

Vision For Skykomish

August 2005

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A Community Defined Vision for the Future of Skykomish

Town of Skykomish

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Acknowledgements

The Vision of Skykomish resides in the hearts and minds of the community. This project puts that Vision on paper and helps take a step toward making it a reality. The efforts, energy and enthusiasm of all involved created this record of the community's Vision.

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Foreword

The community of Skykomish values the small size, simplicity and intimacy of its town. They enjoy the outdoor activities it affords and the town's livability for all types of people. Into the future, the community seeks to balance these values, particularly of the natural environment with opportunities for growth, and the maintenance of its unique heritage with economic development opportunities. These characteristics and the community's values might describe several towns here in the Northwest and countless other towns throughout the U.S.

However, the striking setting of the town along the Skykomish River on the western slope of the Cascade Mountains, and the still visible roots of its history in the earliest industries of the Northwest (timber and rail) make it a truly special place. And Skykomish is also unique in that it is facing a large environment cleanup effort to remove the undesirable aspects of the railroad legacy. Experiences of other small towns that have gone through the process of environmental cleanup efforts have shown that establishing a clean and safe environment can be achieved in myriad different ways, yet these can have a significant range of impacts from positive to negative, on the communities in which they take place.

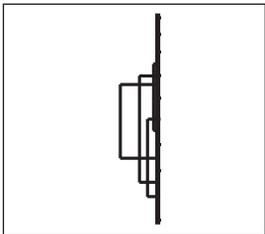
As the regulatory agency responsible for overseeing the cleanup effort, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) seeks to ensure that the ensuing cleanup activities in Skykomish are planned and designed to not only meet regulatory standards, but also to progress the shape of the town towards the way the community desires it to be. The Vision project was conceived with this intent in mind, and this report will be instrumental to developing a cleanup action plan that

achieves the objective of establishing a clean and safe environment while having a positive impact on the town throughout the process.

In order to build both a "picture" of the future of Skykomish, and strengthen the network of community-based thinking and collaboration among its members before decisions on cleanup activities were made, Ecology offered to fund a Visioning project for the town. A town Council resolution formally accepted the grant, and this project commenced.

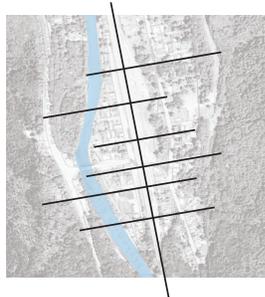
The town sought a neutral, objective facilitator to bring the community together to form this Vision. They wanted to explore their potential future with fresh eyes, insight, and new energy to generate a common Vision going into the cleanup process. They turned to the University of Washington's Northwest Center For Livable Communities. The center joined with the town's planning consultants, Berryman & Henigar, and these two entities formed the facilitation team that assisted the town in this endeavour. The accomplishments of the Vision project extend beyond just the pages in this report to the energy and enthusiasm that has been generated and continues to build within the community for the incredible opportunities the town promises residents and visitors, and the emerging ways to realize them in the short and long term.

Organization of the Report



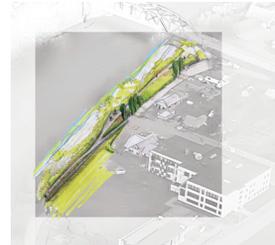
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE VISION

This section presents the Vision Statement framing the report. In addition, it explains the role and purpose of the Visioning project, as well as describes the process which generated the community's Vision for the future.



SECTION 2: FOUNDATION OF THE VISION

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



SECTION 3: BUILDING THE VISION

Building on the foundation concepts identified in the previous section, this section develops the ideas in detail, provides illustrations and design ideas, reveals how the future of Skykomish may "look," and demonstrates possibilities for achieving it.



SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

This section describes the specific actions that can be used to make the Skykomish Vision a reality. The four broad strategies correspond to the foundation of the Vision and the particular projects and actions under each strategy are intended to work together synergistically.