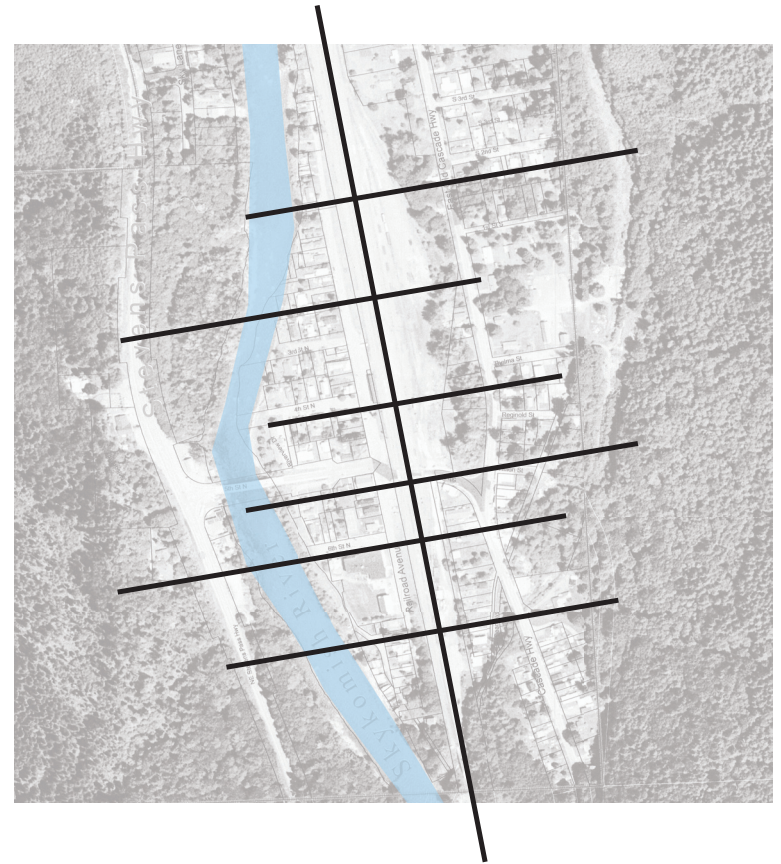


SECTION 2: FOUNDATION OF THE VISION

This section describes defining community characteristics and values, as well as highlights important aspects of the town's history. Six fundamental concepts forming the foundation of the town's future Vision are defined.



Skykomish Today

With its dramatic mountain setting, Skykomish has been shaped by both the rugged natural surroundings and the evolution of the railroad from steam to electric to diesel. Set in the upper Skykomish River valley and formerly occupied by the nomadic “inland people” or the Skykomish, the valley was only permanently occupied in the early 1890’s after it was included as part of the route of the Great Northern Railroad to the West Coast. Skykomish was originally settled by John Maloney in 1893 when he staked out 140 acres and created a siding for the railroad which was known as Maloney Siding. He later built Maloney’s General Merchandise and Post Office and eventually filed the original plat of the town. When the town incorporated in 1909 as Skykomish, Maloney became its first mayor.

In its heyday in the 1920’s there were hundreds of workers in town to build Great Northern’s eight-mile tunnel through Stevens Pass. The saw mill and railyard expanded, mining flourished, and there were then approximately 500 permanent residents in town. The railroad was electrified from Skykomish to Wenatchee to accommodate the tunnel, thus making Skykomish a major hub of activity along the route as the trains shifted from steam to electric locomotives at Skykomish and then back again at Wenatchee.

Also during this period the Cascade Highway was built and auto related businesses sprang up, including an “office and auto supplies” store, a sixteen-car garage and repair shop, and a gas and oil station and auto parts store. Since realignment of the Stevens Pass Highway in 1939, almost all signs of former roadside businesses have disappeared along Old Cascade Highway.

During WWII the railyard began to slow, the roundhouse burned and, with new ventilation in the tunnel, diesels started to replace steam and electric. By the 1950’s Skykomish saw the last of the steam and



Images of Skykomish, ca. 1908



“Downtown” Skykomish, 1920’s



electric locomotives reducing railroad activity, and the town entered an economic downturn.

Skykomish is now looking toward the tourist and recreation industries for economic development by taking advantage of its unique “alpine” location along the wild and scenic Skykomish River. Since the 1960’s and 1970’s when the Stevens Pass ski area was enlarged, some businesses in town have been catering to the tourism industry.

Today, the town reflects its heritage with the old depot still in the middle of town, and Railroad Avenue is thought of as the “centerpiece of the community” with its historic and picturesque, false-front buildings still lining the street edge. Most buildings, sharing the town’s sense of history, are wood frame with Victorian or Craftsman era details. Sidewalks along Railroad Avenue still evoke the old boardwalks with shed roof overhangs and balustraded balconies with chamfered wood posts. There is no off-street parking in Skykomish, enhancing its pedestrian friendliness.

This community values the relatively small, simple, and intimate town with a natural Northwest focus. They enjoy the outdoor activities it affords and the town’s livability for all types of people. And the community values its balance with nature and the preservation of its history.



The Skykomish River, as entering town



“Downtown” Skykomish, today

South side of Skykomish



Ensuing Cleanup

The railroad legacy was not without its negative effects. The railroad refueled and maintained locomotives and operated an electrical substation for electric engines in the center of the town from the late 1890's until the mid 1970's. These activities resulted in the release of petroleum and heavy metals to the surrounding environment, floating on top of the water table and moving up and down and spreading through the soil with the water fluctuation. BNSF, the current operator of the railroad, is now preparing to conduct a cleanup of the contamination in the town under the oversight of Washington State Department of Ecology.

With Ecology and BNSF working on plans to begin cleanup, BNSF has submitted a Feasibility Study that identifies and analyzes a range of cleanup alternatives for the contamination. In the study, BNSF has identified various options on how the contamination could be cleaned up.

The cleanup area as a whole can be divided into three sub-sections; the levee, the town proper and the railyard. The levee will be addressed first and is scheduled to be replaced during the summer of 2006.

The town proper includes areas both north and south of the railyard, including residential and commercial areas. In town, varying degrees of excavation may occur which would impact the town both in the short and long term. Excavation would require removal of surface features to allow digging, with the possibility of streets being dug up, utilities replaced, and residential and commercial structures temporarily moved. Construction of trenches to intercept or collect oil

HOW DOES THIS REPORT RELATE TO OTHER PLANS AND THE ENSUING CLEANUP ACTIVITIES?

This report describes a community defined Vision for the future and a specific set of actions to bring that desired future about. It is intended to guide decisions on cleanup activities in the short term by identifying specific opportunities to implement the Vision during the cleanup process. Additionally, projects and actions to be carried out at the community's initiative over the long term are also included to facilitate the continued implementation of the community's desired future.

and groundwater treatment systems will also require excavation, but on a smaller scale.

The railyard includes the former channel of Maloney Creek. The issues around the railyard focus on the degree of excavation that could occur, the placement of trenches to intercept or collect oil, and the

degree of groundwater treatment. In addition, the active rail line raises the question of how best to manage a functioning line during cleanup. With respect to the former Maloney Creek channel, cleanup options range from excavation of contaminated soil, either shallow or deep, to just monitoring surface and groundwater.

Ecology is the regulatory agency charged with determining final cleanup actions. The agency will use this Vision document as a tool to inform that approach. Ecology is in the process of evaluating all of the alternatives presented in the Feasibility Study conducted by BNSF and intends to incorporate the Vision of the Skykomish community into the final action as able. Ecology's determination of final cleanup actions will be made by balancing several factors, including how protective and permanent the cleanup will be, how quickly the cleanup will be achieved, how much contamination can safely be left in place and how historic preservation and long term economic development will be impacted.

This Vision starts with the assumption that the ensuing cleanup actions will result in a "clean" Skykomish in the future and be a safe place to live and enjoy the environment.

Foundation Concepts

What this section presents as the foundation for the Vision are the underlying, fundamental concepts that the community has identified to support the future Vision of Skykomish. These concepts were distilled from the dialogue with the community at the brainstorming session and through the intensive charrette that explored design ideas. The consistency of these concepts throughout the development of this Vision -- the brainstorming session, and workshop and charrette -- as well as with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan is worth noting. The message from the community about what is essential to the future of the town has been spoken uniformly, and is articulated in the six concepts presented here -- **economic vitality, infrastructure, livability, history, connections and access, and environment.**

Though it is not explicitly stated in this section, it is important to note that the number one concern of the community in the short term is a clean and safe environment. Discussed earlier, this report presents a long term Vision for the future. As such, the Vision process has assumed that the cleanup effort will result in a clean and safe environment, as regulatory agencies oversee the process to ensure that it does. The foundation concepts, then, address the enduring concerns and values of the community through the cleanup and for the long term.

These concepts overlap and interconnect with one another, and all are essential to foster and maintain the future of Skykomish as described in the detailed Vision statement. All of the concepts distilled from the community meetings -- whether related to physical, economic, or social goals -- are inextricably linked, like the steel and concrete in a building's foundation. Furthermore, the ideas and values articulated in the concepts often overlap one another. For example, the livability of the town and maintenance of a high quality of life is closely tied to the town's economic vitality which is necessary to support amenities and

SIX CONCEPTS FORMING THE FOUNDATION OF THE VISION

1. **ECONOMIC VITALITY** maintained by a balance between tourism-related industries, as well as those supporting and serving local and area residents.
2. Appropriate **INFRASTRUCTURE** and services to sustain the community and support future opportunities for growth.
3. Enhanced **LIVABILITY** of the town and maintenance of a high quality of life for young and older generations of Skykomish residents alike.
4. References to the unique **HISTORY** of the town and its character maintained in new development.
5. Clear, consistent **CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS** to the town from surrounding areas, as well as to cultural and natural amenities within the town.
6. Promotion of the town's strong relationship to the **ENVIRONMENT** in historical references through access to surrounding outdoor recreation opportunities and the education of visitors about processes that maintain its healthy status.

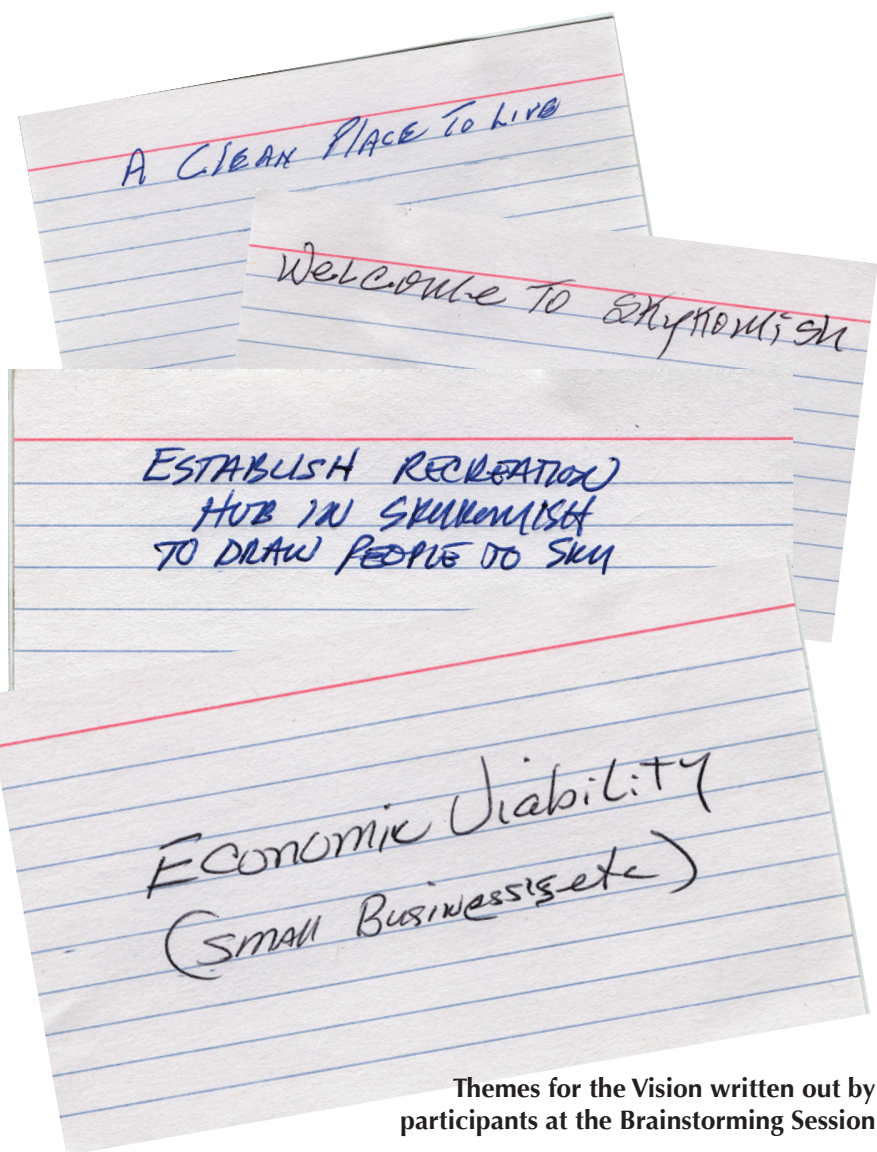
industries that serve local and area residents.

The six foundation concepts acted as guideposts for the facilitation team to develop ways of implementing the broad range of ideas for the future as revealed in the community workshops. The following section provides illustrations and specific design concepts revealing how the future of Skykomish may “look” and demonstrates possibilities for achieving it. Specific opportunities and design ideas are identified and presented, building upon the foundation concepts explained in this section.

The diagram below appears throughout the section that follows to help explain the specific foundation concepts that each piece of that section emphasizes.



This foundation diagram will appear with the various design ideas explored in the following section. The corresponding concepts to each piece of that section will appear in bold.



Themes for the Vision written out by participants at the Brainstorming Session