

Detailed Revisions Between Public Review Draft and Public Hearing Draft

October 20, 2025

Introduction

This memo summarizes substantive revisions made between the **Public Review Draft** and **Public Hearing Draft** of the *Ketchikan Gateway Borough 2035 Comprehensive Plan*. These changes reflect public input received during the comment period and direction from the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Commission. Revisions include added or revised themes, goals, strategies, and actions across multiple chapters. Additional minor edits, such as corrections to grammar, formatting, or internal cross-references, are not detailed here but are documented in the Comprehensive Plan Comment Tracker, which records every change. Below are the detailed substantive changes organized by plan chapters.

Land Use and Environment

Theme (New)

Historic preservation drives authentic revitalization.

Ketchikan’s built environment and cultural landscapes tell the story of a community shaped by Indigenous heritage, maritime industry, and artistic resilience. With more than 400 recorded heritage resources and 13 National Register–listed properties (plus multiple eligible ones), Ketchikan is rich with places that embody the region’s identity and economy. In the 2025 community survey, 30 percent of residents named culture, history, and arts as what they valued most about the Borough — a clear confirmation that preservation belongs at the center of planning. Thoughtful preservation policies, design standards, and adaptive reuse incentives can help retain Ketchikan’s authentic character while supporting housing, tourism, and small business growth. Integrating preservation into land use and redevelopment decisions ensures that future investment reflects the Borough’s deep respect for its history and for the people who have shaped it.

Strategy 2: Update and Improve the Borough's Zoning and Subdivision Code

Added:

- *Potential Partner-led Action:* “Coordinate with the City of Ketchikan to promote infill and redevelopment of underutilized properties.”

Strategy 3: Reduce Risks from Landslides, Flooding, Erosion, and Other Natural Hazards

Added:

- *Potential Partner-led Action:* “Support development of a Ketchikan Creek Master Plan to address potential damage, infrastructure failure and economic impacts from flooding.”
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Strategy 4: Promote Coordinated Area and Neighborhood Planning

Added:

- *Potential Partner-led Action:* “Collaborate with property owners, the business community, the City of Ketchikan, and the State of Alaska to develop a Downtown Ketchikan sub-area plan that strengthens the district as a year-round hub of community life...”
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Strategy 5: Preserve Cultural, Environmental, and Recreational Resources

Deleted (from Previous Version):

- Partner-led action: “Support the creation of a Historic Preservation Plan. As part of the plan, consider the development of a comprehensive inventory of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources.”

Added/Replaced with Expanded Version:

- “Support the creation of a community-wide Historic Preservation Plan that includes Creek Street, Downtown, and the Stedman/Thomas historic districts. The plan should build on previous community planning efforts and be developed in partnership with local organizations. Implementation may include tools such as design standard guidance, wayfinding signage and interpretation in historic districts, as well as historic resource assessments in early neighborhoods.”

Added:

- *Potential Partner-led Action:* “Advocate for City of Ketchikan enforceable code to protect Ketchikan's historic buildings and cultural sites.”
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Transportation

Airport Infrastructure and Access

- Previous title: “Airport infrastructure and access should be strengthened to support regional connectivity.”
 - **New title:** “Strengthening airport infrastructure and access supports regional connectivity.”
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- Added references to the **Terminal Area Plan (2022)** and **Phase 1 terminal expansion (completion expected 2027)**.
 - Replaced “requires redundancy and modernization” with “makes redundancy and modernization crucial.”
 - Removed outdated descriptions of terminal size and phased upgrade strategy.
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Multimodal and ADA-Accessible Transportation

- Simplified language:
 - Previous: “...keep the community connected and safe and improve livability.”
 - **New:** “...improve livability.”
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Public Transit

- **Rewritten** to reflect 2024–2025 program updates.
 - Borough brought paratransit operations in-house as “**Bus +**” in 2024.
 - Notes ridership growth in FY25 and new **real-time tracking** features.
 - Three new ADA vans added in 2025.
 - Connects current work to the **Coordinated Transportation Plan, Strategic Plan, and Transit Development Plan**.
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Gravina Island Access

- References **Gravina Access Project** nearing completion.
 - Notes lack of new state funds and need for vessel and terminal reinvestment.
 - Prioritizes replacement of aging vessels and long-term capital funding.
 - Identifies eligible state/federal funding pathways.
 - Removes previous passenger/vehicle count data.
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Community Quotes

- Previous quote: “Preventative maintenance of our transportation infrastructure is the best repair.”
- **New final quote:** “Downtown bus and traffic congestion needs a plan to support the growing industry.”

Strategy 1: Hazard-Resilient Transportation

- Title revised from “Invest in hazard-resilient and improving aging transportation infrastructure.” → “**Advocate for hazard-resilient transportation infrastructure.**”
 - “Explore creating” → “Explore the creation of” vulnerability map.
 - ADA collaboration action moved to *Partner-led*.
 - Removed references to “aging transportation infrastructure.”
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Strategy 2: Marine and Inter-Island Connectivity

- **Added Partner-led Action:** “Convene public, Tribal, and private logistics partners to develop a community-wide freight coordination and cost-reduction strategy... to expand shipping options and encourage competition.”
 - **Removed:** Previous partner action about increasing backhaul shipping volume.
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Strategy 3: Airport Access and Modernization

- Title revised: “Improve airport access...” → “**Continue to improve airport access...**”
 - “Continue implementing Phase 1” → “**Complete Phase 1.**”
 - **Added Action:** “Develop and pursue a funding plan for Gravina ferry vessels and terminal assets that identifies eligible state and federal funding pathways in coordination with ADOT&PF.”
 - Updated ADA planning action to reference FAA ADA requirements.
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Strategy 4: Public Transit

- Moved up (was Strategy 5 in previous version).
 - Added reference to **Bus + demand-responsive pilot service.**
 - Notes **Transit Development Plan update** (budgeted, last revised 2003).
 - Removed redundant text about on-demand feasibility.
 - Clarified coordination with plan update.
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Strategy 5: Accessibility & Traffic Congestion

- Reordered (moved down one position).
 - **Added Partner-led Actions:**
 - Add protected bicycle lanes where feasible.
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- Create continuous multi-use trail connections linking neighborhoods, schools, harbors, and downtown.
 - Coordinate with visitor-industry partners to stagger coach arrivals during peak hours.
 - Borough-led actions unchanged.
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Public Facilities and Services

No substantive changes.

Housing

No substantive changes.

Economic Development

Theme Revisions

- **Economic diversification:** Added, “The nonprofit sector, including arts, culture, and community services, serve as both an employer and an economic driver, reinforcing diversification and quality of life.”
 - **Sustainable tourism:** Added, “To address these concerns, economic development strategies should aim to incorporate measures that protect community well-being and ensure that the benefits of tourism are reinvested locally to sustain quality of life.”
 - **Local food systems:** Added, “Subsistence activities, including fishing, hunting, and gathering, remain an important part of Ketchikan’s food system and local economy. These practices supplement household food supplies, support cultural traditions, and help offset high grocery costs.”
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Revised Goals

- **Goal A:** Diversify and strengthen the local, year-round economy.
 - **Goal B:** Ensure economic development initiatives, activities, and growth reflect community values, support quality of life, and allow for community engagement.
 - **Goal C:** Invest in people and infrastructure to build and retain a skilled, inclusive, and future-ready workforce.
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Strategies and Actions

Strategy 1

- a) Support development in emerging industries such as marine trades, construction, value-added seafood processing, small-scale manufacturing, technology sectors, and the arts economy.
- b) Move to under Strategy 4.
- c) Revise to: “Support local business development support services to small business owners.”

Strategy 2

- Revise to: “Align tourism activities and management with community values and resident quality of life.”
- c) Revise to: “Explore community tourism models that aim to improve the quality of life for residents, improve visitor experiences, support business growth, increase sales tax revenue, and foster community collaboration and coordination in conjunction with tourism industry.”

Added Potential Borough-led Action:

- “Assess the cumulative impacts of visitor activity on community infrastructure, including transportation, utilities, broadband capacity, and public spaces.”

Added Potential Partner-led Actions:

- “Collaborate with local utilities and telecommunications providers to expand broadband and cell service capacity during peak visitor seasons.”
- “Support implementation of shore power and port electrification projects that reduce noise and emissions, improving both visitor experience and livability for nearby residents.”
- *(Cross reference Strategy 2 with XXX Chapter for complementary actions addressing livability and community well-being.)*

Strategy 5

- Revise to: “Strengthen growth of local food systems to expand food security and help address high living costs.”
 - a) Revise to: “Support community gardens, small scale farming, gardening support and mentoring programs, and culturally relevant gardening initiatives (e.g., Alaska Native, Filipino, and traditional food practices).”
 - **Add new 5d:** “Work with residents and local Tribes to identify and document key subsistence areas to consider in future planning efforts.”
 - **Add new 5k:** “Support educational and intergenerational programs that promote subsistence harvesting skills and food preservation methods.”

New Strategy 6

“Continue support for local nonprofit, arts, community services, and cultural activities and initiatives.” (*Cross reference with Culture and Education chapter.*)

- **Potential Borough-led Actions:**
 - Continue support for funding, grants, and technical assistance for nonprofit organizations to strengthen financial sustainability and local hiring capacity.
 - Promote volunteerism and civic engagement through nonprofit events and programs.
 - **Potential Partner-led Actions:**
 - Support local activities and cultural events that target community participation.
 - Expand year-round programming that draws both residents and visitors.
 - Encourage collaboration between nonprofits and local businesses (e.g., restaurants, retail, hospitality) to maximize the “multiplier effect.”
 - Track and report economic impacts of local nonprofit programming and events.
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Quality of Life

The Quality of Life chapter was broken into two new chapters, Health and Wellness and Education and Culture. Existing themes, goals, and strategies were broken out into the new chapters with new one added.

Health and Wellness

Themes

- Affordability of basic needs contributes to community health and well-being.
- Community connectivity programs support mental health.
 - *Add:* “Nonprofit arts and cultural programs also provide safe spaces for connection, creativity, and mental health support.”
- **New:** Indoor recreation and activities supports physical and mental health.
 - *Edit:* “In Ketchikan’s climate, indoor spaces like the Ketchikan Public Library, the Gateway Recreation Center, and others, are important for staying active, reducing isolation, and supporting emotional wellness.”

Goals

- Goal A: Promote community well-being by improving access to health, housing, and support services.
- **New Goal B:** Support prevention, recovery, and community resilience through coordinated behavioral health and substance misuse response.

- **New Goal C:** Ensure all residents have equitable access to healthy environments and opportunities for active living.

Strategies and Actions

- **Strategy 1:** Consider access to housing, childcare, food, and health care as essential components of community health.
 - *Added Borough-led Actions:*
 - Partner with service providers to expand emergency and transitional housing.
 - Collaborate with healthcare and nonprofits to increase access to opioid treatment programs.
 - Support wraparound services integrating mental health, substance abuse treatment, and housing assistance.
 - **Strategy 2:** Promote physical and mental wellness across generations by strengthening support in schools, homes, and shared community spaces.
 - *Added Partner-led Action:*
 - Develop community-based education, outreach, and prevention programs targeting substance abuse, including opioids.
 - **Strategy 3:** Develop inclusive indoor recreation and gathering spaces.
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Education and Culture

Themes

- A strong, supported public education system builds stable communities.
- Cultural identity and belonging are central to community well-being.
- **New:** Arts, history, and cultural expression strengthen community identity and quality of life.
 - *Full paragraph retained as in draft.*

Goals

- **Goal A:** Strengthen education systems through sustained investment, support, and youth engagement.
- **Goal B:** Celebrate cultural identity and promote a connected, inclusive, and welcoming community.
- **New Goal C:** Expand access to arts, lifelong learning, and cultural opportunities for all residents.

Strategies and Actions

- **Strategy 1:** Ensure capital, planning, and advocacy efforts reflect desire for high-quality K–12 education.
 - **Strategy 2:** Empower youth to participate in local government.
 - **Strategy 3 (Revised):** Strengthen collaboration between the Borough, Tribes, Filipino community, and other cultural connections and service providers to support culturally rooted wellness.
 - *Add Borough-led Action:* Support local nonprofits and organizations as key partners in advancing cultural identity, connectedness, and inclusion.
 - **New Strategy 4:** Support local arts and cultural programming as important components of community education.
 - *Potential Partner-led Actions:*
 - Support partnerships with the Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council, Tribes, Ketchikan Wellness Coalition, Filipino community, and nonprofits to expand arts education.
 - Encourage integration of arts and cultural learning into youth and adult programs.
 - Develop curriculum and exhibits celebrating local culture.
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Governance

Revised Strategy 2: Strengthen Intergovernmental Collaboration

a) Explore opportunities to open community dialogue about potential consolidation of City and Borough governments or services, including learning from models in other Alaska communities and assessing possible benefits and challenges, including gathering data and evaluating costs.

Additions to Background and Data Research Document

Nonprofits in the Ketchikan Community

Nonprofits in Alaska communities engage in various sectors and they offer a wide variety of essential services like early childcare, housing, food security, and firefighting. They also partner with and contribute to the vitality of commercial enterprises. Nonprofits contribute to both employment and community services that are otherwise limited in government functions. According to the 2024 *Alaska's Nonprofit Sector: Generating Economic Impact* report from The Foraker Group, 134 nonprofit organizations in Ketchikan accounted for seven percent of total employment and five percent in total wages.

The Ketchikan arts and culture sector illustrates these impacts. The Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council estimates that approximately 40,000 people participated in nonprofit arts programming and events during the FY25 season (not including activities hosted by museums, libraries, Tribal organizations, or private businesses). Beyond the direct economic contributions of event spending and employment, these activities draw visitors, support local businesses, and expand opportunities for residents. Combined with the broader roles of nonprofits in housing, food security, childcare, and volunteer-driven services, the sector represents a steady but sometimes hard-to-measure component of Ketchikan’s overall economic system.