

Please note that when the following pages were written, progress for funding a new Public Safety Facility had stalled after years of efforts, expense, and frustration. As of this writing, and as you know, the project is well on its way, with design at 65% and available funds at roughly half of the projected estimate - though how, when, and even if, we get the remainder is still unclear.

I applaud everyone's efforts, and years from now when the new building materializes, I'm sure everyone will love it, even me. In the meantime, it remains possible, though perhaps unlikely given the momentum, that we will suspend current efforts or reverse course to consider another option. But having a backup plan still makes sense and could even be a starting point and interim solution.

Referred to here as Plan B, it may be pertinent to explore this option now, starting with independent inspection and analysis of the existing building and site for Plan B feasibility. This would differ from previous inspections conducted solely for designing the proposed new building and site.

To my thinking, the ideal would be to spend funds now to make the current PSB safe and add what's needed for volunteers, training, etc. But first, we would put an addition on the borough administration building (see schematic floor plan on the following pages) for the borough assembly, planners, and offices relocated from the PSB. With that done and the existing PSB functional, we would seek funding for a new one if we hadn't done so already. The architects' and engineers' design would not be wasted.

Thus, we would have a safe, functional building to use for police, emergency personnel and morgue for the several years it would take to secure the funding, prepare the site, and build and furnish the new PSF. Once finished, the old PSB, instead of being demolished, could be sold (possibly at a profit) or otherwise repurposed by the borough.

Not included in the previous work on the following pages is relatively new information concerning the Lutak Dock. Like the Public Safety Building, the Lutak Dock most certainly needs repair or replacement. But currently a much larger dock than what the town needs has been pursued and put to a timeline. What has been pointed out to me is that the larger dock would accommodate the extra-long Handy-max ships that are capable of transporting ore from local mines.

But in truth, mining companies have the resources to purchase nearby properties and build such a dock themselves. And should they do so, the Haines Borough would not need to be subsidizing the mining industry by paying for greater maintenance and repairs. The same goes for Delta Western.

Further, with a smaller but adequate dock for Haines consisting of a rubble-rock design, or a modification of R&M's 2-17 design, repairs and maintenance will cost much less in the long run. The rubble design will provide work for local contractors and use mostly local materials. A steel dock design will eventually fail.

It is tempting to endeavor to get as much free money as possible from the federal government to get the biggest facility(s) we can... and more money flowing through town. But the larger and more complex the project, the greater the likelihood that outside design firms and contractors will absorb most of the funding- and take the money and jobs with them when they leave town.

What remains clear to me, however, is that by putting so much time, energy, and expense into pursuing federal money for projects like the new Public Safety Facility and the Lutak Dock, we prioritize these over ones that focus on boosting the Haines economy, growing the town, and attracting visitors.

For that I ask that you please read on.

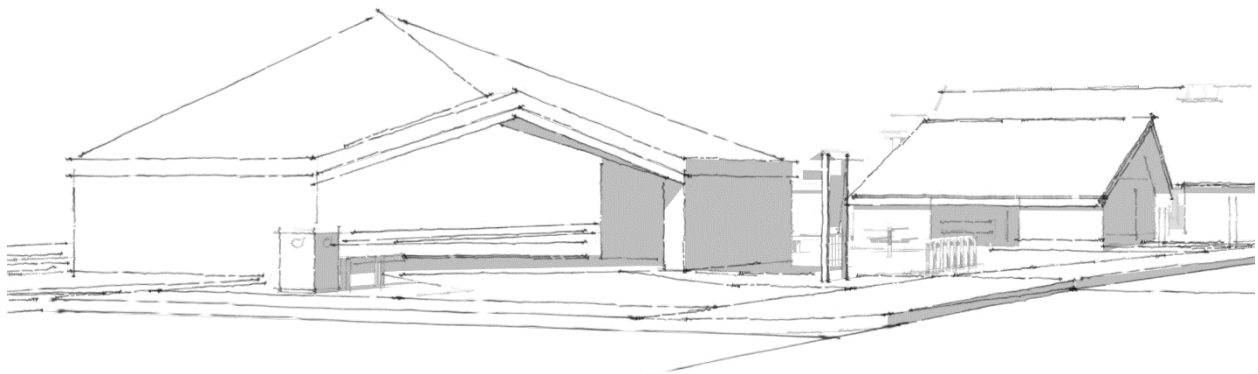
Larry Larson

The following letter is intended to follow on the heels of both the Haines Comprehensive Plan, now in the works, and the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) requests from borough residents. These, of course, also relate directly to the FY24 Budget and anticipated sources of revenue, present and future.

The timing seemed right to expand on those requests with information not widely known or understood. I offer this in the spirit directing realistic yet impactful funding requests, prioritizing big-picture projects, and improving the quality of life for Haines.

Contents:

- 0: Cover Page
- 1: FY24 (Infrastructure) Budget & 6 Year CIP Plan
- 2: Part One; Rolling the Dice (Public Safety Building, Plan B)
- 3: Public Safety Building, Plan B, continued
- 4: Part Two; Saving Steps; Administration Building Schematic Design
- 5: Part Three; An Alternative Vision; The Core Concept & Access Points
- 6: Access Points, continued
- 7: Part Four; A Landmark by any other Name (Conceptual Design)
- 8: Appendix I; Photo Page (not included in print copies)
- 9: Photo Page (not included in print copies)
- 10: Appendix II; Closing Statement & Background Reference



To all of you, I admire your ability and willingness to tackle big budgets, politics, egos, corporate pressures, and complex financial issues. Thank You for lending an ear to someone with no such skills.

Borough management has recently been quoted as saying that they "...have no idea what the priorities are". In what follows, I hope to reiterate, suggest or clarify a few. But at least one priority is clearly stated in the Haines Borough FY24 (Infrastructure) Budget, presumably by the manager. And, though general and a little vague, it's one I think everyone can agree with, even expand upon.

It is a very rainy Monday, and "I'm in the basement, thinking 'bout the government" (Dylan), looking over budget projections (sure to brighten anyone's day) and I am struck first by its thoroughness. But no less so by some inconsistencies and omissions - ones that I hope can be addressed in an addendum, or at the very least, with some debate. From Focus of the FY24 Budget Proposal, **Financial Policies**: focuses on infrastructure "on which opportunities can expand". Of note:

It's important to maintain an atmosphere where people want to open and maintain businesses. Residents are also assets, and we will partner with non-profits, tribal leadership, and non-governmental groups on projects such as trails, training, fisheries enhancement, and clean metal round up and removal. Although employment may draw people to Haines initially, it is the quality of life here which keeps them.

And:

With adequate infrastructure in place, economic opportunities can build on the availability of these necessary elements.

It's understandable that most of the anticipated budget will be nuts and bolts items. But what's missing in the **Six-Year CIP Plan** is that there is *virtually nothing* I see in the budget projections that would "draw people to Haines...and the quality of life that will keep them", except perhaps for the Portage Cove Interpretive Trail. Not the Lutak dock, the public safety building, or the new police vehicles.

Ice Rink/Tennis/Pickleball Court? Softball Field Improvements? another playground? Not so much. Some of these are cherished and popular items, and I am not suggesting that anything be eliminated from the anticipated budget, only that we identify potential revenue and cast a wider net.

In **The Future**, we read that a survey from cruise ship companies shows passengers dissatisfied with the few options available when docking in Haines. This "will impact the amount of sales tax revenue collected from cruise ship visitors." This is one critical thing I hope we can identify now as a priority.

Further on we see the **Capitol Improvement Program**, to which I and many others have contributed ideas. But, of all our entries, the only the sledding hill lighting and playground are given as examples. Though popular, it is better I think to de-list these two than to exclude all the others.

Part One, Rolling the Dice

A note before we begin: none of what follows is costing the Haines Borough a single dime. Therefore, I ask that readers do not automatically assume that the information contained here is of little value.

The Public Safety Lottery

There's a tendency to pursue a big project and, in doing so, put all our eggs into one basket. This makes sense where funding from government grants is available, apart from any unforeseen long-term maintenance expenses. When that funding is not readily available, it then becomes more of a gamble. From my limited research, the borough has spent well over \$400,000 on lobbyists since 2009. Much of that appears to have been directed towards a new public safety building over a period of several years.

I have no love for the current public safety building (PSB). As you know, it is in terrible shape, with forty years of deferred maintenance and lack of repairs. But if we are to gamble on the big prize, it might be wise to also consider a Plan B - and pocket enough money to get home on.

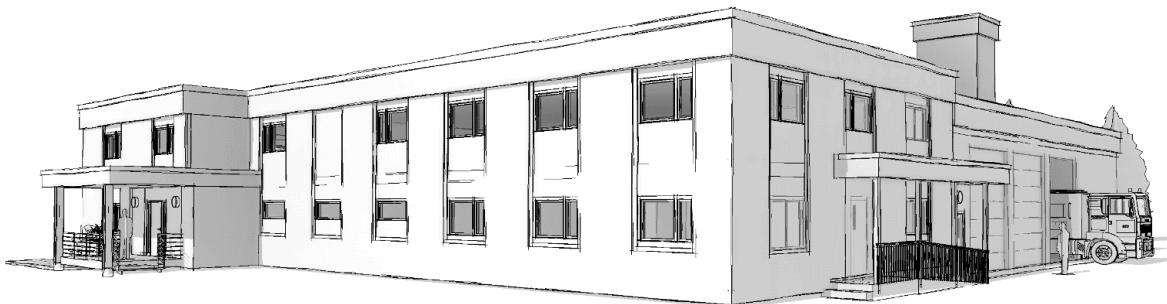
The Plan B: a temporary building can be made permanent (sort of)

Familiarity with the current PSB and long experience tell me that repairs, improvements and/or additions *can* be made. And this at a small fraction of the cost of a new multi-use facility. And with that, the likelihood that grant funding might be easier to obtain. As a guestimate, I would personally like to see how far three to five Million would take us. It might be prudent though, to get a start on it.

Some of the reasons given for opposing an approach like Plan B, such as it having a sinking foundation and being in a tsunami zone (it sits at the extreme edge, as does the library and much of Haines) are unfounded and/or exaggerated (understandable though, if you are hard campaigning for a new one).

These things can be demonstrated, but if I am wrong, I welcome any accredited, independent expert not directly or indirectly benefiting from the project, financially or otherwise, to set me straight.

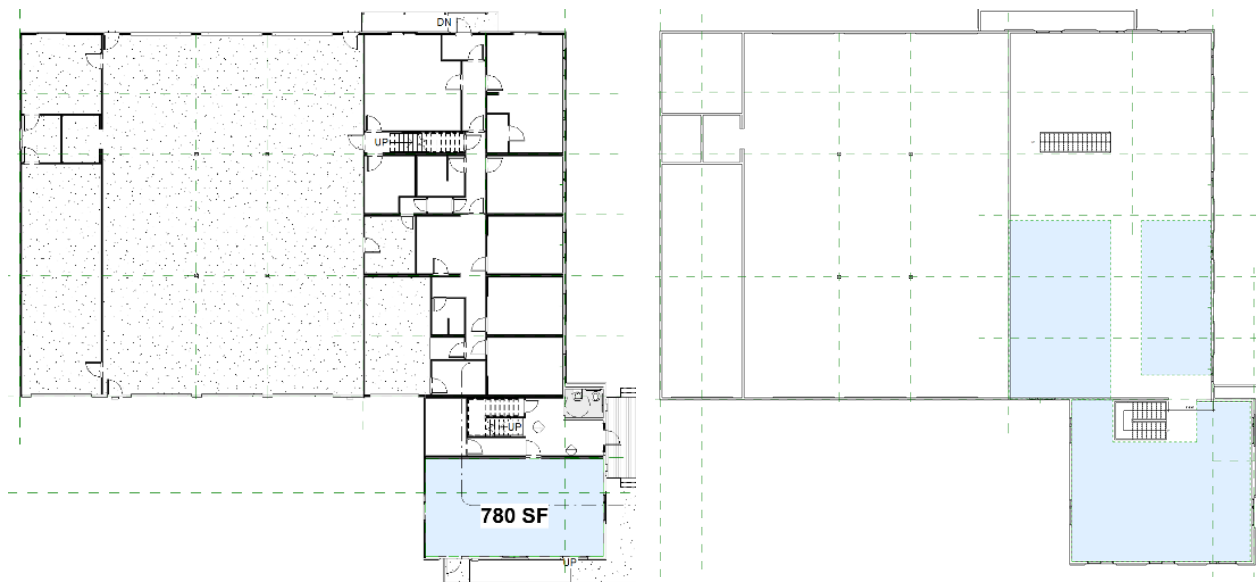
Call it pie in the hand, not pie in the sky (and a pie in the hand is worth two... uh, hmm, never mind). However, as an existing building, (and not public, despite the name) it would not need to meet all the accessibility and code requirements for a new building (Chapter 6 of the 2018 International Building Code). That alone would save a ton of money. But we should also consider the appalling amount of waste generated by demolishing the existing building, and the cost of disposing of it. Food for thought (but no pie just yet).



The Plan B, (continued):

At the same time, at the very least, some of the expressed needs for inclusion in a *new* PSB can be accommodated in areas of the existing building if the assembly chambers and upstairs offices are vacated and relocated in the proposed addition to Haines Borough Administration Building (next page).

Former Assembly Chambers on First Floor can house Morgue and other functions. If addition(s) are needed, there is ample opportunity to the South and Southeast. A new reinforced concrete slab in the Emergency Bays will support heavy equipment and drain water subsurface to collection areas.



Upstairs in the current PSB, offices occupied by the Facilities Director and others can also be relocated to the expanded Borough Administration Building, freeing up over 1500 Square Feet for reconfigured rooms containing a training classroom, storage, and other non-public occupancies.

And, with the relocation of offices, etc., upstairs areas could be upgraded, including insulation, to mitigate excessive heat buildup in summer, a current problem.

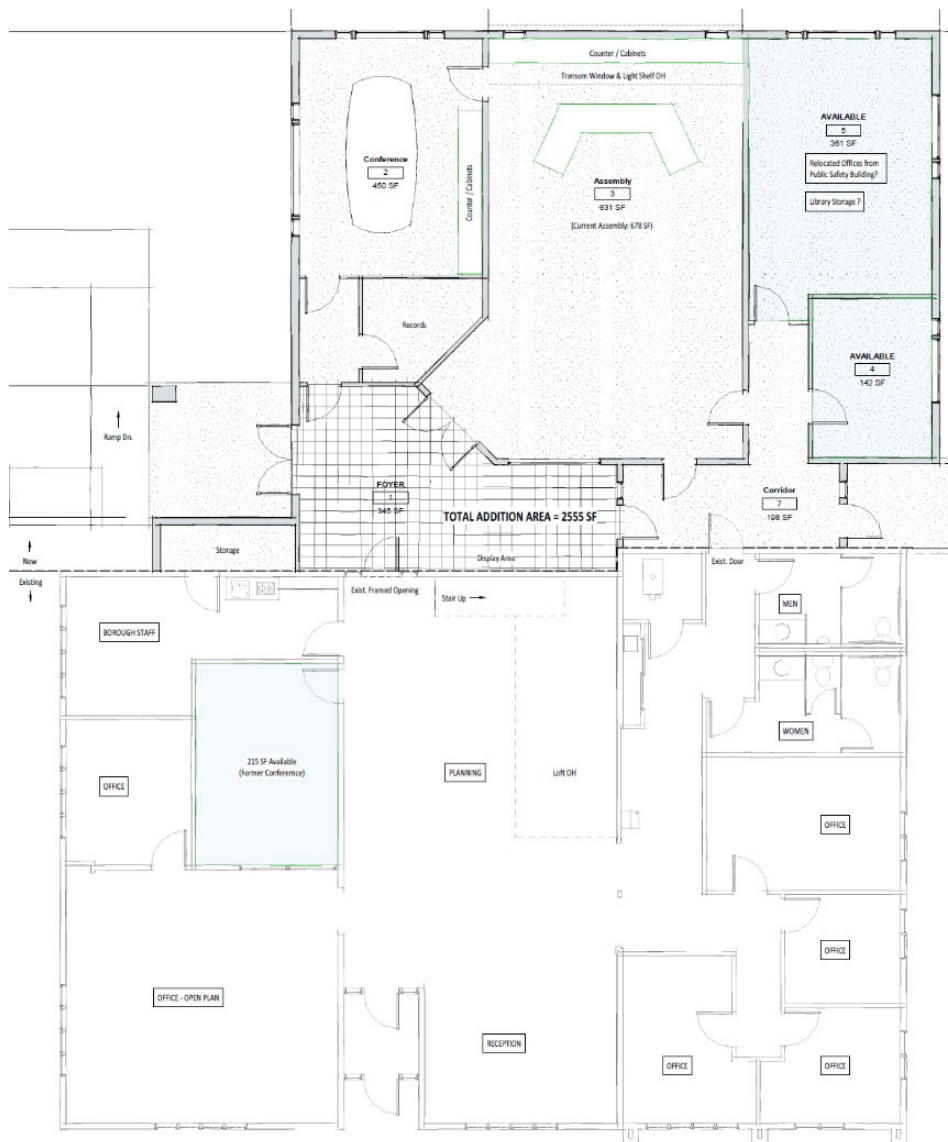
Ding-Ding-Ding (colored lights flashing; champagne flowing)

Finally, if the lobbyists have earned their keep and we win the jackpot and our brand new PSB (now being called a *Public Safety Facility*) is funded and built – however long that takes – the repaired and upgraded, former PSB can remain standing and be repurposed or sold, theoretically, at a profit.

Part Two: Saving Steps

Originally presented to the borough assembly and the facilities director in 2021, The advantages of combining assembly chambers and other borough offices currently located in the public safety building with similar functions in the administration building seemed logical, if not obvious. Yet I have received no responses since then, other than Mr. Coffland asking a year later that the floor plan below be resent.

It was only yesterday (1/30/2023), when reading through the FY24 Budget, that I learn it had been added to the projected expenditures list for a couple of years down the road. This is good news for Haines – and for me in delivering this spiel. That’s because *the Haines Borough Administration Addition would realistically be the place to start*. For those unfamiliar with the idea, here are some of the advantages:



Admin. Bldg. Addition Schematic Design

Basically, it would mean that meetings, records, and other departments would all be under one roof, boosting efficiency and lowering costs. But also:

- There is ample room for the extended building on borough-owned land behind to the West.
- New entrances at North and South sides of the addition add easier access to and from parking.
- Existing restrooms can handle the additional occupant load.
- Modernization, Improved ventilation, and energy efficiency for entire building
- Existing exterior doors and framed openings on the existing building can be utilized.
- Larger lobby and assembly chambers, along with adjacent conference room and offices.
- Shared views, landscaping, trail, throughway, vendors/food trucks with library and greenspace.
- Federal grant money and incentives are likely available.

Part Three: An Alternative Vision

The Core Concept

I've been kicking around a few big ideas for a while - and have gotten some kickbacks in return. This "core concept" amounts to urban planning, though nearly everything proposed is already in place. It has been shared with the Haines Planning Commission, past and present, and given my blessing for forwarding to urban planners and/or landscape architects such as Corvis Design in Juneau for further development if desired or deemed necessary. Then again, there's nothing very complicated about it.

The "Campus at the Core" seeks to organize, optimize, and integrate the community by way of trails, venues, commerce, open space, visitor experience and general livability of Haines. If this sounds familiar, it's nearly word-for-word with the statement from the FY24 Financial Policies report on Page 1 of this document: "*...an atmosphere where people want to open and maintain businesses.*" (And to) "*the quality of life here which keeps them.*" And: "*With adequate infrastructure in place, economic opportunities can build on the availability of these necessary elements.*" And, indeed, *build* we must!

In the past I have done considerable research and produced pages of documentation alluding to the benefits of a central town square, or park. I include none of that here, though it can be supplied upon request. I *will* say however, that other communities, having realized such benefits often needed to purchase land and/or demolish buildings, bring in utilities and provide access. *We need do none of it.*

To summarize: Property values increase for businesses near a town center, as does tax revenue. The Aspen Hotel. Haines Brewery and the Haines Tower are all sitting pretty. Other downtown building owners might be emboldened to upgrade their facades. Visitors naturally gravitate to a downtown and seek its center if there is recognizable appeal. As a focal point, many pictures will be taken – and taken home. Buses will stop, tour groups will organize, and visitors will disperse and shop.

These elements are also consistent with multiple public comments and requests in the Haines Comprehensive Plan, which is currently being updated.

Access Points

Pictured on the next page is an aerial view of what we can reasonably call the downtown core of Haines. At the center of the view is property owned and maintained by The Haines Borough. These include the Haines School and athletic fields; the Public Library; the Haines Administration Building and the Greenspace at 3rd Avenue and Main Street (a major intersection with access to all parts of town and beyond). Within a ½ mile radius of this core are other borough holdings: Sheldon Museum; Small Boat Harbor; Tlingit Park; Portage Cove; SE State Fairgrounds, State and Federal Offices and the Haines Pool.

Port Chilkoot, Fort Seward and Chilkoot Indian Association trails are also within this radius, along with the majority of businesses, RV Parks and non-profits, including the American Bald Eagle Foundation.



Area View of Haines Core Development

Overlays show major access routes and a proposed walking; biking; cross country skiing, Urban Trail System, potentially expanded and connecting to Tlingit Park, the waterfront, the proposed Portage Cove Trail and hopefully, to the Chilkat Indian Association network of trails. Also overlaid are suggested structures and landscape design for the .75-Acre lot at the intersection of 3rd & Main, and the proposed addition to the borough administration building. Snow storage areas would relocate to the West of it.

Together, these public spaces form a “campus” that adjoins and enhances public facilities like the library, ball court and sports fields. The Aspen Hotel and the Haines Brewery, the two newest buildings downtown, also benefit, with the Urban Trail giving easy access to their patrons. Lastly, a row of booths are shown next to administration parking, bringing possibilities for street food and other micro-vendors – and possibly business startups. These booths could be leased from the borough to generate revenue.

Part Four: A Landmark by any other name

Campus Integration

I think you will see that these three projects are linked. Regardless of what happens with the Public Safety Building, the Admin. Building Addition is a good move and a great place to start. But, along with it, infrastructure for adjacent elements should be considered as well: (Core Area Map, Previous Page).

- The Campus portion of the Urban Trail and Through-way (containing water and sewer mains).
- Underground Utilities (existing water and sewer, and new power) to future Public Restrooms
- Telephone Poles and other eyesores removed along 3rd Ave.
- Power and Telephone underground along 3rd Ave. simultaneous with road/sidewalk work.(This might qualify as federal infrastructure spending for transportation under the IIJA.)

Greenspace Landscape and Structures

Whereas the Admin. Building Addition is in its Schematic Design Phase, The Greenspace development is purely Conceptual at this point. A description follows:

Call it Central Park; Park Place; The Hub; Haines Campus; it doesn't matter. We are fortunate that this greenspace has not been sold or otherwise desecrated. It, along with its surroundings are worth more than the sum of their parts. Together, they give our town an identity, one that is respectful of living in a vast and immensely beautiful part of the planet - and not just a place to buy gas and groceries on the way out of town. The benefits of a central space for locals and visitors has previously been stated.

Keeping the existing trees, picnic tables and topography, I show walkways, accessible public restrooms, and a row of booths along the urban trail/throughway for micro-vendors and bike parking. A wide ADAAG low-slope walkway leads from Main Street and the much-needed downtown restrooms, to the Urban Trail, athletic fields, library, and points beyond. The entire project can easily be made accessible.

A fanciful pavilion and stage at the core's strategic intersection of 3rd & Main was added to catch the eye of visitors - but might also capture some of the overflow from the fair or other venues - or just be a place to get out of the wind or rain and catch some sun. Its appearance, approach, and southern orientation invoke a sundial, drawing the eye past open fields and forest to the mountains beyond.

End of Spiel,

Thank You for your time and consideration!

Larry Larson / Deadtree Design

Appendix I: Make Us a Town to Match our Mountains!

Being a visual person, I would have been content to just dump a bunch of pictures on you and leave it at that. But there's this nagging, dim, and distant memory of someone saying, "use your words, Larry." At least I can let the picture pages have the last "word" ... and hope that they speak better than I can.

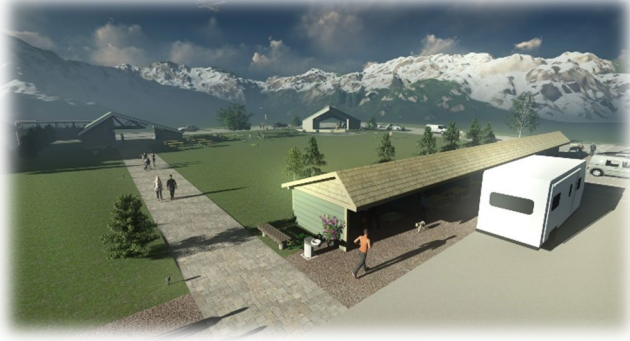
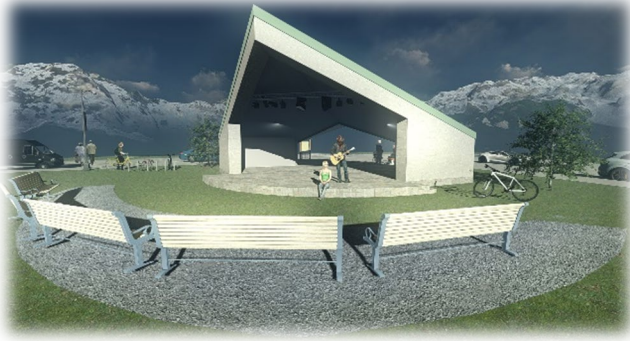
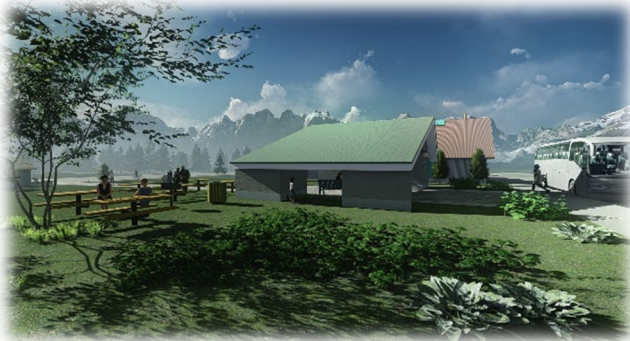


Proposed Borough Administration Building Addition



Proposed Public Safety Building Upgrade (Plan B)

“You Belong Where You Feel Free” (Tom Petty)



Concept: Town Center at Third & Main

Appendix II

Work on the above has been a joyful pet project of mine for some time - using my life skills to help improve the livability of Haines. I do this partly because I agree that “*employment may draw people to Haines initially, (but) it is the quality of life here which keeps them.*” (from FY24 Budget, Page 1)

But also, for others like me, it is the wildness, the freedom, and the escape from other places - ones that may have once possessed these qualities, but have lost, sold, or squandered them - that keeps me here. In this respect, the notion of *quality of life*, though subjective, is protean and expandable to include places that *did* get it right. It helps to travel, witness, register these things, and pass them along.

For background and reference, my involvement in Haines Borough design projects include:

- Library expansion, 1995 (currently the administration building)
- Library conversion to Haines Borough Offices. 1997 Interior design
- Oslund Park Ballfield, 1998, design and documentation
- Haines Police Security Upgrade, 1999 (Public Safety Building)
- Haines Police Offices Remodel, 2000.
- Haines Borough Offices Remodel, 2003. (with Ke Mell Architects)
- Tlingit Park Restrooms, 2003
- Senior Center New Front Entrance and drive-through, 2010
- Klahanie Valley Fire Department Roof, RFP, 2012
- Haines Borough School District Vocational Building Interior Redesign, date?
- Haines Borough Administration Roof Redesign, 2012
- Library Storage Addition design options, 2012
- Senior Center As-built drawings for Bid Documents, 2015
- Haines Preschool preliminary design, 2013 (not used)
- Haines Borough School District, 2016. Sauna for Pool (not used)
- Chilkat Vally Preschool, 2016. Design and Documentation (with Pro HNS)
- Senior Center Integration with CVP, 2016. Interior & Fire Suppression
- Public Safety Building Upgrades Proposal, 2017, RFP for Pro HNS: Floor Plans; Model (not used)
- Haines Borough School District Bus Barn, 2017, design and documentation

Note: nearly all the documents related to the above projects have been retained and may be useful for anyone considering future work or consideration with respect to these or other borough facilities.

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