

Working Group Notes – March 7, 2025

2035 Ketchikan Gateway Borough Comprehensive Plan Update

Meeting Objectives and Agenda topics

1. Review survey outreach and milestones since last meeting
 - Survey
 - 123 responses as of March 7. Most people are completing the survey, although some are not answering demographic questions.
 - Outreach methods: Continuing to advertise over the next week via flyers, newsletters, (Chamber, Saxman, borough), social media, and radio announcements.
 - Frank and Talya visited high school Governance and US History classes. It was a mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors and 80 students completed a student survey.
 - Questions:
 - Diane followed up to ask if we were adding the survey to the utility bills. Lacey confirmed the contact is Kim Simpson, KPU Sales Marketing Division Manager –
 - Meg circling back to double check budget and timeline.
 - Diane asked if she could send them to the Rotary students? Yes, Frank will follow up with the link to the student survey.
 - Small Group Discussions
 - Going to do a series of small group discussions the week of April 7th. These will be hybrid discussions. Working group members are invited to attend any and all that they would like.
 - Questions
 - Diane would be willing to help facilitate a focus group. Meg will circle back to the group about how working group members can support the small group discussions.
2. Discuss emerging values, challenges, and priorities from research, interviews, and community meetings thus far:
 - **Housing and Public Services - some guiding discussion questions:**
 - The current survey results show that the availability and affordability of housing is emerging as a top priority and concern for survey participants.
 - Housing issues:
 - Challenges are roads and utilities.
 - New opportunities: DNR and land sale on the north end of island. They would put in the roads to put in to do the logging.
 - Workforce housing a concern
 - Frank
 - Where is mental health going to do housing? Bigger question about utilities, Borough is not intending to put funding into that, correct? Well, if the secondary concern is infrastructure, what is the Borough's appetite for talking about either self funding or finding money for infrastructure? How are we going to subsidize, promote, or incentivize infrastructure?
 - Strategies: Reduce cost of infrastructure
 - Kathy
 - No one wants the Borough doing housing, could offer low interest loans to build those roads.

- Message from recent DC visit is that Ketchikan Coast Guard station is far down the list for new USCG housing. NOAA may be interested, but current federal happenings make things a little confusing with federal agencies. USCG also adjusted their need from 85 to 40 units.
- **Strategies of Interest**
 - **Mobile integrated readiness training program.** Use an opportunity to teach military forces how to build roads to send different places. That's how the road to airport ferry on Annette was built.
 - **Tax abatement programs**
 - Not for tax deferment, but there are ways the borough could create policies to incentivize developers to minimize initial costs
 - Tiny houses
 - Nothing prohibiting tiny homes in code. Biggest issue is homeowners insurance. With City changing building codes, this will be a part of the conversation if people can do it in city limit.
 - The scale of tiny housing don't always save that much money.
 - Tiny homes vs small homes – Tiny are usually on a chasey under 400 rather than cottage under 800 on a foundation. What the community is really more interested in small homes. Division in code for residential to be developed on 10,000 sq ft to carve into multiple properties.
 - Infill
 - Frank- First street – burnt out houses will be infill. The market is looking at those as actual opportunities.
 - Lacey – Up to property owners what they want to do, but we don't have a way to incentivize. Speaking for the city, there aren't any available and attractive lots spoken for.
 - Utilities
 - Diane – We're almost maxed out on capacity, right? Lacey – are we talking about water/sewer or electricity. For residential, no. We continue to see the demand creep us as more people convert from oil to electric forms of heat. But it's not a spike, we aren't bumping up right now. We will in years to come, especially if we get a large customer like Metlaktala (Shore power) but we aren't limited right now residential for electricity, water, and sewer. For water and sewer, it's not a capacity thing, it's having utilities installed, which is a separate discussion. While water is always a concern when we hit our draught periods, we would need a lot more residents pulling on utilities. In this conversation we aren't talking about growing the market we're talking about providing for what we have.
 - Sharli
 - Tribal organizations are making efforts to facilitate infrastructure. Those partnerships are critical to addressing infrastructure needs.
 - Housing conversation is about a broader economic development discussion. But if we're talking about what we want the future to look like, how can we build what we want to happen?
- **Strategies off Table**
 - Coast Guard housing
 - Planning Commission Codes

- Some Developers are saying the Planning Commission codes. The team disagrees at this time and doesn't feel Planning Commission codes need revisited at this time.
- Housing Market Study
 - Sharli – Felt like they didn't get a good understanding of community
 - Other parts of the study are valuable
 - Roads that are on utilities
 - Mud Bay area not on utilities. That area platted by state, if we could get roads in that neighborhood. But there's a ton of green belt space with DNR that we're trying to make a trade for.
 - Recommendations we do/don't have a problem with
 - Sharli
 - We've done a lot of these things
 - Don't know what else we can do to subsidize other than tax abatement
 - Not a big appetite to have government investing in housing development
 - Community land trust happening at nonprofit level as it should
 - Richard advocated for increased density, minimum already 5,000. Maybe we need to have a conversation about going to 3,500
 - Remodel and blight
 - 20K program 6 months to 12 months – education campaigns
 - Already did the ADUS
 - Different opinions about regulating short-term rentals
- SE Conference
 - Their #1 priority was housing
 - Talked about code changes and partnerships for funding and spurring development
- Diane
 - Question for Kathy and Sharli
 - Housing is a national problem. Is there any hope for outside funding or government providing incentives to communities?
 - Sharli – everyone is trying to figure out what's going on as the administration changes.
 - We can be part of conversation for CTE programs. How do you build timber framing, metal buildings? Help alleviate current and future housing shortages. One of the biggest problems is finding the skilled labor necessary to build the houses.
 - Kathy – No such thing as affordable housing. Can try to make it affordable to some extent, but it's not affordable to create. Addressing the cost of living and wages may help address the concerns about housing affordability.
 - Two thoughts on how we don't spend money on education
 - Maritime center – People would come and take our classes if place was available to rent, but they aren't

- If money comes in we do a good job with it. We need to encourage single story accessible places so elders can age in place.
- Richard
 - Affordable housing construction costs is one piece. Respectably disagree with no such thing as affordable housing, there are ways the housing can be at an affordable rate? If economic development, if we only have tourism jobs that are low wage when you have to have a salary of 90K or above
 - When homes are on the market on large lots on waterfront, then we aren't helping because they are fair market value. But at the same time, people from out of town are buying second homes as vacation homes. We can look at other communities, maybe Hawaii and Jackson Hole WY for examples of ideas. As we talk about these things, can't just say infrastructure and construction of home defines it.
 - Regulating vacation rentals is a tool as a tact for affordable housing. It is a case study. Does it affect how you use property and infringe on freedom? Yes. But how serious as the community on how to address affordable housing? Do we want to see property values increase and property taxes increase? What Jackson Hole is close doing is almost like rent controlled, but it depends on how serious we are.
 - Someone is going to pay for incentivizing. Fiber, electrical, pipe is going to cost money. How do you get the biggest bang for money? Most homes are on property with lowest cost.
 - Demolition costs so much to take to dump. Really expensive to dispose of a home (\$40K). How serious are we about getting rid of them and who is going to foot the bill?
- Lacey
 - Limiting vacation rentals is absolutely a proven way to address affordable housing challenges, even if it's not popular
 - When we talk about utilities, it's a difficult discussion. You're asking all the other rate payers to support an individual or a small number of individuals that the Borough hasn't answered yet. "Ultimate philosophical questions." Right of individual or greater good of community. How do we provide individual rights with community needs? How serious is community? Is the community willing to give up a little to get a lot?
- Diane
 - Appreciate Richard's comments, and that's my take on situation. It will be interesting how we take and implement into comprehensive plan.
- Frank
 - How to pay to implement ideas is the challenge.
- Meg
 - Focus groups – look at policies and strategies where the people who were involved most reasonable and approachable way to determine.
 - Education piece during public review – community wants it, then may end up moving down priority list.

3. Wrap Up

- Set next meeting date, topic(s), and action items
- Two weeks, March 21st
- Keep updated about survey and focus groups

Invited Participants

Name	Organization & Title	Attended
Alma Parker	Filipina Community Representative	
Diane Gubatayao	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Planning Commission	X
Ginger McCormick	City of Saxman, Clerk	
Jaimie Palmer	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Assembly	X
Lacey Simpson	City of Ketchikan, Assistant Manager	X
Kathy Bolling	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Assembly	X
Michael Martin	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Planning Commission Chair	
Richard Harney	Ketchikan Indian Community, Tribal Planner	
Rob Arnold	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Planning Commission	
Sharli Arntzen	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Assembly	
Frank Maloney	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Planning Director	X
Talya Stek	Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Associate Planner	X
Meg Friedenauer	Agnew::Beck Consulting, Project Manager	X
Holly Smith	Agnew::Beck Consulting, Associate	
Maxine Laszlo	Agnew::Beck Consulting, Senior Associate	X