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The trail along the Portage Cove waterfront has been a part of long-range planning for the community of Haines for at least five years. In my last year of teaching, the Corvus Design staff solicited input from middle schoolers and it was clear they were quite enthusiastic about the project, even integrating artistic elements. We need to keep these young people in mind as decisions are made that affect their future. I realize that the engineers for the project are now proHNS and that the original design is not on the table. It is lost on no one here that in Haines for the past two years, walks in our lovely outdoor setting have been integral to sustaining mental health as well as healing from losses suffered in the December storm. Environmental education is already being provided by several groups and companies for both locals and visitors and this trail could add one more asset. With the dramatic changes in landscape going on along the cove on both public and private property, moving this trail project along could promote goodwill between people in our community. Quality of life brings people to Haines and keeps them here. Opportunities to stay physically healthy and connected with place are essential to the well-being of all of us. Economically, it is in the interest of the Borough to listen to people who are able to bring their talents and families to Haines. Many of our newcomers have the skills and professions that Haines needs or they are able to work from anywhere. They spend their money here and support a healthy lifestyle.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of a waterfront trail.

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