

# Community Open House Notes – February 18, 2025

## 2035 Ketchikan Gateway Borough Comprehensive Plan Update

Tuesday, February 18; 4-6pm at the Kayhi Commons

### Description of Activity

The Planning Team held an open house for the Comprehensive Plan project on February 18<sup>th</sup> at the Ketchikan High School Commons (Kayhi Commons) from 4-6 PM. Approximately 40 attendees were present and were asked to provide their feedback on several focus area posters (see below for a list of responses). The team also answered questions about the Comprehensive Plan Update process, purpose, and timeline.



## Summary of Comments by Focus Area

Text in brackets [ ] are used to clarify or modify the original wording of a comment for context, grammar, or readability while maintaining the integrity of the quote. Text in green is used to note where a comment relates to more than one focus area. Check marks ✓ note where more than one individual agreed with a comment.

### 1. Health, Wellbeing, and Education

- Welcome private education.
- Expand fast track
- Develop certification tracks thru public school system.
- Focus education needed for local industry (construction, technology, indigenous trades, etc.).
- Expand recreation center!
- [We need] more [athletic] fields. They are always booked and it's difficult to get free time. If not involved in an organization, it's hard to get access.
- Separate bike trails / lanes from traffic. *Link with transportation.*
- A major hardship is waitlist for specialists. 10-18 months is killing us when we travel for care and try to find ADA rooms. Taxis or booked flights is a problem.
- How can we get SNAP for the farmers market here?
- Get rid of zoning rules for green houses if they are limited to 10 x 12 ft.
- Better accessible public spaces.
- Fitness trail.
- Indoor playground for children.
- Create stronger ties with and a platform for local labor groups. Unions already working to train specialized workforce (IBEW, etc.).
- Lack of access – The cost and lack of insurance and long waitlists for specialists.
- Address standard of living – Housing / childcare access / affordability / adequate pay. So many medical providers want to move here.
- More covered play places.
- Extend the bike path north and south. *Link with transportation.*
- Tax the tourists. *Link with fiscal considerations and economic development.*
- I think this goes back to standard of living. It is not going to matter if you have CTE if young people can't afford to live here.
- Support local community gardens, grocery delivery services, Ketchikan Evergreens, and start a fish donation service.
- Encourage more medical specialties (dermatologists, cancer treatments, audiology).
- Use knowledge of preventative care for suicide and substance abuse. It exists but how to access it?
- If we increase standards of living it would improve access. I would love an indoor facility like Juneau has that can host indoor sports and events.
- The proposals for rec center expansion would be amazing. If the rec center had more classroom type space it could possibly host a before and after school program for elementary students, which would help fill transportation gaps.

- If only there was an easy answer: I feel like education has been bogged down for a while. My child is dyslexic, and I pay an extra \$500 per month for private tutoring to get her to grade level. I'm hopeful that more teaming can occur for better support for teachers and students in larger class sizes.
- UAS gave a compelling presentation on classes that could support high school or college students. Many options like this would be helpful. Many amazing community partners would love to take on interns and if it could be paired with instruction, we might take some burden.
- Promote and support community gardens or food forests. School-based gardening programs would be so helpful. Most master gardeners are of an older age. The course is available through UAA; maybe promote more younger people to pursue this course.
- Playground indoors and outdoors for children!
- Need more activities – especially on the weekend – for working parents. Music classes, arts, and sports activities.
- An AED on wall is needed. Instructions for all to use facility.
- Active social worker at Peace Health required to assist people prior to discharge w/ info on providers and services who are available to assist with medical care paperwork.



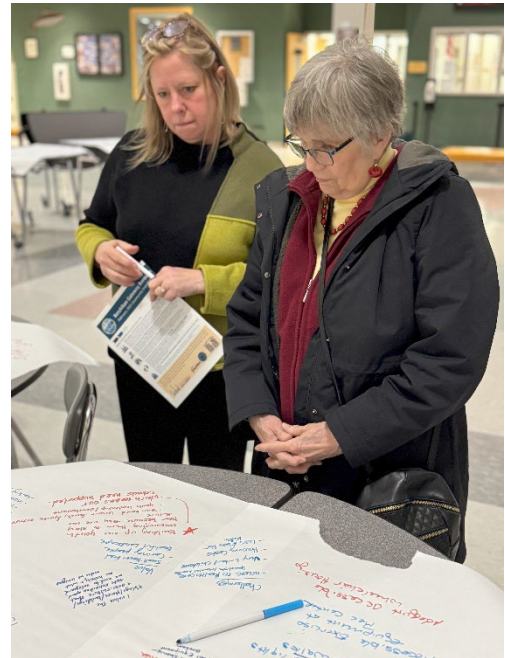
## 2. Visitor and Fishing Industries

- It is amazing when I stand at the airport for a few minutes and watch the amount of fish boxes leave our town – way more than anyone could eat in 10 years! Fish box tax?
- Fishing classes for all youth. Teach the kids who live here how to fish. Unless someone in the family teaches those skills, they are lost for the next generation.
- Encourage growth of mariculture industry (kelp, oysters, etc.) and associated products.
- Can we put a daily cap on the number of ships and tourists rather than letting the cruise industry dictate growth?
- Think about our disabled visitors who don't know about the hardships of visiting.
- Sustainable tourism rooted in safeguarding and celebrating the things/places that people value in Ketchikan.
- KAPA's. Work in creating commercial kitchen / packing resources for loads to be able to become bust sales/commerce.
- Have tourism approved zones; limit or prohibit commercial tour activities in residential zones and preserve recreational areas for non-commercial use. *Link with land use.*
- Have a tourism plan.

## 3. Economic Development and Jobs

- Encourage growth of mariculture industry (kelp, oysters). ✓
- Reimplement trade programs at the high school!!! ✓
- Industries in farm and garden. Local agricultural has great potential for Ketchikan.
- Recycling local resources can provide the means for regenerative agriculture.
- Mandates w/ organics in the waste stream / provide infrastructure.

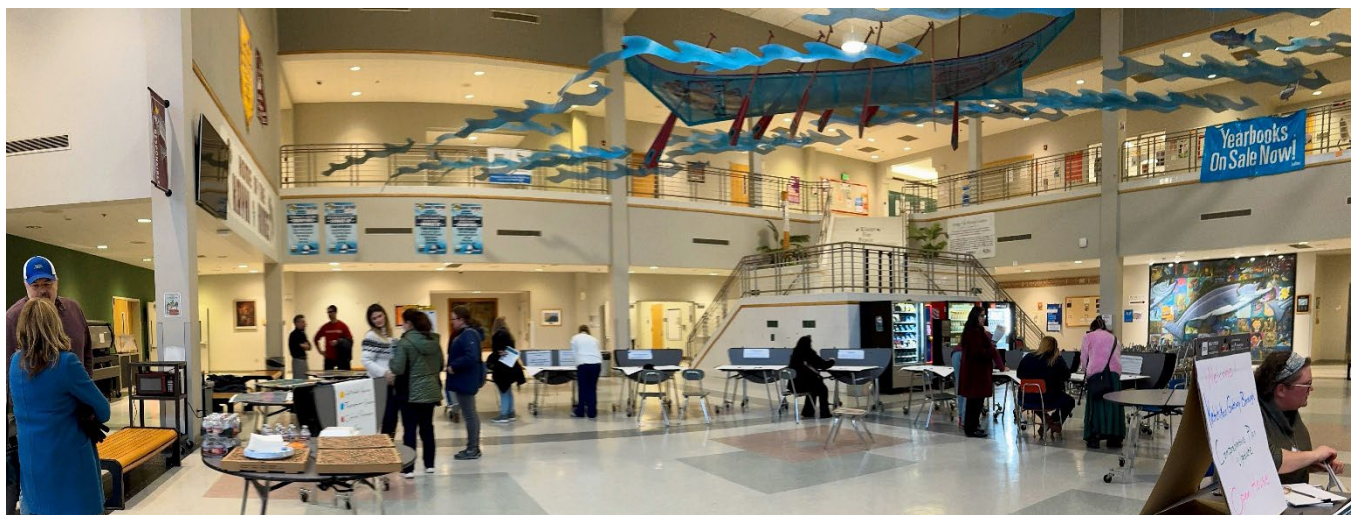
- Competing with corporations.
- Technology!
- Education!
- Medical restoration (addiction services, recovery, grief healing, senior services).
- Small mill operators.
- Why do you tax food? [Link with fiscal considerations.](#)
- Industries that support young families, like childcare, child attractions, academics.
- Freight/shipping competition.
- Shipbuilding.
- Manufactured home building.
- Modernize infrastructure.
- Expand internships and mentorships in trades.
- There is certainly lots of interest in this town with establishing a community-wide composting system.
- Programs and education for our youth that can show them what is viable.
- Support local agriculture like Ketchikan Evergreen and Outpost.
- Timber jobs and products.
- Tax breaks for the 100 plus people employed.
- I think that the community needs more trades. I also think that some licensing issues get in the way of behavioral health professionals. Make peer support specialists hold a stronger role to help fill faps.



#### 4. Housing

- Too many Airbnb's, short-term rentals, too few landlords allowing children, and housing costs in general are too high. ✓
- Low barrier homeless shelter! ✓
- Lack of qualified contractors. ✓
- 1600 square foot townhouse with four-foot setback with garage by Safeway.
- Homeowners don't want to rent parts of their home out and be left with damage from renters. Affordable rental insurance for tenants and protections of homeowners is needed.
- Tax short-term rentals at higher rates. Create better incentives for long-term rentals. [Link with fiscal considerations.](#)
- Make Airbnb's and short-term rentals register and monitor usage. Put a cap on how many [are allowed]. It impacts our community's ability to get housing.
- [Create] low-income housing/apartments.
- Rates of pay for most Ketchikan jobs can't cover rent.
- Low inventory [of housing].
- Lack of stable rental options, especially with pets.
- There's not a lot of help or standards in the home-buying process.
- [Create] fewer roadblocks to higher density or other zoning of housing.

- Ketchikan needs a disability priority list [from Alaska Housing Finance Corporation] like every other community in the state.
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation needs to issue more vouchers.
- Rentals need to come up to code in order to become eligible for Alaska Housing Finance Corporation vouchers.
- [We need more] affordable 1-2 bed homes for single families under \$400K.
- There are way too many short-term rentals. When I am priced out of Ketchikan it will be tied to housing and rent. I have personally experienced a 48 percent increase in rent in the last five years.
- Less rules on zoning.
- Reduced minimum setbacks.
- Do the things suggested by the housing survey.
- We need accessible housing with zero steps [ADA compliant] and good parking with no age restrictions. Our young and disabled need help too!
- More tiny house developments.
- More multi-generational starter homes.
- More housing for elders to age-in-place and high-density multiplexes.
- Barriers to housing:
  - Shipping costs;
  - Unable to manufacture here;
  - Near impossible to even find a handy man;
  - Low inventory;
  - Low quality inventory;
  - Development costs; and
  - Supply costs.
- More mixed-use / commercial housing.



## 5. Transportation

- The lack of ferry services has completely changed our lives annually. Now it's hard/impossible to hunt, visit family, import goods without massive shipping costs. ✓✓✓✓
- [Poor] road quality! ✓✓✓✓
- The local trail from Frog Pond to the lake is dangerous with its icy slant. It hasn't been maintained since the Ward Cove Road was eliminated. ✓✓
- Make transit free for all youth and elders permanently – beyond the pilot program. ✓✓
- Clearly mark crosswalks and more pedestrian lights. ✓✓
- The ferry schedule is poor and the tickets are more expensive. The Borough could keep advocating for this resource. ✓
- Roads! The quality of roads is related to the costs of repairs and car maintenance from fixing struts, shanks, and driving systems and the time it takes to fix them.
- Prince Rupert has a larger community of SE Alaskans.
- From a 2023 study, 49 percent of food insecurities in Ketchikan are related to lack of transportation to get groceries and knowing how to cook.
- The transit schedule is so limited [one hour between buses]. We have free shuttles for tourists but not for locals. [Link with Fishing and Tourism Industry.](#)
- Build a tube to Gravina, a Bradford bridge to Canaoa, or a ferry to Hyder.
- Disability access! ADA code enforcement for sidewalks. There is maybe ONE accessible trail. Better signage. Get more input from others in the community on our needs. Don't assume people with no hardships can make plans that flow well.
- Non-commercial recreation sites that are for locals only. [Link with Fishing and Tourism Industry.](#)
- Add more blinking crossing signs at all crosswalks.
- Bring back water taxis.



## 6. Public Infrastructure & Services

- Make MIH (Mobile Integrated Healthcare) services available island-wide. ✓✓✓
- Recycling: Target organics in the waste stream and repurpose for local agriculture. Begin replacing dumpsters with recyclers. Better recycling for more than just glass (cardboard, fishing nets, etc.) ✓✓✓
- All EMS need to be trained in communicating with individuals with autism or those who communicate differently. Use other types of communication like iPads. ✓
- If we add more housing north, we need a sewer system! Not just allowing it to overflow into the ocean. North End is the biggest sewer dropper into our ocean. ✓ [Link with Land Use.](#)
- Cleaner water / water filtration system. ✓
- Create emergency call lists for individuals with disabilities and elders who live alone to have support if a natural disaster occurs. [Link with Land Use.](#)

- There seems to be no oversight into private sewer systems in the Borough. Faulty systems run into neighboring properties, etc.
- Create a connected water and sewer system throughout the whole city.
- More water supply valves.
- I wish we could be self-contained: ✓
  - More sustainable;
  - Burn garbage for energy;
  - Working septic systems;
  - Access to mainland; and
  - Need education opportunities for our citizens to do the jobs we need.
- How about runoff pipes under roads instead of building lots. ✓

## 7. Land Use

- More island-wide interpretive signage.
- More opportunities for tandem parking.
- Ward Cove Area
  - This should be a park.
- Gravina & Pennock Island
  - No development without strong consideration of the Pennock/Gravina lifestyle.
- Waterfall/Mile 17
  - Retain beach for park.
  - Remain in the FD zone.
- City of Ketchikan: West End
  - Approve permit for a community garden next to Revilla.
  - Medium density? No way!
- Herring Cove
  - Make this area walking-only and build a pedestrian bridge [that connects with the existing west end pedestrian bridge / trail].
  - Create bus parking fees? *Link with Tourism Industry and Fiscal Considerations.*
- Mountain Point:
  - Create 3-story condos?
  - More flexibility in subdivision regulations. Developers don't want to subdivide because it creates higher property taxes and surveying costs are high. Consider a property tax abatement program linked to the average time it takes to sell smaller properties.

