

Executive Summary





Photo Credit: Travel Yukon

Introduction

The Village of Haines Junction offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreational activities for residents and visitors. The community is located 155km west of Whitehorse along the Alaska Highway and is surrounded by pristine wilderness making it a natural playground for outdoor enthusiasts. The Village of Haines Junction is situated in the Yukon Territory within the traditional lands of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN).

The Village has several indoor recreational facilities including the Bill Brewster Arena and St. Elias Convention Centre. The community is surrounded by stunning natural beauty that provides ample opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hiking, camping, fishing, and cross-country skiing. The Village also provides access to nearby parks and trails, such as the Dezadeash River Day Use Area, which is an excellent location for walking or skiing along the Dezadeash River Trail. Furthermore, the Village serves as a gateway to Kluane National Park and Reserve. This area is a popular destination for hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, and wildlife viewing.

In addition to services provided by the Village, there are a variety of opportunities provided by the CAFN including the Da Kų Năn Ts'éthhèt Dance Festival in June, a winter Shaket Tun Wilderness Camp for adventurous travellers, ice fishing and traditional drum making, and spring/summer wilderness camps.

Overall, the Village of Haines Junction provides an abundance of recreational opportunities that cater to a variety of interests. Whether it is exploring the natural surroundings, enjoying indoor activities, or attending community events, residents and visitors have an array of recreational options. Its natural beauty, rich culture, and friendly people, make Haines Junction a unique and special place to live and visit.

The Project

Recreation services play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for residents of the Village. To help ensure recreation facilities and services satisfy community needs, the Village has completed a Recreational Needs Assessment. The needs assessment will provide a firm steppingstone for continued planning in the community, guide future investment in recreation, and support the long-term success of the Village.

Overview of Research

A variety of primary and secondary research activities were conducted to develop the needs assessment. Primary research was completed through surveys, input workshops, interviews and an in-person tour. Secondary research consisted of a review of key internal, regional, territorial, and national documents, trends research, and benchmarking research.



*Haines Junction Summer Camp
Photo Credit: Whitehorse Daily Star*

Current State

A high-level analysis of the Village's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) as they relate to recreation was completed to support the needs assessment. The key findings from this analysis are provided next.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Strong sense of community with active participation among residents and community groups in organizing recreation events and programs. › Strong resident and community group support for recreation development. › The community hosts several annual events and festivals that showcase its vibrant culture and traditions. › Strong links to Indigenous history and culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The Village's recreation infrastructure is aging. › Limited population and tax base. › Lack of human resources assigned to recreation. There is no Recreation Director or support staff for recreation at the Village currently.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Recreation service delivery could benefit from enhanced collaboration. › With planned residential growth, there is an opportunity to enhance and expand recreation services. › The natural beauty and proximity to Kluane National Park and Reserve presents an opportunity to promote outdoor activities for residents and visitors. › Linking recreation development with tourism development to attract visitors and potential new residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Rising costs to maintain and build recreation infrastructure. › The lack of specialized expertise or qualified professionals in the recreation field may hinder the development and implementation of innovative and high-quality programs and services.

Community Engagement

A key input toward the needs assessment was community engagement. The table below provides a summary of the number of engagement touchpoints achieved through the process. In total, the engagement process produced 194 touchpoints.

Summary of Engagement Touchpoints

Engagement Activity	Total Engagement
Resident Survey	140 responses
Community Group Survey	7 group responses
Community Input Sessions	11 participants
Council Input Workshop	4 participants
CAFN Input Workshop	3 participants
Youth Engagement Session	17 participants
Interviews	12
Total	194



Haines Junction Soccer Fest
Photo Credit: John Hopkins-Hill / Yukon News



Vision for Recreation in Haines Junction

Community groups currently play a pivotal role in facilitating much of the recreational programming available in Haines Junction. These groups' activities showcase their dedication to fostering an active and vibrant community. However, amidst these successes, challenges and gaps have emerged. For example, the pool is no longer operational, necessitating decisions regarding its future. Furthermore, feedback has revealed low levels of satisfaction with recreational offerings across various age groups, highlighting the need for improvements to better meet the needs and wants of community members. Recognizing the importance of collaboration, residents, community groups, the Village, and other partners have the opportunity to come together with a shared vision to increase satisfaction levels, remove barriers to participation, and promote accessibility and inclusivity in the community's recreation system.

Vision Statement

The Village and its community partners will work closely together to address gaps in service provision and expand opportunities for residents.

At the completion of this Needs Assessment, the following will be achieved:

Haines Junction will become a dynamic recreational hub offering a diverse array of spaces and services. With a clear strategy and proactive approach, the community will address resource constraints and embrace innovation to create a sustainable and thriving recreation environment. Through capacity building initiatives, the Village will be able to offer vibrant and fulfilling recreational experiences, solidifying Haines Junction as a community that exemplifies sustainability, innovation, and a sense of togetherness.

Guiding Principles for Service Delivery

Guiding principles for recreation service delivery were developed to support the implementation of the needs assessment. The Village will:

- 1 Provide equitable access to facilities, services, and programs which will include a balance between access for:
 - › Organized groups and the general public
 - › Passive and active endeavors
 - › Competitive and non-competitive pursuits
 - › Structured and spontaneous activities
 - › Diverse ages, cultures, and abilities
 - › Indoor and outdoor opportunities
- 2 Seek solutions that leverage outdoor assets and spaces and encourage the community to connect with the land and participate in outdoor recreation.
- 3 Support decision making with detailed analysis that enables a fulsome understanding of potential impacts, including benefits and costs.
- 4 Endeavour to achieve long-term sustainability, continuity, and adaptability in recreation infrastructure and programs.
- 5 Seek opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.
- 6 Ensure inclusion and accessibility in all programs, facilities, and services.





Tour de Haines Junction
Photo Credit: Whitehorse Star



St. Elias Convention Centre
Photo Credit: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

Recreation Development Priorities

Priorities for recreation development were created using a host of indicators that were informed by the findings from the research, engagement, and analysis process. The recommended priorities are as follows.

Phase 1 Priorities

1. Determine Feasibility of Adding a New Multipurpose Facility that Includes Aquatics, Fitness, and Multipurpose Space.
2. Address the Need for Aquatics Programming
 - a. Determine Feasibility of Offering Swimming Lessons at Pine Lake
 - b. Explore a Bus to Swim Program
3. Address the Gap in Recreation Staffing (including the hiring of a full-time Recreation Director and securing the services of contracted support).
4. Expand the Role of the Village in Service Delivery
5. Collaborate with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN)
6. Capital Project Evaluation

Phase 2 Priorities

1. Expand and Enhance Programming for All Ages
 - a. Fitness Programming
 - b. Educational and Skill-building Programs
 - c. Children and Youth Programs
 - d. Outdoor Winter Programming
2. Conduct a Condition Assessment for the Arena

Other Recreational Needs Identified Through the Process

1. Trails and Pathways
2. Bike Skills Park/Pump Track
3. Festival and Event Space
4. Indoor Play Space
5. Skatepark
6. Climbing Wall
7. Signage and Marketing
8. Upgrade and Maintain Existing Facilities
 - a. Mezzanine
 - b. Grand Hall
 - c. Arena
9. Basketball Court
10. Maintain Rectangular Field
11. Ball Diamond

Implementation Planning and Considerations

1. Collaboration and Planning Forums with Community Groups
2. Develop a Tourism Strategy
3. Review the Recreation Facility Rental Policy

*Event in Haines Junction
Photo Credit: Yukon News*



Conclusion

The Haines Junction Recreational Needs Assessment puts forward a strategic direction that will guide the community towards its vision of fostering collective collaboration to address service gaps.

Achieving this vision will require ongoing investment, proactive planning, and collaborative efforts from the Village, community groups, residents, and partners. By uniting as a community, Haines Junction will become a place where individuals can continue to come together to partake in and appreciate the benefits of recreation.