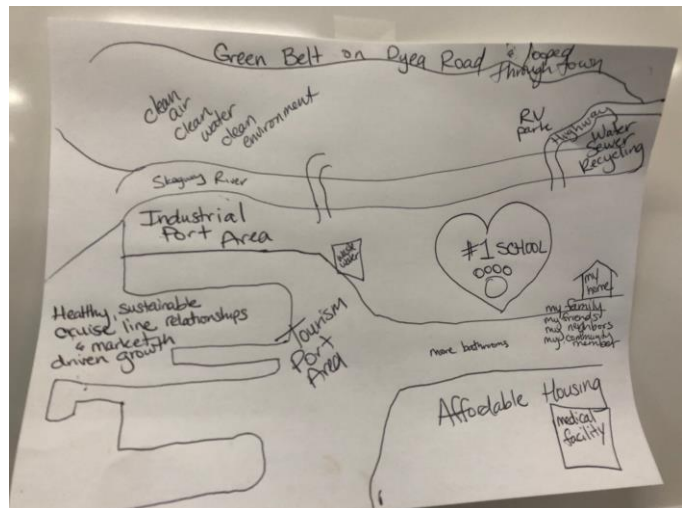


SKAGWAY 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

May Meeting Summary: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With Planning and Zoning Commissioners, about 25 residents gathered on May 23 to discuss economic development in Skagway. To begin the session, participants were asked "What is economic development?" since there are many definitions for "economic development" and economic development programs can have a wide range of goals and objectives. Responses included: a holistic approach to growth; involving both private and public sectors; having an impact for a large number of people; sustainable and matching community priorities; complementary to quality of life; public and nonprofit support of opportunities; a stronger year-round economy; investment in education; and having to do with the cost of doing business.



The group heard from Kaitlyn Jared, Director of the Skagway Development Corporation, about the results of a business climate survey her organization conducted. The survey asked business owners to rate their overall opinion of Skagway as a place to do business; about a third of respondents rated Skagway as an excellent place to do business, and 40% said it was very good. The survey also asked respondents to list strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats of Skagway's economy, with many responses in all four categories touching on the visitor industry and community infrastructure. Participants then went through a very similar exercise, answering the question "What are the advantages and disadvantages Skagway faces when thinking about economic development?"

The group identified the following as assets and advantages for Skagway:

- Deep water port (ice-free)
- Hydroelectricity
- Quality of life
- History

- Natural beauty
- Highway
- Location
- Tourism
- Gateway to Yukon
- Proactive community, residents serve their community
- Skiing
- Relative ease of starting businesses

And the group listed these challenges and disadvantages:

- Inadequate infrastructure facilities
- Cost of living
- Overcrowding on Broadway, highway, trails
- Deep water port (depth)
- Customs (and the traffic)
- Land base
- Seasonality of business and climate
- Distance from services
- Reliability of workforce, reliance on seasonal workforce
- Inaction can lead to rash decisions (e.g. housing)
- Lack of competition (goods, services, transportation)
- Small population and labor pool
- Housing

Next, there was a brief presentation about the economy of Skagway, which touched on income, employment and wages by industry, the seasonality of employment, revenue by sector, visitors (including a breakdown of non-cruise visitors by mode of travel), the small boat harbor, and freight and shipment into, out of, and through Skagway. Quality of life was also touched on, including top factors that influence quality of life for residents:

access to great indoor and outdoor recreation; a strong economy; the caring community and people in Skagway; impacts linked to the volume of visitors; housing.

The group was then invited to draw a picture to answer the question: "What does economic success look like for Skagway?" The drawings were shared with the room as each artist provided commentary about what success looks like, which included:

- An inverted pyramid made up of the following: economy, transportation, quality of life, community, history, housing,

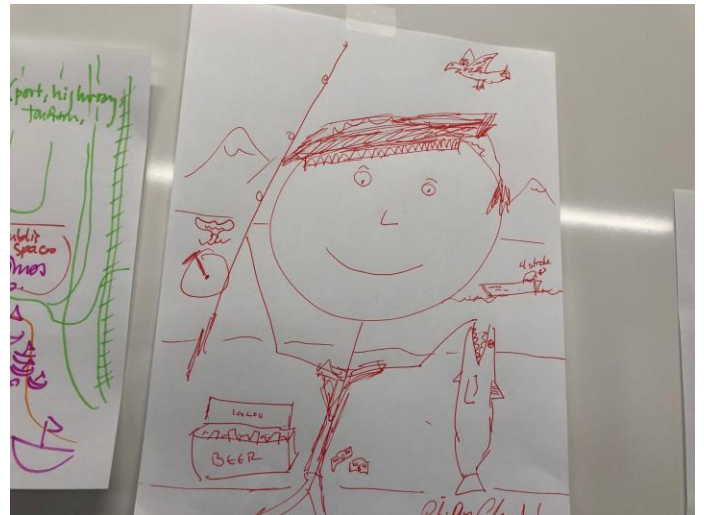
infrastructure, and answers to questions about capacity



- Cottage industry, which is important for a year-round economy, where production can happen in winter time to prep for summer
- Quality over quantity, where moderate visitor days can improve sales for some industries
- For all of Skagway in all aspects so everyone is mutually successful
- A fine balance, with a need for a strong economy to have a strong school, that considers affordable housing, green spaces and environment, and the importance of community
- Successful students, diverse business and employment opportunities, more businesses open year round, safe housing, less stress, time to enjoy life
- Maintaining quality of life and design for visitor experience and crowding including green spaces
- Designing for crowding including a one-way loop through Broadway, using Garden City for housing; developing more green space, and reducing congestion on the highway
- Flow for all: visitors, traffic, green spaces, pets, freight
- No international jewelry stores and more local art and goods on Broadway
- Freight, cruise ships, glaciers, trees, biodiversity
- Ore, clean ships, pristine lakes and trails, housing height limits south of 12th, whales out in the bay

The planning team then shared the following draft goals for the comprehensive plan:

- Enhance the experience of Skagway for visitors while maximizing the benefits of the visitor industry for the community
- Increase municipal control of port management and revenue from port use
- Strive to balance economic growth, business success, Skagway's heritage, future opportunities, and residents' quality of life
- Manage the waterfront for effective and efficient mixed-use economic activity
- Build on Skagway's economic assets and competitive advantages to diversify the economy and strengthen local businesses
- Continue to recognize the link between community amenities and Skagway's ability to attract and retain talent and business
- Ensure an adequate supply of appropriately-zoned land is available for commerce and industry



- Break down housing barriers that dampen economic growth

The group was invited to provide immediate feedback to the draft goals. Ideas included: addressing the ease of starting a business, tax incentives for residents, containerization of ore concentrate, and hiring of a Port director. Enthusiasm was expressed for Tourism Management Best Practices and careful consideration was advised regarding the highest and best use of waterfront lands.

THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED:

- **Thursday, June 27, 5:30–7:30 pm**, Municipality of Skagway Assembly Chambers, Deep Dive on Goals, Objectives, and Actions

The next session in June will be a work session for the planning commission, with community members being invited to offer comments at one or two specific times during the meeting.

More work sessions are planned on the fourth Thursday of most months to explore community priorities around transportation, public services and facilities, and natural and cultural resources.

