

# Vision For Skykomish

August 2005

# **Vision For Skykomish**

*A Community Defined Vision for the Future of Skykomish*

## **Town of Skykomish**

Charlotte L. Mackner, Mayor  
Christina Yates, Clerk Treasurer

**August 2005**

## **Bureau Veritas / Berryman & Henigar**

Roger Wagoner, FAICP  
Paul Inghram, AICP  
Stan May

## **University of Washington, Northwest Center for Livable Communities**

Fritz Wagoner, FAICP, Managing Director  
Eric Noll, Research Assistant  
with assistance from Alison Sheetz  
and Clayton Beaudoin

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	iii	
Foreword .....	vi	
Organization of this Report.....	v	
<b>SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE VISION.....</b>	<b>1</b>	
Vision Statement .....	2	
Role and Purpose of the Project.....	3	
Process of Creating the Vision.....	4	
<b>SECTION 2: FOUNDATION OF THE VISION.....</b>	<b>7</b>	
Skykomish Today.....	8	
Foundation Concepts.....	12	
<b>SECTION 3: BUILDING THE VISION.....</b>	<b>15</b>	
Downtown.....	16	
Railyard Area.....	20	
Accessing Skykomish.....	26	
Levee Area.....	32	
<b>SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTING THE VISION.....</b>	<b>37</b>	
Implementation Opportunities.....	38	
Priority Projects and Actions.....	39	
Timing.....	42	
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>43</b>	
Appendix A: Resolution Concerning Levee Design Recommendations...	44	

# 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.

## ***Vision Committee Members:***

Bob Mackner, Chair	Jerry Dinsmore	Patti Kalles	Anne Sekor
Rick Aydelotte	Rick Goranson	Michael Moore	Henry Sladek
Jewels Berg	Susan Goranson	John Robinson	Delana Slone
Mike Descheemaeker	Lorna Goebel	Maurisa Schainker	Don Wheatley

## ***Additional support provided by:***

Lynda Averill	Patrick Lynch	Angie Thomson-Bulldis, <i>Envirolssues</i>	Veronica Mireau
Tom Averill	Kathy McCowan	Katheryn Krafft, <i>King County</i> <i>Office of Historic Preservation</i>	Brianna Shawver
Rex Bakel	Madelle Quiring	Julia L. Larson, <i>King County Rural</i> <i>Economic Strategies Coordinator</i>	Molly Campbell
Hank Barber	Sharon Reynolds	<b>And the Skykomish School and</b> <b>students, including:</b>	Sky Lyons
Jennifer Bristol	Michael Sharpe	Jana Danielak	Sara Ramsey
Warren Carlson	Gary West	Cheyenne Gillihan	Rachel Ramsey
Mike Cortis	Rich Yarges		Rebecca Ramsey
Pat Gallagher-Carlson	Nancy Yarges		Marshall Gould
Desiree Gould	The Masonic Lodge		Dallas Robinson
John Lochmann	Bruce Sheppard, <i>BNSF</i>		Nick Robinson

Funding for this report was provided by the **Washington State Department of Ecology** in the interest of supporting public involvement. Susan Lee, Dawn Hooper, Louise Bardy and Tim Nord of Ecology were critical in the success of this project.

# 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.

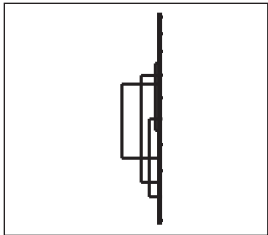
As the regulatory agency responsible for overseeing the cleanup effort, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) seeks to ensure that the ensuing cleanup activities in Skykomish are planned and designed to not only meet regulatory standards, but also to progress the shape of the town towards 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.

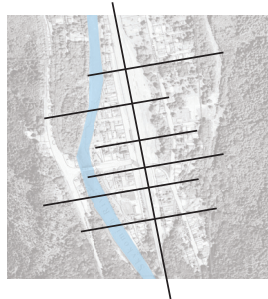
The town sought a neutral, objective facilitator to bring the community together to form this Vision. They wanted to explore their potential future with fresh eyes, insight, and new energy to generate a common Vision going into the cleanup process. They turned to the University of Washington's Northwest 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



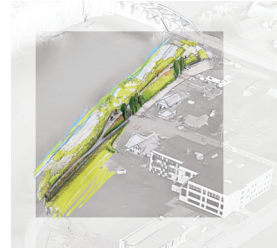
## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE VISION**

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.

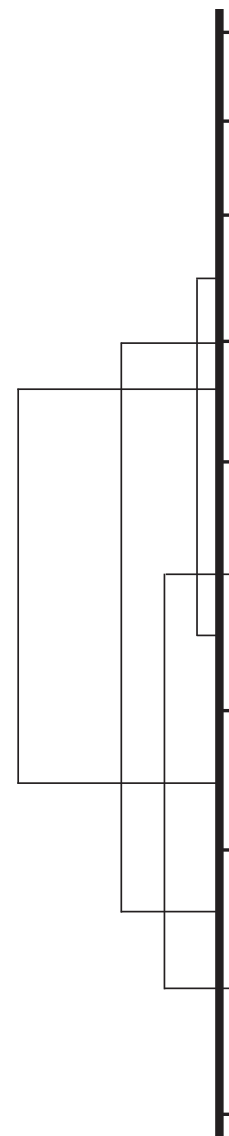


## **SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTING THE VISION**

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.

# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE VISION

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



# Vision Statement

Skykomish is a quintessential Northwest town – it is nestled in a stunning mountain setting alongside a vigorous river, with a rich history rooted in timber harvest and the development of what is now the BNSF Railroad Company (BNSF). While the town’s unique Northwest history is visible in both the style of local buildings and architecture, like the inn and depot, events and facilities in town also connect to current Northwest culture and values. A hub of outdoor recreational activities and host to vibrant music and arts festivals, Skykomish also provides visitors a living classroom for environmental education. Now free of toxic contaminants, the town is a regional center for environmental education that demonstrates the harmony between the town and its inspiring natural setting. Historical references in the town evoke the early railroad era of the 1920’s, like the sidewalks, lighting, and many of the buildings in central Skykomish that are authentic pieces of this unique heritage.

The historic depot, in its original location on the southern side of the railroad tracks, is, as it always has been, a hub for visitors. It is a living vestige of the town’s rail and timber heritage, displaying artifacts and information about the history of the railroad, while also serving as an information center for current activities in town. The expansive railyard, where locomotives were once serviced, has been reclaimed for the town. Buffering this hub of activity from nearby residences is a wetland, with a multi-use trail that links up to the network of trails stretching into lands surrounding town.

While the Skykomish River levee provides FEMA-certified flood protection, it also creates a park-like area that affords views and access to the river. A multi-use trail runs along the top of the levee, which is blanketed by native vegetation. This provides a natural look and feel to the levee that complements the stunning natural setting of the town. The trail provides residents and visitors alike the opportunity

to access the river for boating, fishing, or other activities, and also to move along on top of the levee between downtown and points south. Welcoming visitors to Skykomish are attractive entrances from east, west, and north of town, with clearly visible signs and attractive landscaping along Highway 2. Visitors by car and bicycle venture through town while traveling on the Old Cascade Highway, a scenic byway which is well marked where it intersects the current highway. Consistent character among signs on the highway and in town, increases visitor awareness of arriving in Skykomish, and reflects the town’s own Northwest heritage. Facilities in town, well-marketed events, and clearly-defined access points to myriad outdoor activities support the large numbers of visitors who come to enjoy Skykomish’s past and present heritage.





# Role and Purpose of the Project

The central purpose of the Visioning project is to identify and describe a Vision for the future of Skykomish that represents the aspirations and intentions of the community for its future condition. This Vision report spells out what the community seeks to become down the road and identifies specific means for achieving that future. Those means are presented in this report as an implementation strategy complete with specific projects and actions to be taken in order to bring about the desired future.

In August of 2004, the Town of Skykomish adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act. The Comprehensive Plan contains a set of adopted goals and policies to guide development and policy decisions based on a Vision statement established during the creation of the plan. That Vision statement formed the starting point for the process of producing an expanded and detailed Vision presented here, and only those implementation projects that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan were considered in this report.

One of the major issues affecting the town is the imminent cleanup of petroleum hydrocarbons (oil) and heavy metals that are contaminating the soil and groundwater of the town. This cleanup also involves petroleum that is seeping into the Skykomish River. The contamination is the result of activities of BNSF at their former railway maintenance and fueling facility operated from the late 1890's until the 1970's. BNSF is conducting the cleanup of the petroleum at the site under the oversight of Ecology.

Ensuing cleanup activities present the town with an extraordinary opportunity to potentially carry out projects and actions via the cleanup process that will contribute to implementing this Vision.

Since cleanup activities will affect specific locations in the town, the implementation strategy identifies corresponding projects that may be included in the final cleanup action plan for those different areas. It is intended to guide and inform the final cleanup action plan to ensure that the outcome of cleanup projects meets regulatory compliance, and is accomplished in a way that contributes to the future the community seeks.

However, the focus of this report and the future Vision that it puts forward extends beyond the timeframe and spaces of the cleanup into other parts of town and the long term. Thus, the Vision described here is not limited to a picture of how the town would like to be “cleaned up;” rather, this report builds a comprehensive statement of the community’s desired future stretching into years beyond the cleanup effort. Additionally, because the Vision for the future of Skykomish involves social and economic conditions that cannot be simply put in place by physical interventions in town, the implementation strategy also identifies actions to be carried out at the initiative of the community over the long term.

## WHAT THIS REPORT DOES

- Describes an expanded, detailed Vision for the future of Skykomish, consistent with the Skykomish Comprehensive Plan.
- Identifies the key, community-defined concepts essential to the future Vision.
- Explores options for physical development in the town and presents specific projects and actions to implement the overall Vision.

## WHAT THIS REPORT DOES NOT DO

- Does not override the current Comprehensive Plan.
- Does not contain final decisions on cleanup activities -- projects proposed will be considered for the final cleanup action plan.
- Does not require specific uses of public or private properties.

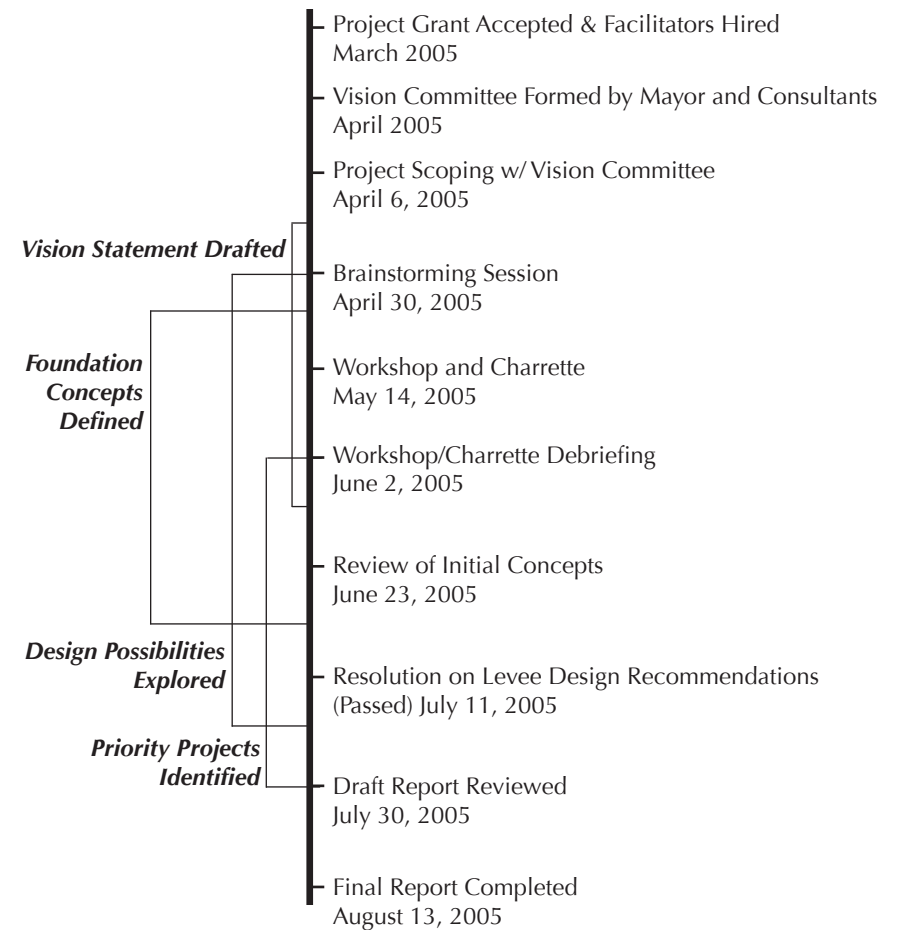
# Process of Creating the Vision

This Vision was developed through a process that integrated the broad ideas and directions of the community for its future with detailed explorations of possible options for achieving them in a unified and comprehensive fashion. The process began with the identification of a citizen committee to assist with the definition and organization of the tasks in the project. In early April, the first public meeting with the Vision Committee was held. The necessary steps for arriving at the Vision were outlined, and tentative dates established for the events in the project.

Information describing the town, its history, its setting, and current conditions, as well as plans and documents describing the planned cleanup program, schedule, and requirements were gathered early on by the facilitation team and continued throughout the process. This information was used to assist community members discuss specific topics and issues, as well as to identify discrete areas in town for implementing the Vision.

The first community workshop, a brainstorming session, was held where the community was invited to engage in dialogue leading to a Vision statement. With the facilitation team, the community explored related approaches to developing spaces and facilities in Skykomish that keep with the preferred Vision. Based on the key themes for the Vision identified in the brainstorm session, an intensive workshop and charrette was then held to produce design concepts illustrating possible options for achieving the overall Vision.

The sketches and concepts from the charrette were then refined and presented to the Vision Committee. This meeting identified remaining issues needing further attention and prioritized key design concepts. Ways to implement these concepts were then explored in detail by the facilitation team, and preliminary illustrations and designs were then



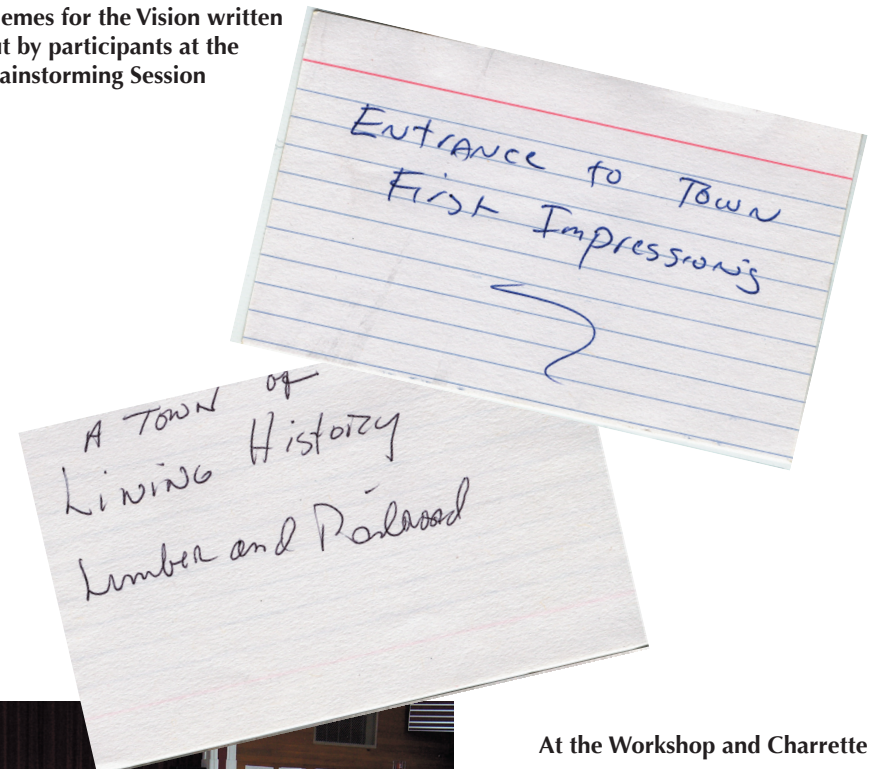
*The diagram above is a timeline of the events held to generate the Vision, and identifies the steps in this process as they relate to the development of the sections of this report.*

presented to the community. This meeting discussed further considerations, particularly the pending levee reconstruction, which will require design drawings before the completion of the Vision process. Developing the town's recommendations for the levee design was made a priority to meet this timeframe. The Vision team then focused on preparing a specific set of recommendations for the levee, which were passed by a Council resolution.

After defining and completing illustrations of design recommendations for the levee, other ways of implementing the key concepts of the overall Vision were developed by the facilitation team. Priority projects related to the overall Vision, in both the cleanup effort and the long term were defined to establish the means for realizing the Vision. This report is the culmination of the Visioning project, as it describes the town's preferred Vision for its future, and identifies related actions to be taken in the short and long term.



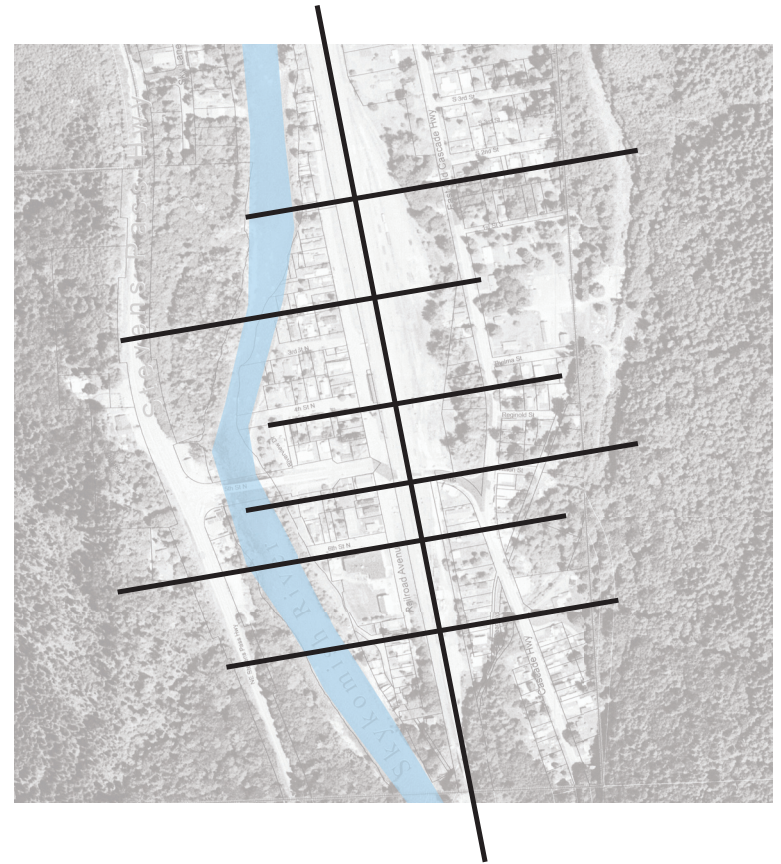
Themes for the Vision written out by participants at the Brainstorming Session



At the Workshop and Charrette

## 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.

### South side of Skykomish



The Skykomish River, as entering town



“Downtown” Skykomish, today

## 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

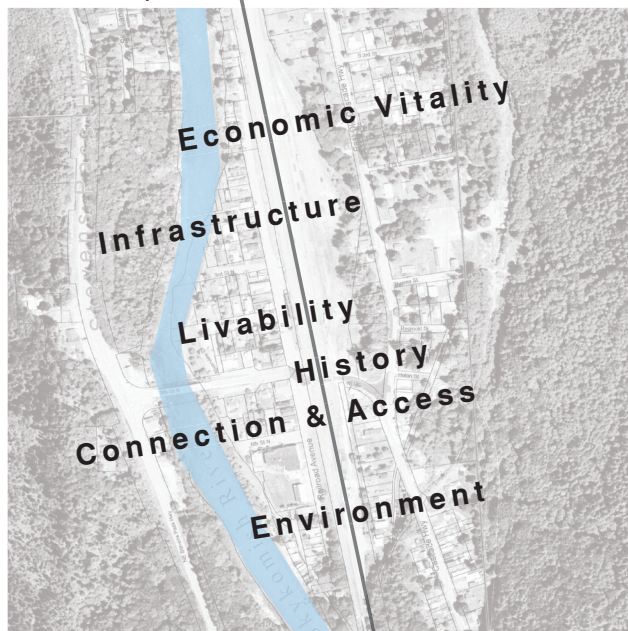
## SIX CONCEPTS FORMING THE FOUNDATION OF THE VISION

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.

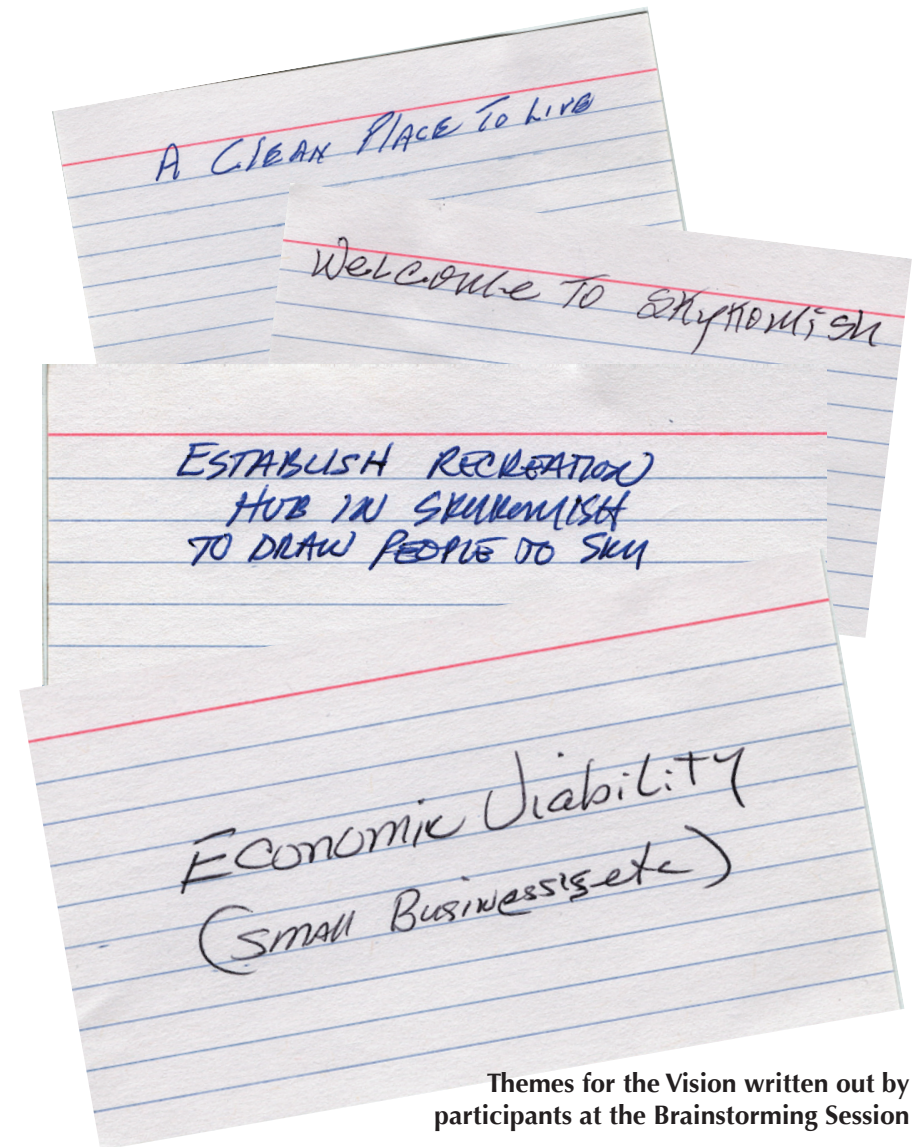
industries that serve local and area residents.

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

# SECTION 4: IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

This section describes the specific actions that can be taken to make the Skykomish Vision a reality. As projects and actions occur, they will add to and reinforce each other to provide the conditions that will make the community's future Vision a reality.



# Implementation Opportunities

It should be emphasized that the Vision for Skykomish is not to construct an “unobtainable” image of limited depth or duration, but to build the infrastructure and physical improvements that support the long term enhancement of the town. The construction of specific improvements will respect the value of the town’s history while recognizing the community’s current interests and providing the town and its guests with modern services and amenities. These new improvements will encourage public events, tourism, and commercial activity, that will drive private investments in the town, and in turn, will help support additional public improvements.

A key purpose for the Visioning report is for use by Ecology, BNSF, and the town of Skykomish during selection of remedy and development of the cleanup action plan. Ecology and BNSF will incorporate the Skykomish Vision into reconstruction of the cleanup areas as appropriate to the cleanup action. The cleanup will require reconstruction of the levee west of the bridge, areas in the town proper and areas of the railyard.

Some of the ideas expressed through Visioning will be accomplished as a part of the cleanup as areas impacted by the cleanup are reconstructed. It is recognized that only a portion of some Vision projects may be achievable with different cleanup actions. Other elements will be beyond the reach of the cleanup action but may be accomplished by the town through funding or assistance provided by other sources or as a part of the town’s long term planning. At the next update of the Skykomish Comprehensive Plan, the Capital Facilities Element should be updated to recognize the Vision, and implementation projects should be considered for prioritization in the capital improvement plan.

With a small population and tax base, there is no simple method

for the town to fund the concepts identified in the Vision that are not accomplished by the cleanup actions. The town may be able to implement certain aspects of the Vision by coordinating construction with cleanup actions to result in cost savings to the town without impacting the cleanup process. Projects may also be implemented with outside funding and costs might be shared with other agencies. For example, Skykomish recently entered into an interlocal agreement with King County for historic preservation services, and King County’s Historic Preservation Office may be able to help develop plans for and secure grant funding to restore historic properties.

While public agencies and funds are often used for public infrastructure projects, successful implementation of the Vision will require efforts throughout the Skykomish community. Volunteer and private actions will play a critical role. Individuals may embrace the Vision in how they decorate, maintain, and improve their own homes and businesses. The Vision does not dictate how citizens must use their land. The Vision leaves open a wide range of possibilities that individuals may or may not choose to act on. However, everyone in the town will benefit from working toward the shared Vision.

# Priority Projects and Actions

The process of crafting the Skykomish Vision included several community meetings where the drafting of Vision concepts led directly to the identification of physical projects that would be needed to make the Vision a reality. An obvious example is the implementation of the Vision concept for the levee, which is already in the planning and design process. For it, the community recommended several opportunities to enhance the levee and to make it more park-like. Other implementation projects were suggested directly by individuals or groups and through the Vision process received community support. These priority projects and actions are described below.

## PRIORITY PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

1. **Economic Development Council**
2. **“Skykomish General Store”**
3. **Levee reconstruction and school playfield expansion**
4. **Sanitary sewer system**
5. **Street improvements**
6. **Depot restoration**
7. **Trail and bike route development**
8. **Pedestrian park bridge**
9. **High-Speed communication infrastructure**
10. **Highway 2 signage**
11. **Entrances and viewpoints**
12. **Visitors Center**
13. **Music venue/park improvements**
14. **Railyard platform and overcrossing**

**1. Economic Development Council** -- One option to encourage private investment in the Vision is to initiate and support an economic development group or council. This group of community members could focus on pursuing various projects that would bring new revenue streams into town. “Job 1” might be the pursuit of a Stevens Pass shuttle service between Skykomish and the pass utilizing the town’s all weather parking.

**2. “Skykomish General Store”** – As a school assignment, students were asked to list their most critical needs for Skykomish. Number one on their list is a grocery or general store that would allow residents to shop, at least for basic needs, without having to drive several miles west. This is especially important to young people who have to rely on adults for private transportation outside of town.

**3. Levee reconstruction and school playfield expansion** – The levee is scheduled for cleanup and reconstruction in 2006 as the first cleanup action. Reconstruction of the levee creates the opportunity to implement several of the specific design recommendations adopted by the town, including making the levee more park-like, providing access along and to the water, and creating educational view points. It is also hoped that reconstruction can result in reclamation of the portion of Riverview Drive adjacent to the school to allow for expansion of the school playfield.

**4. Sanitary sewer system** – Concurrent with the Vision process, the town has sought Community Development Block Grant funds to study the implementation of a community sewer system. Sewer infrastructure would resolve environmental issues associated with substandard septic systems and increase the feasibility of supporting new commercial developments. Sewer would also be consistent with the objectives of the Growth Management Act.

**5. Street improvements** – As the most common form of public space in Skykomish (as with most cities), the look and character of the street system strongly influences the image of the town. Street improvements could echo the 1920's era style evident along Railroad Avenue and include additional historic references. During cleanup it is anticipated that several sections of local streets will be reconstructed.

**6. Depot restoration** – Restoring the depot building is a possible means of developing a tourism center, a museum, a public restroom, a trailhead, or an information center. However the depot is used once restored, it is a vital symbol of Skykomish's past. The Skykomish design guidelines as well as a recent school project contemplate relocating the depot to its original location on the south side of the tracks where it would be a focal point for those coming across the bridge. The King County Historic Preservation Office, the Skykomish Historical Society and BNSF should coordinate with any plans involving the depot.

**7. Trail and bike route development** – As a central component of attracting visitors, Skykomish sees itself as a destination for outdoor recreation. Adjacent to forest lands, it logically makes sense to develop trails and trail heads in Skykomish that connect to regional trails. This could be coordinated with the US Forest Service, Green Trails, Washington Trails Association and other trail groups. Grant funding may be available for converting abandoned rail corridors to trail use. Improving and designating bicycle routes should be coordinated with regional bicycle clubs and the Department of Transportation

**8. Pedestrian park bridge** – As documented in the Skykomish Parks Plan, a pedestrian bridge to the Skykomish Park would provide connectivity between the north and south sides of town and increase

the feasibility of using the park as a regional music/event venue. Visitors could park and eat in town, then walk across the bridge to the park venue. Proposals should be coordinated with sewer planning, as a pedestrian bridge might be able to serve a dual purpose as a utility crossing. A similar pedestrian river crossing may be seen in Newhalem, WA.

**9. High-speed communication infrastructure** – The town seeks enhanced communications systems to support commercial operations and home-based businesses. With high-speed connections, work-from-home options become viable. Reconstruction of streets and other areas should be designed to facilitate new and future utility installations.

**10. Highway 2 signage** – Traveling quickly on Highway 2, many motorists pass by without noticing the gem of Skykomish. New "Entering Skykomish" signs, designed in the Northwest character of the town, would herald its approach. The reader board could be relocated to a more visible location. New highway signs would direct bicyclists to the Old Cascade Highway "Scenic Route." Highway signage should be coordinated with the Department of Transportation.

**11. Entrances and viewpoints** – People want to stop when an area holds interest and is attractive. Therefore, the first views of Skykomish from Highway 2 need to be improved. Landscaping and flower beds could be planted near the entrance off Highway 2. Views of the town from the north need to be opened up. Lighting could be added to the bridge and the old hotel's cupola. Improvements should be coordinated with the Department of Transportation and private property owners.

**12. Visitors Center** – To attract and welcome visitors as part of the

economic development strategy, the town seeks a Visitors Center that would provide information about local and regional activities, be an opportunity for shuttle parking, and provide public restrooms. The visitors center might be part of a restored depot building, but could be located elsewhere. Planning should be coordinated with King County Office of Historic Preservation and the Skykomish Historical Society.

**13. Music venue/park improvements** – A music/event venue would bring in people from around the region and potentially result in additional revenue. A venue could be located at the Skykomish park. Coordination might occur with regional music promoters such as House of Blues (operator of the Gorge Amphitheater).

**14. Railyard platform and overcrossing** – An overcrossing at the railyard would provide for a safe pedestrian crossing over the active tracks. Currently, school children from the south must cross back and forth each day. More than a simple pedestrian overcrossing, a railyard platform would also be a visual centerpiece, reflect the rail heritage in its design, and be a viewing deck to watch the trains come and go. Development of an overcrossing should be coordinated with BNSF and could be synchronized with cleanup actions.

# Timing

The cleanup presents a unique opportunity to achieve many of the projects listed above. Some may be directly implemented as part of a cleanup action, such as a street reconstruction. For others, cleanup actions may present a window of opportunity to make efficient use of other funding sources. As cleanup actions occur, much of the Vision may be realized as early as 2010. Nonetheless, the Vision is a long term plan that should continue to be implemented over the next several decades, recognizing that the town's Vision may evolve over that time.

It is with the long term in mind that the community should set about building their future. The first steps may be the easiest – the “planting of petunias.” As small steps are taken, momentum will build. Completing smaller projects will demonstrate a commitment to the Vision which will help secure additional funding. As projects are built, private investment will be more likely. And as businesses make improvements, more visitors will be attracted, building an ongoing cycle of renewal.



# SECTION 5: APPENDICES

# Appendix A: Resolution on Recommendations for the Levee Design

## RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE LEVEE DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS Resolution No. 212

**WHEREAS**, BNSF plans to rebuild the levee on the Skykomish River west of the 5th Avenue bridge as part of the cleanup process and is currently developing levee design documentation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Skykomish has engaged in a community input process that included a public workshop and several public meetings to develop a draft Vision for Skykomish that includes a design recommendation for the levee; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Skykomish seeks to recommend elements, developed during the Vision process, to be included in, but not limited to, the design of the rebuilt levee;

### **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TOWN OF SKYKOMISH:**

1.) Recommends the following nine elements be included in the final design of the levee:

1. In addition to the requirements for flood control, the final design for the Skykomish River flood protection levee should include aesthetic, habitat, educational, and recreational considerations. Thus, the construction of the levee should be treated as the opportunity to create a unique place in Skykomish in addition to its function as a structure providing flood control. To achieve this, the final design of the levee should be completed by a multi-disciplinary team of both engineers and landscape architects.

2. West River Road from 6th Avenue to the end of the school grounds should be removed, and the school grounds expanded to the edge of a retaining wall along the south face of the levee, providing additional playground space. A right of way west of the school grounds, which will be cleared during the construction of the levee, should be opened permanently to provide access to residences at the south end of West River Road.

3. Direct water access should be provided at 5th Avenue, just west of the bridge, where the bank slopes gently and the river is calmer at a “natural” eddy area. The access point shall facilitate hand launching of boats and kayaks, as well as fishing and nature viewing.

4. A trail should be provided along the length of the top of the levee for foot travel, extending from the end of the levee just west of the school grounds, and culminating at the river access area at the eastern tip of the levee near the 5th Avenue bridge.
5. Access to the levee trail should be provided at a minimum of three points – at the west end of the levee just beyond the school property, at the north end of 6th Avenue, and at the eastern end of the levee adjacent to the 5th Avenue bridge. The trail access from the end of 6th Avenue should include a ramp, meeting ADA accessibility standards.
6. A landscape buffer, consisting of small shrubs and grasses should be planted along the edges of the levee trail. The buffer shall function both to protect trail users from the steep slope of the river side of the levee, as well as the edge of the levee on the town side. Shrubs and tall grasses should be used to enable unobstructed views both north and south from the trail (of the river and town, respectively), while maintaining a strong ground presence to maintain the safety of trail users. Trees should be planted selectively to enhance landscaping, while maintaining view corridors.
7. Seating should be provided at occasional points along the levee trail for reflecting on and enjoying the natural beauty of the area.
8. An outlook should be created along the levee trail, at the 6th Avenue intersection. This structure should provide an outlook to allow users views across and down the river, as well as provide the opportunity for environmental education through the use of signs or displays.
9. West River Road should be maintained between 5th and 6th Avenues. At the point where West River Avenue bends southward, the street should be widened to at least 20 feet to allow for vehicles to pass and drop off users of the river access. A retaining wall should be used from the eastern edge of the levee to the point where West River road narrows, in order to accommodate the widening of the road.

This resolution was passed by motion on this \_\_\_11\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_July\_\_\_\_\_ 2005.