

5.0 Public Comment

5.1 Community Opinions on Borough Formation

The contract asks that a finding be made on, “The Reasonably Predictable Level of Commitment and Interest of the Population in Sustaining a Borough Government.” Verbal and written comments received during the study on the interest in sustaining a borough government can be characterized as follows. Community mayors or chairpersons approved these characterizations.

- Angoon – Commentators and the City of Angoon generally do not support forming a borough government; however, are very concerned that Juneau is looking at the possibility of extending its boundaries toward the northwestern and northeastern shores of Admiralty Island. As a consequence of this and the interest of some of communities in the region, the City and its residents are interested in further dialogue and study about borough government.
- Elfin Cove – Neither commentators nor the Community of Elfin Cove Non Profit Corporation are supportive of the 'proposed' borough structure. Residents are skeptical, but want more information. We are in favor of joining with other communities to solve regional issues and to create regional opportunities. Residents are interested in mechanisms (including governmental) that would allow them to capture a percentage of the revenue moving through the community in the summer to support local improvements.
- Gustavus – Neither commentators nor the City of Gustavus support forming a borough government.
- Hoonah – Commentators were mixed, mostly in support of forming a borough government. The City of Hoonah supports forming a borough government.
- Kake – Commentators and the City of Kake support forming a borough government.
- Pelican – Commentators were mixed, the City of Pelican is interested in further dialogue and study about borough government and is inclined to support it.
- Tenakee Springs – Commentators were mixed, the City of Tenakee Springs is interested in further dialogue and study about borough government and might consider supporting it.

At the May 3rd regional meeting all community representatives expressed interest in increased regional dialogue among their communities to address regional issues and create regional opportunities.

5.2 Public Involvement Process

There were several opportunities for public involvement and comment during the project. As a result, there are 207 individual residents, land and business owners on the project mailing list because they either attended a meeting, submitted a comment, or asked to be included. Seven aspects of the public involvement program are listed below.

1. December-January Information Meetings in Communities

During December 2006 and January 2007 Sheinberg Associates attended community meetings in Angoon, Elfin Cove, Hoonah, Gustavus, Kake, Pelican (by teleconference) and Tenakee Springs. A total of 102 residents of the region attended one of these meetings. Each meeting lasted approximately two hours. A display ad listing the date and time for the meeting series was published in the Juneau Empire and Capital City Weekly. Flyers announcing each community's meeting were distributed to mayors or clerks for posting around town approximately two weeks prior to each meeting.

At each meeting Ms. Sheinberg and introduced herself and the project and gave a PowerPoint presentation that covered: (1) Project Purpose; (2) Glacier Bay Chatham Borough Boundary and Project History; (3) the Project's Ten Tasks & Timeline, Public Involvement Opportunities; and (4) Reviewed some points from the June 2006 Initial Feasibility Study that likely would not change significantly during this project, as a way to introduce project issues.

During these meetings residents raised questions that they wanted answered as part of this study. Those against borough formation expressed this during the meetings.

2. Website Access to Project Information

In February, the Sheinberg Associates website was established with a link for this project. http://www.sheinbergassociates.com/proj_glacier_bay_chatham.html
All project documents are available on the website.

3. Distribution of Draft Economic Feasibility Assessment

The draft Economic Feasibility Assessment of Glacier Bay Chatham Borough was published in March 2007. Ten copies of the plan, 10 copies of the executive summary, and a copy of each on CD were distributed to the City or Community Hall at each of the seven project communities. The documents were also available on the project website.

4. March-April Public Meetings in Communities

In March and April 2007, Sheinberg Associates hosted a second round of community meetings in each town. A total of 100 residents of the region attended one of the March or April meetings. A display ad listing the date and time for the meeting series was published in the Juneau Empire and Capital City Weekly. Flyers to post around town announcing each community's meeting were distributed approximately two weeks prior to the meeting via each town's City or

Community Hall (mayor or clerk). A notice about the meeting was emailed to anyone from the community on the project email list. During each community visit another 10 copies of the executive summary and five copies of the plan were made available and 20 copies of that evening's PowerPoint presentation were distributed. A comment form was made available to assist residents in commenting. The form solicited comments on a few key questions about the economic feasibility assessment. During all meetings it was emphasized that the comment form was optional, had comment ideas only, and individual comments and letters were welcomed. The comment form was also available via the project website.

At each community meeting Sheinberg Associates hosted an open house for two hours for informal talk about the study, followed or preceded by a formal public meeting. The public meetings generally lasted 2-2.5 hours each. Meeting comments were documented.

5. Teleconference with Borough Officials

On April 25 Sheinberg Associates organized a 1.5 hour teleconference for the region with northern and western Alaska borough officials from places that are more like a Glacier Bay Chatham borough (multiple small and large communities within their boroughs) in contrast to the boroughs in Southeast which each a single more urban community. Region residents called a toll free phone number from anywhere to listen in to the teleconference. Approximately 50 individual telephone lines dialed in for the call. Borough officials who graciously volunteered their time to participate included:

Lake and Peninsula Borough
Mr. Glen Alsworth Sr., Mayor
Ms. Sheila Bergey, Borough Clerk

Aleutians East Borough
Ms. Tina Anderson, Borough Clerk
Mr. Paul Gundholdt, Borough Assembly
Mr. John Nickels, former Borough Assembly

Kodiak Island Borough
Mr. Rick Gifford, Borough Manager
Mr. Jerome Selby, Mayor

Denali Borough
Mr. Dave Talerico, Mayor

Ms. Sheinberg moderated the teleconference. She posed the following questions (sent out ahead of time) to residents and the Borough officials:

1. Why did your region form a borough?
2. Candidly, what do you feel are the strongest and weakest parts of having a borough government?

3. Is there a sense of duplicating layers of government with both a borough and cities? Why or why not?
4. How does the borough benefit or support its communities and residents? What main services does it provide? How does the borough provide support in a way that seems fair if some communities are large, others are small, some are unincorporated, and so on?
5. How do Borough Assembly members get elected? Do you vote at-large or have election districts based on population or what? Do small and large communities both feel represented?
6. What advice would you give to residents of a region that are considering forming a borough?

6. May 3, 2007 Regional Meeting

On May 3, Sheinberg Associates hosted a regional meeting in Juneau for two representatives from each community. If a community wished to send more than two this was acceptable, though the State contract allowed Sheinberg Associates to pay for travel, lodging and per diem for only two. A total of 20 individuals from the region attended the meeting (four for only part of the day). Discussion and comments at this meeting were documented (see comment summary below).

7. Public Comments Accepted

After the draft study was issued, written comments on the study were accepted by email, US mail or fax thorough May 5. Twenty-nine (29) individual comments were received.

5.3 Project Comments

Comments made at the March-April public meetings; sent in by email, letter or comment form; or made at the May 3rd regional meeting were recorded. Comments were recorded and then separated by issue. A single letter submitted from an individual or one verbal comment during a meeting typically covered several issues. Breaking comments down by issue allows a comprehensive review of the nature of the opinions and range of ideas on each issue. After all comments were segregated by issue, a total of 527 individual comments were documented during this project's public process.

All comments can be viewed in Appendix C, aggregated by topic. On the project website www.sheinbergassociates.com/proj_glacier_bay_chatham.html and the project CD (send to all communities) Appendix C can also be viewed aggregated by community.

A total of 223 comments on an individual issue were recorded during the March-April community meetings, 188 comments submitted on individual issues submitted in writing, and 116 recorded during the regional meeting on May 3.

Of the total number of comments by issue, 60 are from Angoon residents, 74 from Elfin Cove, 6 from Funter Bay, 200 from Gustavus, 26 from Hoonah, 31 from Kake, 87 from Pelican, and 43 from Tenakee Springs.

The 41 different comment issues identified are listed below, followed by the total number of individual comments documented for each issue:

Issue	Number of Comments
Apportionment	30
Be Pro-Active	4
Borough - No	43
Borough - Mixed	4
Borough - Yes	14
Borough Boundary or Composition	27
Borough Formation Process	15
Borough Infrastructure	5
Borough Jobs	2
Borough or School Office Location	3
City Boundaries	2
Community Impact	13
Community Values or Strengths	17
Debt	1
Docks & Harbors	2
Economy	31
Extra layer of government	11
Land Entitlement	2
Land Use	11
Loss of autonomy	11

Issue	Number of Comments
Other	6
Other - Info. Needs	14
Other - Public Opinion or Process	5
Other-Bias	8
PERS/TRS	4
Population or Residency	9
Powers/ Services	5
Pressure to form Borough	6
Public Health	2
Public Safety	22
Revenue	25
Revenue Sharing (Borough)	8
School Funding	17
School Jobs	8
School Programs or Funding	12
Sociocultural	21
Taxes	80
Voter turn-out	2
Workforce	3
Working Together	22
<i>Total</i>	<i>527</i>

5.3.3 Comment Summary

Main points mentioned in some of the larger categories of comments are now reviewed.

Apportionment

Comments cite the importance of every community having an elected seat on the borough assembly, thus providing an equal voice for each community on regional decisions.

In response to direct questioning at the May 3rd regional meeting Hoonah and Kake (as the two largest communities in the Glacier Bay Chatham region) both felt the apportionment option where every community, including their own, got one seat on a borough assembly was acceptable. It seems acceptable because decisions about matters within their own communities would still be handled by their city councils and be local decisions; whereas the borough and the assembly would be dealing with regional issues only where it is appropriate for every community to have an equal say.

Borough Formation

The predominance of comments (80%) urges that the area not form a borough or expresses negative sentiment about boroughs and being in a borough. About 20% of all comments on this issue either mention that their community has mixed opinions, or cite perceived benefits like increased school funding and ability to achieve some economies of scale with regard to schools, that being in a borough will promote the region working together and strengthen its voice, and that both Kake and Hoonah are interested in going forward with borough formation.

Borough Boundary or Composition

Comments offer various alternatives to the Glacier Bay Chatham Borough boundary including that the borough attempt to include Excursion Inlet, Greens Creek or the outer coast of Chichagof from Lisianski Strait south to Dry Pass; that single community boroughs be formed; that there is conflict within Southeast about proposed borough boundaries; that either the Glacier Bay region and Chatham region form separate boroughs, or that Pelican, Elfin Cove and Gustavus consider forming a separate borough.

Community Impact

Several comments raise questions about the impact of borough formation on individual communities.

Community Values or Strengths

Comments talk about the values, strengths and uniqueness of individual communities and discuss how these attributes must be maintained and respected, or, would make it incompatible to be in a borough with other communities.

Loss of autonomy

Here commentators mention the fear of being in a borough with unequal sized communities and how this will inevitably lead to smaller communities losing their voices and being dominated and overruled by larger communities.

Extra layer of government

Comments discuss that neither this area nor the individual communities within it need another layer of government. What kind of administrative efficiency does a borough scenario suggest? Existing individual city governments alone or working together are sufficient enough to administer to local community, and regional, needs.

Economy

These comments: A) Identify a need to strengthen individual community and the region's economy and the need to create more jobs; B) Point out problems with the datedness of available poverty and unemployment data; C) Offer comments on individual aspects of the economy such as commercial fishing; or D) cite examples of the challenge and hardship of maintaining a tourism business in rural Alaska, particularly those that depend on independent tourists.

Land Use

These comments generally question how forming a borough would affect the ability to influence land use and development, and whether a borough planning commission could be influenced by outside interests.

Public Safety

The vast majority of comments are strongly against a borough providing increased public safety or police in communities. A small minority of those commenting wished to see increased service. However, all comments were about law enforcement; none addressed fire or EMS services.

Revenue (including borough revenue sharing)

Comments regarding revenue were about mainly about National Forest Receipts (NFR) and a concern over the potential loss of NFR revenue, the negative impact this would have on sustaining a borough, and that because this is likely it is not appropriate to consider a borough budget that includes NFR revenue. Other comments mention that many factors affecting state and federal revenue are external, making borough revenue predictions uncertain. Some comments identified attributes about individual economic sectors or noted that their community is struggling for revenue and jobs. Comments about borough revenue sharing were skeptical that it would be maintained for the long term; it is feared that larger communities would move to discontinue the program or reduce revenues to small communities if the borough budget got tight.

School Funding, Programs and Jobs

With school age populations declining throughout the region many comments focus on recent program and service losses in their schools. Several comments suggest ways other than forming a borough that residents in the unorganized borough (outside of 1st class cities) could make a 4-mill equivalent contribution to education (since this is a cause behind the pressure to form boroughs). Several comments note no objection to paying something to support education.

Commentators suggest a positive side of possible consolidation of school administrative jobs is that this will release some funds for teachers and direct student support; a negative side is that loss of even a single year-round good wage job in the small communities in this region has an immediate and spin-off negative impact to the economy. Every job counts in small towns.

The Alaska EED forecasted increase to regional school funding if a borough forms is noted, though there is skepticism that this would actually occur.

Socio-cultural

Comments on this issue almost exclusively discuss socio-cultural or economic differences among communities in the region, and cite this as a reason why a Glacier Bay Chatham borough would not work and could not meet State review standards.

Taxes

There are more comments about borough taxes than any other issue. Communities and residents of the region are almost unanimous in their opposition to a property tax. The main reasons cited are:

- Some residents have quite limited income which makes paying property tax unaffordable and could cause residents to lose their major asset, their land and home.
- Some residents own very large lots and properties as part of a rural and homestead-type lifestyle. Paying property tax on such large lots would be unaffordable as many of these residents live a subsistence and low-cash lifestyle.
- Lodge, B&B and commercial properties would likely have the highest assessments and owe the largest amount of property tax. These business owners in rural areas already face extraordinarily high fuel, freight and electricity costs as well as the vagrancies of independent-tourist based travel. A large property tax could be the ‘straw that breaks the camel’s back’ for these businesses.
- Hoonah, Angoon and Kake have properties in federal “restricted status” that are exempt from paying property tax and this is perceived as unfair. [Research, however, shows that only about 5% of residential properties in Hoonah are in restricted status. Assuming the same is true for Angoon and Kake, this is a very small percent of the total residential property in the region and these communities.] Others questioned whether residents in Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority (THREA) housing must pay property taxes if the homes are not fully owned by the resident. [THREA pays the property tax until the house title is transferred; THREA is not exempt from property tax.]
- Native Corporations are the largest private landowners in the region and accordingly worry about a property tax. It should be noted though that ANCSA land is exempt from municipal taxation unless acres are leased or developed, and then only the portion actively being used is subject to taxation and only for the duration of the commercial activity.

The only reason cited to consider a property tax is to capture revenue from seasonal and 2nd homeowners in communities.

If a borough formed, taxes on sales, commercial fishing (based on location of waters) and the charter fleet catch are more favored than property tax. Several comments on the difficulty and costs of enforcing tax reporting and collection were noted.

Several comments note that no type of borough tax is supported.

Working Together

Comments, particularly from the May 3rd regional meeting, note the benefit of the communities in the region working together. As community representatives spoke about their community issues and concerns on May 3rd, representatives seemed to realize that their small, rural, isolated towns have more in common than initially thought. While recognizing their commonalities, most noted that forming a borough was not required to have more regional communication and to work together more frequently.

5.3.4 May 3 Regional Meeting Summary

On May 3, Sheinberg Associates hosted a regional meeting in Juneau at the Orca Room of the Frontier Suites Hotel, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 pm. The State contract allowed for payment of travel, lodging and per diem for two representatives from each community. It was acceptable for a community to send more than two representatives to attend if it desired. Attendees were:

Regional Representatives and Residents

1. Frank Jack III, Angoon
2. Shayne M. Thompson, Angoon (morning)
3. Walter Jack, Mayor, Angoon
4. Gordy Wrobel, Chairman, Elfin Cove
5. Mary Jo Lord-Wild, Elfin Cove (part of morning)
6. Shirley Perkins, Elfin Cove (part of morning)
7. Travis Lewis, Elfin Cove
8. Dan Zobrist, Gustavus
9. Greg Streveler, Gustavus
10. Janet Lassiter, Gustavus
11. Ken Klawunder, Gustavus
12. Dennis H. Gray Jr, Mayor, Hoonah
13. Eugene Avey, School Superintendent, Hoonah
14. Bob Mills, Kake
15. Henrich Kadake Sr., Mayor, Kake
16. James E Phillips, Pelican
17. Patricia Phillips, Mayor, Pelican
18. Dennis Meier, Sammamish, WA and Elfin Cove (morning)
19. Arnold Strong, Tenakee Springs
20. Art Bloom, Tenakee Springs

others

21. Scott Ruby, Alaska DCCED, DCA, Anchorage
22. Lawrence Blood Alaska, DCCED, DCA, Juneau
23. Nicole Grewe, Alaska DCCED, DCA, Juneau, AK 99811-0809
24. Peter McKay, Alaska DCCED, DCA, Juneau, AK 99811-0809
25. Bill Rolfzen, Alaska DCCED, DCA, Juneau (morning)
26. Barbara Sheinberg, Sheinberg Associates
27. Holly Smith, Sheinberg Associates

The meeting agenda is on the next page.

**Glacier Bay Chatham Borough Economic Feasibility Assessment
May 3, 2007 Community Meeting
Juneau, Alaska**

Meeting Purposes

1. Refresher: Project Purposes
2. Hear and discuss each other's views on borough options in Northern Southeast Alaska
3. Discuss regional issues, challenges, and opportunities

agenda

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Welcome, Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	Introductions Purpose of Today's Meeting, Review Agenda Review: Project Purpose and Process
9:15 - 11:30 a.m. (w/15 min break)	Community Comments and Discussion on Boroughs and Options
11:30 - 12:00 noon	"Philosophy" Exercise (a la Lake and Peninsula Borough remarks)
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch at Pasta Garden
1:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Regional Issues & Discussion
2:20 - 3:00 p.m.	Meeting Summary and Wrap-Up

Introductions and Initial Community Comments

Each person attending introduced themselves to the group by telling a little bit about their community, how they earn their living, and something about themselves that others in the room would find surprising.

Next was a 'round robin' session where the community representatives spoke about their concerns and interests with regard to their community, the region and borough formation. At the end of the day community representatives also offered comments. Following now is a summary of key comments made during the day, by community.

Pelican

Mayor Phillips read a paper she had recently completed for a University course in Rural Development that reviewed many, many aspects of local city and borough government in Alaska. This provided context and set the stage for the day's discussions very well. Some Pelican-specific points during the presentation included:

- What do our Legislators think about the Glacier Bay Chatham Borough? Is the pressure to form a borough real or not?
- There is a concern that the June 2006 and March 2007 studies support borough formation.
- Pelican is a well-functioning first class city.

- Decisions on property tax would ultimately be up to the borough assembly. If a borough without property tax formed Pelican would likely keep its property tax and use it for city needs.
- It should be noted that the revenue estimates from a commercial fish tax are based on 2004 catch data and prices. Prices paid for fish have significantly increased since 2004 so the revenue estimate in the study likely significantly underestimates the revenue fish taxes could generate.
- Regional dissemination of funds is a concern; how can we guarantee that it would seem equitable?
- Greens Creek, and the area from Lisianski Strait south to Dry Pass in the northwest corner of Sitka's Borough, should be included in this area's borough.
- We are concerned that eventually the Legislature will take action for this region itself.
- There are different attitudes in the region regarding timber harvest activities.
- Pelican and Hoonah have historic ties; most communities have some historic ties.
- The commercial fishing industry is rebounding; there are fishing and processing ties among our communities.
- Small communities and their uniqueness should be the foundation of a borough government structure in our area. A borough must be a partner to its communities, advocating for them and paying careful attention to their dynamics, rather than governing them.
- Pelican is planning to increase its boundaries by annexing adjacent areas to enfranchise these residents who participate in Pelican's civic life and should be allowed to vote, as well as to gather property tax for a share of the use of Pelican infrastructure and services.
- All communities aspire to be self-sufficient.
- Communities are able to exercise their regional voice without forming a borough to campaign for regional improvements with the legislature, like regional transportation.
- Gustavus can facilitate by providing a region-wide resource, like hosting a website, which would be an asset to us all.
- No borough property tax is a key issue; we can put these things into a borough charter.

Tenakee Springs

- It is difficult to get the community involved in the borough study. There are tentative opinions but a community consensus on the borough idea has not formed.
- What opportunities are there for Tenakee Springs if a borough formed? Let's consider this rather than joining a borough because we feel forced. Will a borough help Tenakee capture more revenue, help us pay our own way, help us advocate for community goals?
- Can others dictate our future rather than we citizens taking control of our future?

- A challenge for all of us in here is that sometimes we do compete with each other (e.g. over AMHS schedule); how do we prevent this from happening?
- The teleconference was beneficial in that it proved boroughs do work in some situations; it opened our eyes in a positive way.
- There is a bed tax in Tenakee Springs.

Kake

- We'd like to hear from our Legislators whether or not there will be pressure from the state or Legislature to form a borough.
- People were better off in the past; the resources were richer.
- How can this area generate taxable revenue? The wilderness status of Admiralty Island and Glacier Bay National Park prevent activities that can generate taxable income. Federal lands do not generate taxable revenue and are not subject to taxation. Native Village Corporations don't have subsurface mineral rights either.
- Kake is interested in being part of borough that includes Thomas Bay and the mainland.
- The University Lands bill claimed too much land from our area that is part of Kake's traditional territory, removing it from our potential land base.
- Kake objects to proposed Petersburg and Wrangell borough boundaries; Kake needs to stand up for its land and rights.
- All communities here today are rural, we need to work together and stand up as rural communities and as a region; we are all "native."
- We must work together and take control as a region on issues relating to kids, education, revenue, etc. A borough could be an opportunity, and if don't take action now, we could lose opportunities as others form boroughs and organize around us.
- Kake needs better local jobs for our youth.
- Kake intends to file a borough petition; we are not sure what the boundaries will be yet or if it will be for a single city borough or if we will team with others, but we are filing.
- Kake has experienced significant population decline in the last five years.
- There is concern that there have been cut-backs in education.
- Hasty decisions are not good; don't rush the process.
- The status quo now means losing; it's not good enough anymore.
- Why are we studying this if it is not going to be forced on us later?
- A borough system could work if all communities take the time and work together.

Gustavus

- Individual school districts are being starved; could we collectively reduce overall administrative costs in the schools and devote more revenue to the teachers? It will be beneficial to talk together as we have valuable experiences to share, for example Superintendent Avey has had experience working in a similar borough.
- Special services do not guarantee that kids get the help that they need.
- Do a study on the economies of scale that could be achieved and what it could really mean for our region if a borough and borough school district formed.
- Gustavus does not want to join a borough, but its residents want to be prepared in case it happens in the future.
- Communities need to be closer. It is regrettable that Gustavus does not have a closer tie with Hoonah and Kake, but is a borough the only way to bring us together as a region?
- Government can create more problems than it solves.
- Many residents live in Gustavus to get away from government.
- Gustavus is a new city and is conservative with tax dollars and government administration.
- We do need to be prepared for the future; we don't want to be left out.
- Gustavus does not want a property tax; it would be detrimental to the community.
- The reasons being cited today for considering forming a borough vary; they include protecting local fisheries, improving our school system, fear of encroachment from other boroughs and fear of being left behind as others organize around us.
- There are residents that live half the time in small communities and other half of the time in Juneau.
- What are the benefits of forming a borough? If it is to unify us for a stronger regional voice, to improve transportation, other? Is the borough the best way to accomplish these things?
- Preserving our unique lifestyle is very important to Gustavus. The regional lifestyles are different, equitability could be difficult to sustain.
- It is hard to imagine things being done equitably in this borough due to the widely varying community populations.
- Everyone wants to tax someone else; it could be difficult to share a regional tax base. The economic base (and tax burden) would be variable within the region.
- How, as a small community, are we assured that we will retain the apportionment option which includes one vote for each community? Are large communities willing to do this?
- If Southeast Alaska loses National Forest Receipt funding, the tax burden for small communities will not be equal.

Angoon

- There is concern that becoming a borough could result in less state/federal funding and support.
- What is the definition of boroughs and its authorities?
- If we join a borough, what would happen to Klukwan and the Chatham REAA?
- More funding is needed in Southeast.
- Our region needs a health facility; it is too difficult and expensive to travel to other hospitals.
- We should create a regional economic plan.
- We support establishing an endowment fund.
- The economic base in Angoon is limited.
- There is concern about the Juneau Annexation Commission report that recommends annexing much of Admiralty Island to Juneau; this would crush economic opportunities for Angoon. All Local Boundary Commission action on borough formations in Southeast should halt until we all agree on borough boundaries for the region. We, as a region, need to write a letter to the Local Boundary Commission to officially state that Admiralty Island belongs with Angoon. Perhaps we could produce a fiscal study, or a map, and present it to the legislature.
- Will forming a borough really help our regional economy? The answer seems to be positive only if we tax our own people.
- A borough is not the answer to education challenges.
- We have to look to each other, not the State.
- Angoon is against joining a Glacier Bay Chatham borough, but would still like to learn more about its potential and how it might bring opportunities to Angoon.
- How would taxes work?
- How would revenue sharing be generated?
- Angoon is in the middle of a National Wilderness Monument; we need an economy yet this ties our hands.
- Can being more unified and establishing a regional base really help Angoon?
- Taxes scare our residents.
- The Angoon school population and funding has declined recently. We lost our music program and have not had a shop class in two years.
- Angoon does not want another layer of government unless there are obvious benefits.
- Sustainable funding for a borough is the biggest concern.

Elfin Cove

- Elfin Cove is different the other communities. We have no school. We have only one youth in town. Our population is very small. Elfin Cove's issues are very different from other communities. How will we be represented in a borough?
- Infrastructure is very expensive in remote locations like ours; DOT&PF recently awarded \$150,000 to be spent on boardwalk upgrades and this was not nearly enough to meet all code requirements.
- Demands on natural resources are increasing.
- Elfin Cove is a very small community and it may not be possible to support another layer of government.
- We would like more information about forming a borough.
- As a business owner, the current proposal does not help us or do anything for us.
- There is interest in working together as a region, but not as part of the proposed borough.
- We need to be self-reliant and not depend on an outside entity to make decisions for our community.
- There is no clear consensus in the Elfin Cove community on borough formation; residents need more information.
- There is concern that the study is biased and that Sheinberg Associates is pro-borough. There hasn't been enough transparency during the process.
- How can we receive funding for VSPO and docks when the community is so small?
- How would Elfin Cove benefit, how would a borough provide funding and revenue?
- In the final economic feasibility study the "0s" and "*" from Elfin Cove's columns need to be removed; so a better job of showing what it could mean for Elfin Cove.
- Equitable taxation is a concern for Elfin Cove.
- Elfin Cove has written to Representative Thomas about the pressure to form a borough; he has responded that the Legislature has no intentions of forcing borough formation at this time.
- The community is mixed; some residents are here primarily to get away from government and taxation, and others want to progress.
- The feasibility study is complex; there is a lot of data.
- This borough is not a good model for Elfin Cove. We would like to see the State help identify other governmental models or options that could work better for Elfin Cove rather than emphasizing boroughs.
- We are considered a distressed community; extra taxes would be an added burden to the community.
- Our infrastructure needs are high; there needs to be more focus on what borough infrastructure could include.

- Elfin Cove would like a list of pros and cons about the borough concept.
- As a frontier community, we believe Elfin merits extra state and federal interest and funding to assist us in developing.

Hoonah

- Hoonah would like a borough, but we have no interest in dictating the terms, we want to work cooperatively with other communities.
- Hoonah would like our community and our region to be pro-active.
- A borough would generate more revenue for education and give us a stronger regional voice.
- A region-wide tax is more dependable and makes more choices available to communities.
- The region needs more of a year-round economy, rather than seasonal economy.
- We are all small towns.
- Not all Hoonah residents support the borough concept.
- All school districts have some of the same issues; they all want high quality education. The current funding cutbacks and downsizing is appalling. Can working together strengthen a voice for education funding and programs?
- Regional economies-of-scale will help for education; there will be cost savings in administration that can be passed on to programming and teaching. There also is a lot of talent and expertise around the region, in a borough school district we can learn from each other.
- The future will be more challenging, not less, for small communities in Southeast Alaska.
- We need a political, regional voice to help support our kids. We especially need a strong lobby for funding and aid for intensive needs youth.

Representative Thomas Comments

In response to inquiries during the morning, Ms. Sheinberg attempted to locate Representative Thomas during lunch. Representative Thomas' staff, Ms. Kaci Schroeder Hotch was contacted. She follows borough issues for Representative Thomas. He is at a meeting, and given the closing days of the session, is not able to attend this meeting. However, she did convey a message from him to share with the group after lunch.

Ms. Schroeder Hotch stated that Representative Thomas has no interest in forcing this area or any part of this region to form a borough against its wishes. He cautions that the issue of forming boroughs will eventually come back to the Legislative arena; it has not gone away for good. Representative Thomas believes that the communities sitting together in the room there today have more in common with one another than they do with Juneau, Petersburg and Wrangell. He urges the communities in the room today to talk with one another and figure out

what they want for themselves and the region, so that when the time comes you can dictate your own terms.

Glacier Bay Chatham Regional and Community Values

During the April 25 teleconference, Mayor Glen Alsworth of Lake and Peninsula Borough referred several times to the philosophy and principle statements that the communities and residents established for their borough as they began a dialogue about borough formation. Almost 20 years later their government philosophy and principles still drive borough decisions. This inspired the next part of the agenda, which asked community representatives to identify values and principals that are important to their community and the region. Each person wrote their ideas on large sheets of paper and posted them on one wall of the room. The comments (organized by topic) are presented on the next page, and can be used as inspiration for any future regional talks.

Conclusion

As community representatives spoke during the day about their communities and concerns every person in the room seemed to realize that their small, rural, isolated towns have more in common than initially thought. Talking together was intense during breaks and at lunch as well. At the May 3rd regional meeting all community representatives expressed interest in increased regional dialogue among their communities to address regional issues and create regional opportunities.

The Economy, Business, Natural Resources

- Protecting sustainable natural resources
- Controlling economic and development scenarios
- Jobs: Contractors come in and bring their own people state-wide
- Start working on hydroelectric for rural Southeast Alaska
- Establish more businesses to create an economy to support the borough
- Fishing – commercial and subsistence
- Raw fish tax
- Low cost energy
- A strong economy makes for a strong community
- Clever economies are forward-looking economies

Communication and Transportation

- Improved transportation and freight
- Transportation
- Communication: Telecommunication, Internet, Cellular
- Harbor infrastructure
- Better freight system for rural Southeast Alaska

Education

- Education: self determination for each school's needs
- Education
- Quality schools and quality programs
- Student-centered education with a robust technology base
- Hands-on learning with application to the world of work
- Program expansions, not program cuts
- Schools
- Education
- What is best for the kids?

Subsistence

- Subsistence: We need to close some fisheries so that they can rebuild. We need to protect all our lands so the state is not depleting the natural resources.
- Subsistence

Government

- Autonomy: self-reliance and quality of life
- Securing a sustainable budget
- Minimal regulation of government: no property tax
- Local control and options
- Regional voice on all issues
- We can always govern ourselves better than someone else
- It all starts with communication
- Government is best if (1) it is proportioned to the problems it is to address and (2) it is close to those governed by it
- Information to make informed decisions is essential to informed planning
- Self-determination
- Local representation on any borough assembly
- Self-governing
- Self-sustainability
- Retention of community lifestyle
- No overlap of governmental function
- Assure community representation
- Limit borough government to the things cities can't do but need
- Look out for the interests of others as much as your own interests