neighborhood quality, heliports, routes and areas of use, monitoring, quality experience etc. Don't re-invent the wheel; build on existing permits and decisions (ongoing).
- Develop a continuous multi-use path along Lutak/Portage Cove from AMHS ferry terminal to Nukdik Pt. to Portage Cove State Recreation Site to Battery Point. Path should link Picture Point's new picnic and viewing area with parking and interpretative signage, the small boat harbor, Lookout Park, Tlingit Park and Playground, a developed (but natural) beach access and path between Lookout Park and Port Chilkoot Dock, Port Chilkoot Dock restroom facilities, and Portage Cove Campground and Recreation site. Restore public access to Portage Cove on Borough land near Lighthouse Restaurant (in progress).
- Build on spontaneous efforts and develop programs to encourage temporary window displays and uses for empty buildings in DBD. Support Alaska Arts Confluence grant work bringing art to downtown window fronts (in progress with AAC, Chamber)
- Integrate the new wayfaring signage with a new walking map and maps on promotional websites.
- Enact a low-interest small-loan program for businesses in Haines (establish goals, terms, loan criteria, other).
- Pursue grant and other opportunities to provide internet access to rural areas; make current Open Skies (starband) program for rural Alaska known to citizens (in progress).
- Complete deferred maintenance and upgrades at the Chilkat Center for the Performing Arts.
- Increase marketing efforts Chilkat Center for the Performing Arts to get higher use and revenue from local and traveling performers and for conferences. Assign marketing the Center as an identified duty of the HCVB (or other entity). Set goals for use and track progress.
- Install handicap access to the Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center, repair foundation to prevent basement flooding, replace windows to improve energy efficiency and maintain a controlled building climate.
- Add space at Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center for collection storage, archival material, exhibits, staff work area, and a classroom.
- Define economic contribution (employment, wages, revenue with multipliers) to Haines from arts and cultural businesses, organizations, and events (AAC).

TRANSPORTATION

- Conduct work session/public review to advance Portage Cove Small Boat Harbor expansion (see pg 122) to final concept design (harbor, parking, park).
- Conduct geotechnical drilling needed for accurate cost estimates and design of small boat harbor south wave barrier/ breakwater.
- Advocate for AMHS ferry to homeport or overnight in Haines (ongoing).
- More obvious and higher quality signage needed for tour season transit service as well as printed routes and schedules to significantly improve this service.
- Increase visibility of routes and ease of access to DBD; relocate and improve highway and directional signs to point people and vehicles to – rather than bypass - Main Street.

LAND USE AND FUTURE GROWTH

- Update and unify Haines Borough codes and permitting. Development and permitting procedures must account for Borough's regulatory obligations.
- Clarify in code that a 25 foot no development setback adjacent to catalogued anadromous streams applies borough-wide to all structures, regardless of whether a building or development permit is needed.
- Enhance Sawmill Creek, adjacent wetlands, and One Mile Creek's value for fish and wildlife habitat.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

- Create public place for indoor fitness equipment and recreation.
- Determine feasibility of developing simple ski and sledding hill with rope tow, oriented to families and teens. Non-winter months can be mountain bike or multi-use trails. If feasible, construct.
- Determine level of support for skate park at Oslund Park and either improve to increase use or develop alternative.
- Add ADA access to beach and a natural beachfront trail from Lookout Park to Port Chilkoot Dock.
- Stabilize and restore Chilkoot River trail.

UTILITIES

- Update the water sewer master plan; determine the useful plant life for both the Water Treatment Facility and equipment (in progress).
- Base utility rates on an equitable and true assessment of the costs to operate, maintain, and contribute to an equipment replacement fund. Periodically perform rate study of utility fees and adjust fees as needed based on results.
- Connect Crystal Cathedral system to main Borough water system.
- Develop a wellhead protection program for Crystal Cathedral. Amend zoning code to require setbacks from drinking water wellheads in Crystal Cathedral area; work with ADEC to determine correct distance. Relocate potential contamination sources as opportunities arise.
- Replace hand-dug lines from 1950's to Piedad water intake to reduce contamination threat. Replace asbestos/cement (AC) piping in Piedad Road. Upgrade Piedad water chlorination system to add a flow-paced chlorinator. Replace Piedad Spring Water Transmission Line and provide new tank at Piedad to store water from the springs during low flow periods (i.e. late at

night) for use during higher demand periods during the day and enhance firefighting capacity.

- Update the water sewer master plan; determine the useful Wastewater Treatment Plant life for both the facility and equipment.
- Base utility rates on an equitable and true assessment of the costs to operate, maintain, and contribute to an equipment replacement fund. Periodically perform rate study of utility fees and adjust fees as needed based on results.
- Implement a bear trash ordinance and education program on proper management of garbage to reduce 'problem bears' and bear-human incidents and interactions. Include warnings and fines for improperly stored garbage. Initiate a public education program. Team with ADF&G, ADNR, Takshanuk Watershed Council, solid waste collection companies and others to fund and develop garbage bear outreach and education program.
- Implement a junk car removal program.
- Take action to conserve energy, such as replacement of Borough office and street lights with LED or lower energy consumption lights, use of fuel efficient municipal vehicles, upgrade to energy efficient windows, etc (ongoing).

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Acquire and install an enhanced 911 system.
- Periodically review public safety related portions of the Haines Borough code and update as needed.
- Improve fire response time and lower fire insurance rates (ongoing, one of the best response times in state).
- Conduct pumper tests every year in order to lower ISO ratings and reduce fire insurance rates for residents and businesses within and close to fire hydrant-ed areas.
- Implement results of 2012 ISO rating.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- If Borough continues to own Senior Center, install a new boiler, heating registers, insulated windows and weatherize the building to reduce operating costs, and make it more affordable to heat/run.
- Add space at Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center for collection storage, archival material, exhibits, staff work area, and a classroom.
- Work with Haines medical providers to bring an itinerant pediatrician to Haines; and develop a long-term plan to bring a permanent pediatrician to the community.
- Support HAL/SLSL "campus" including development of proposed Veteran's Home.
- Support creation of an indoor exercise area and regular fitness classes for seniors. Combine with other community indoor fitness needs (as long as seniors are safe and welcomed).
- Expand senior transportation services/options (ongoing, Coordinated Transportation Plan).

EDUCATION

None.

ITEMS TO BE REMOVED

BOROUGH GOVERNMENT

- After election of new assembly each year, schedule a half to one-day retreat to discuss priorities.
- Public outreach includes twitter, Facebook, and postings out Haines Highway and Excursion Inlet
- Determine whether Neighborhood Associations would be an effective way to provide direct and continuing citizen participation in local government; if so, facilitate creation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Remove Borough responsibility from items that will be primarily addressed by Chamber or HEDC:
 - With Alaska Arts Confluence, work on Downtown Business District initiatives. Create a Building & Facade Improvement grant program for DBD.
 - Establish metrics defining economic conditions in DBD and identify indicators to use to evaluate and measure result of incentives program and changing conditions (CEDs).
 - Continue to support a diversity of Haines Borough marketing efforts that promote and celebrate these qualities, including re-initiation of the "Move to Haines" campaign and targeted marketing to cruise ships, about Haines festivals, and winter recreation.
 - Update Haines economic indicators every two years to maintain current on understanding of economy, business diversity and interdependencies, leading industries, employment, wages, personal income, and local revenue to track changes and measure result of efforts.
 - Provide regular customer service training for front-line employees at start of every summer.
 - Periodically provide entrepreneurship education classes to sow the seeds of economic diversification.
 - Identify and work to address infrastructure and services that meets entrepreneur's needs.
 - Actively market Haines port and highway facilities and capacities.
 - Increase number of family households with children under 18 over next decade by at least 10% (28 more households).
 - Encourage value-added wood product businesses, such as but not limited to firewood, sawmills, biomass, finished wood products, pellet production, etc.
- Increase use of Borough's harbor icehouse by fleet.
- Work with agency and other professional limnologists and fisheries biologists to restore Chilkoot and Chilkat Lake sockeye runs to historic levels of productivity.
- Work with the ADNR to designate key salmon producing drainages in the Haines State Forest for extended rotation length to promote fish production.
- Maintain or enhance fish habitat within special management zones 300 feet on either side of anadromous fish streams and 500 feet from anadromous fish bearing lakes (state forest rules).
- Determine if a cold storage where processors and individuals could lease product space would encourage local value-added sales and processing. If so, conduct cost/benefit analysis and determine appropriate size.
- Support continued fast shuttle ferry service between Haines and Skagway.

- Strengthen walking and visual links to Sheldon Museum from Front Street. Create visual landmark at intersection of Front Street and Main Street (e.g., totem pole, flags, sculpture, other).
- Widen Main Street sidewalks and provide pedestrian amenities that encourage lingering, window-shopping that become shopping, and promotes vitality. Partnership with ADOT&PF required (or street acquisition).
- Provide for internet based sales tax reporting/return program.
- Investigate options, pros and cons, to meet Yukon Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) transshipment demand.
- Identify measures to avoid or minimize impacts from industrial truck traffic along Highway to Lutak Dock (e.g., noise, operation of engine brakes, routes, hours of operation, etc.).
- Continue to request that federal tank farm uplands, waterfront, and dock be conveyed to the Haines Borough by BLM following the tank farm site cleanup. If the Borough is not able to acquire this land, work with CIA or other new landowner to secure public access and to encourage cooperation to enhance public use and access.
- Sustain, promote, and selectively expand services and amenities for retirees and seniors.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Objective 4E and corresponding actions:** Pro-actively address possibility of railroad between Port Lutak area, the Yukon Territory and Interior Alaska.
- Pursue funding to systematically complete the Borough's Transportation Improvement Program including the 36 road and non-motorized improvements projects listed

LAND USE AND FUTURE GROWTH

- Prevent future commercial sprawl and provide for local needs by identifying and designating logical areas to locate and concentrate commercial use and business development on the Future Growth maps for out Haines Highway.
- Organize meetings in General Use zoning areas where land use conflicts are occurring or likely to determine interest in more specific zoning.
- Initiate consultation if inconsistent areas identified between state/federal and Borough plans.
- Ensure state (ADNR, ADOT&PF, ADF&G, UA, AMHT etc.) plans, projects and operations along the Haines Highway are compatible with the Corridor Plan and objectives for this Scenic Byway.
- Provide input during the 5 year timber sale schedule review.
- Stabilize and restore Chilkoot River trail.
- Work with agency and other professional limnologists and fisheries biologists to restore Chilkoot and Chilkat Lake sockeye runs to historic levels of productivity.
- Reestablish Dalton Trail and promote all season multi-use. Add interpretative signage and establish remote campsites.
- Where appropriate, couple sand and gravel extraction with salmon habitat improvement.
- Promote compact development and infill where water and sewer infrastructure exists in order to maximize return on public infrastructure investments, promote energy efficiency, and reduce carbon emissions.
- Base decisions about utility extension on Borough costs, whether policy changes could instead result in infill, if willing Local Improvement District payers are present, and on landowner interests.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

- Fund a halftime (or greater) Borough Parks and Recreation position to coordinate and manage recreation programs, oversee and work with volunteers on trail and facility maintenance, obtain easements for trails and beach access areas, apply for grants to fund recreation improvements, manage community recreation programming, etc.
- Begin planning for pool replacement.

UTILITIES

- Provide education on uses of chemicals and fertilizers, as well as site drainage to landowners within Crystal Cathedral wellhead area. Seek cooperative environmental best management practices from adjacent land owners.
- Encourage voluntary close out of unused or abandoned wells in Crystal Cathedral area.
- Require setbacks from drinking water source intake at Piedad to protect from contamination; work with ADEC to determine correct distance.
- Develop a wellhead protection program for Covenant Life Center drinking water.
- Identify locations of onsite septic systems in Borough and distribute information on proper maintenance. Start with more densely developed areas.
- Establish an energy and emissions reduction program.
- Develop incentives for residents and businesses to invest in energy conservation and energy efficient technologies.
- Haines Borough should work with local electric utilities to achieve a rate of 15 cents per kWh or lower. Support actions to reduce power, heating, and fuel costs (unrealistic).
- Develop renewable energy sources sufficient to meet current and future year-round residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial needs in the Haines Borough. This includes enough local power from renewable sources to, where reasonably economic and practical, first provide year-round power to meet demand from 460 more residents over next 20 years and second, to tie freighters, barges and cruise ships to shore power while in port (already 99% hydro).

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Target youth alcohol abuse in Haines. Form a task force with Haines Police, Lynn Canal Counseling Services, SEARHC, School District, interested community members, State HSS, and others to identify and prioritize programs to implement in community. One program to investigate is youth courts, which exist in Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan and Wrangell. Establish baseline data so there is a metric against which to track progress.
- Determine if gaps in Haines's domestic violence services network exist.
- Support Haines Alcohol Task Force in carrying out its Action Plan. Expand program to cover cigarettes and marijuana.
- Work with the State District Attorney Office to determine if any process changes can increase domestic violence convictions.
- Update Dog ordinances and section of code to make enforcement a simpler process and eliminate misdemeanor offenses.
- Identify land for future emergency response substations in the Mud Bay and Lutak vicinity. Acquire control of land (lease, purchase) if needed.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Investigate use of Chilkat Center for arts classes.
- Increase Haines Library work and storage space.
- Support committees working to acquire historically or culturally significant properties such as Anway Cabin and Eldred Rock Lighthouse. Identify additional funding increments needed (possible funding sources: Borough, grant, sales, etc.) as part of acquisitions to maintain, operate and market new assets.
- Provide a part time Community Senior Development Coordinator position at Borough (similar to part time Community Youth Coordinator) to oversee activity and program development.
- Develop web and paper brochure outlining the benefits of retirement and senior living in Haines and identify available services; listing Haines services and activities for new parents, children and families. Use in "Move to Haines" campaign/marketing.
- Conduct study: What has attracted seniors and retirees to Haines? Use results of study to fill gaps and market more effectively.
- Identify gaps in services available to new parents and young children, prioritize, identify possible funders, develop plan to fill needs.
- Determine if Community Recreation Center can be supported and if so, build.

EDUCATION

None.

ITEMS TO BE ADDED

BOROUGH GOVERNMENT

- **2B3:** Monitor and assess changes in the Borough's population by reviewing on a regular basis available demographic information. Assess implications of population and demographic changes for current and future services and facilities and plan accordingly.
- **Objective:** Increase resident participation in governmental affairs.
 - Encourage residents to become government volunteers, including getting involved in committees.
 - Provide training opportunities for government volunteers, and create a recognition program.
 - Encourage participation by the younger generations. Consider creating a nonvoting youth seat on the Borough Assembly.
 - Identify major barriers and concerns to participation.
 - Develop and implement procedures for early and meaningful community participation.
 - Create opportunities through technology to allow outlying Borough residents to participate.
 - Conduct government processes in a friendly, respectful and positive way that welcomes public participation.
- **Objective:** Encourage the broader community to provide community services and facilities by supporting other organizations and entities that want to develop community services.
 - Develop strong partnerships between the Borough and community partners to expand the ability of citizens to be self-sufficient and provide services and facilities beyond what the Borough can achieve on its own.

- Create incentives for organizations to take a lead in developing and providing services.
- Endeavor to assist community organizations in obtaining funding, infrastructure and/or technology for needed community services and facilities.
- Host bi-annual or quarterly meetings among agencies and organization that provide services and accomplish projects to report on planned or possible activities and projects that that entities can support one another better and collaborate on opportunities. Institutionalize this activity by setting a regular calendar/timetable for accomplishing it.
- **Objective:** In light of anticipated reductions in state revenue, establish criteria to help guide decisions on how operating funds will be allocated among various Borough facilities, programs, and services.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support or assist with current or new winter event marketing and outreach program.
- Include “arts and culture” with Adventure Capital Campaign.
- Young families need full-time, year-round employment opportunities. Need to support economic activity to attract young families.

TRANSPORTATION

- Lutak Rebuild
- **Top Priority:** Maintain and expand public transportation services. Explore opportunities for coordination of services, shared resources and pay-per-ride options among van and bus owners in Haines. Assess public demand for year round transit service and routes and run feasibility analysis.
- **Low Priority:** Pave or chip seal roads in Haines Borough. Focus on Phase III-VI Local Roads Program within the townsite and areas designated for Rural Settlement on Comprehensive Plan Future Growth Maps.

LAND USE AND FUTURE GROWTH

- **Top Priority:** Non-recreation projects and activities in areas designated on Future Growth Maps for “Park, Recreation or Open Space” will be located, designed, constructed and operated to avoid or minimize adverse impact to recreational uses.
- **Top Priority:** Development along anadromous fish streams uses setbacks and best management practices to maintain natural water flow and water quality; reduce erosion; and maintain natural vegetation, fish passage and habitat.
- **Top Priority:** Formalize access, manage areas, and provide infrastructure to improve public access and use of the Portage Cove waterfront, Lutak beaches and Tanani Pt, Chilkat River/ Carrs Cove beaches, Chilkoot River corridor, Chilkat Lake, Klehini River, and other coastal areas, rivers, and lakes important to Haines residents and visitors.
- **Top Priority:** Use Borough-owned land, a limited resource, to accomplish public goals.
- **Top Priority:** Communicate and work with public landowners within Haines Borough to ensure their land development and use is compatible with adopted Borough Plans.
- Other plans should be reviewed proactively to make sure they accurately reflect current and future use plans of land owners in the comprehensive plan.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

NONE

UTILITIES

- **Top Priority:** Designate public drinking water source protection areas on Future Growth maps. Enact policy and amend zoning code to protect public drinking water from contamination.
- Increase Shutoff Fee. Customer base declines 10% in winter.
- **Top Priority:** Monitor water levels in Lily Lake during the summer to ensure no critical water shortages occur.
- Need engineering and cost estimates for Highland Estates sewer system installation.
- **Top Priority:** Resolve issues experienced in 2016 with Lily Lake water source not maintaining pressure to plant.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Top Priority:** Protect Borough public safety employees and volunteers responding to incidents within all parts of the Borough, in Klukwan (where responders occasionally volunteer), and across the Canadian border.
- **Top Priority:** Accomplish deferred maintenance on Public Safety Building.
- **Top Priority:** Accomplish Klehini Valley Fire Hall improvements: Upgrade heating system, replace roll-up doors, and install a new roof.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- **Top Priority:** Install handicap access to the Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center, repair foundation to prevent basement flooding, replace windows to improve energy efficiency and maintain a controlled building climate.
- **Top Priority:** Complete deferred maintenance and upgrades at the Chilkat Center for the Performing Arts.
- Need a small children's gym with small climbers and trikes.
- Provide early childhood education to new parents (ECFE model from Minnesota)
- Increase Sheldon Museum work and storage space.
- Provide ice skating rink in town that is not used for ice hockey, just for family free skating.
- Create Sheldon Museum public programming space separate from gallery space.
- Provide continuity and stability for Museum by identifying core museum programming/staff and striving to provide this as part of annual Borough operating budget rather than relying on unpredictable 'soft' grant funds.
- Create a teen center.
- Movie theatre, miniature golf park, zipline - something fun for older kids.

EDUCATION

- **Shorten goal:** Create and sustain an educated community with the skills and knowledge to take advantage of opportunity and thrive in the 21st century.
- Promote Vocational Education from middle school through high school.