

# Town of Skykomish Revitalization

CPAT Roundtable Final Report



A discussion with the Washington State APA's (American Planning Association)  
CPAT (Community Planning Assistant Team)

October 2018



American Planning Association  
**Washington Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*



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# PURPOSE, PROCESS, AND PARTICIPANTS

## Purpose & Study Area

The Town of Skykomish (Town) invited the Washington State American Planning Association's (APA) Community Planning Assistant Team (CPAT) to help invigorate the town and specific transportation issues at the entrance to the town. The goal of this exercise is to help the Town of Skykomish address comments in the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Skykomish Planning Study dated August 24, 2017. WSDOT conducted a planning study in Skykomish where socio-economic, land use, and transportation-related data sets were evaluated and analyzed. In addition, a public meeting with the town residents was held where the town's active transportation vision, and traffic-related concerns and issues with the US Highway 2 (US-2) were discussed. WSDOT concluded that traffic analysis did not reveal a baseline need for prioritized infrastructure improvements at this time. The study recommended the Town to update its comprehensive plan and incorporate several initiatives including an access management plan, an active transportation vision and policies, and a bicycle/pedestrian wayfinding signage plan.



*Figure 1 The Town of Skykomish Limits, Google Earth*

The discussions were not limited to the WSDOT comments and included broader economic opportunities and transportation development topics both in the town of Skykomish and in the area. The results were expressed in the form of a development framework which could build upon its short, mid, and longer-term recommendations. This strategy framework was organized to be cumulative, and progressively build on each prior stage and accomplishment.

The one-day discussion considered a range of issues that focused on:

- Visionary ideas for long-term future
- Short, medium and longer-term economic and business development prospects
- Transportation issues including: routing, traffic calming and streetscape improvement

- Development of a town entry and gateway
- Community improvement
- Strategic economic development opportunities
- Leveraging any locational advantages (including proximity to Stevens Pass Resort)

The CPAT facilitated dialogue on these issues in the context of the current and expected economic environment, traffic, and overall community needs. Deliberations also covered ongoing and anticipated local and regional concerns.

Due to time and resource constraints, the volunteer team limited the outcomes of this involvement to preliminary recommendations organized within a viable framework. This framework is intended to be a template upon which the residents of the town of Skykomish can further build upon, refine, adopt, and implement a fully developed strategic growth plan in follow-up discussions.

## Who is CPAT?

The Washington chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) offers communities (cities, towns, neighborhoods, and rural villages) assistance of professional planners and specialists in articulating visions, solving problems or resolving issues. The invited CPAT for this project consisted of professional *volunteers* with extensive experience in urban planning, land use, and transportation planning.

The final report embodies an effort that should not be construed as a complete strategic development plan for Skykomish. The purview and constraint of a limited time involvement by CPAT are to provide guidance on how communities in the State of Washington can further their own efforts. It is not able to provide a final, finished outcome.

Consequently, it will be up to the Town to embrace some or all of this effort. It is the concerted opinion of the CPAT that Skykomish has considerable development potential that can be comprehensively achieved in a pragmatic and cumulative way.

Because of its voluntary nature and limited involvement, CPAT is also unable to assure any success of this process. However, since this CPAT comprised of seasoned planning professionals, its suggested direction should be taken seriously. The effort conveyed in this report will certainly provide initial momentum to any concerted internal and public effort by the community. Any concerns or suggestions by the CPAT team should be explored further in future studies.



*Figure 2 View from the Skykomish Depot Park*



## Participants

### CPAT Volunteers:

- Patrick Lynch, AICP – Transpo Group, Transportation Planner, CPAT Co-Chair
- Bob Bengford, AICP – MAKERS, Land Use Planner, CPAT Co-Chair
- Brett Schock, PE, AICP – Transpo Group, Senior Traffic Engineer
- Rishabh Ukil – MAKERS, Landscape Designer
- Polina Butrina – Transpo Group, Transportation Engineer

The group worked with Tony Girder, the Mayor of Skykomish and Town staff to assemble a core team of stakeholders with varied interests to have focused discussions on relevant topics.

### Core Discussion Group

With the Mayor and Town staff's inputs, a core group was assembled to help formulate a viable future strategy. This group consists of:

Tony Girder	Town of Skykomish Mayor
Todd Brunner	Council member and owner of a local construction company
Henry Sladek	Council member and owner-operator of the Cascadia Inn
Steve Koch	Program Director, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
Gene Egan	Local business owner; assists Mayor on transportation issues
Steve Larnier	Utility superintendent and owner of the Sky Deli (5th St and US-2)
James Knisley	Fire Chief, Town of Skykomish
Barb Briggs	Office of Traffic, WSDOT
Thomas Noyes	Mobility planning management, WSDOT
Andrew Bryden	Staff Officer, Skykomish Ranger District Recreation, U.S. Forest Service
Roger Wagner	BAC Consulting Inc

#### Chatham House Rule

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed”.

The discussions with this group occurred in closed sessions and followed the “Chatham House Rules”. The rules indicate that anything said within the session will not be directly to any specific person. This is a well-established basis to ensure open and frank discussions.

## General Community Members

Members of the public were invited to the afternoon/evening open house to hear the results of the event and were encouraged to comment on the concepts and strategies.

## Process and Agenda

The deliberations occurred over two days (June 28th & 29th). Events for these two days were structured as follows:

### Thursday, June 28th

- **Area tour (late afternoon).** The CPAT members together with the Mayor toured the town and relevant areas, including the Skykomish Ballpark, and the Miller River washout.
- **Dinner.** The CPAT team and the Mayor attended an informal meet-and-greet discussion over dinner.

### Friday, June 29th

- **Welcome and introductions (9:00 to 10:30 am).** This opening session began with introductions, a description of the day's process, and an opportunity for the community to share their concerns and aspirations.
- **Round Table to identify issues and build consensus (10:15 am to 12:30 pm).** Issues and aspects that would help revitalize the town were discussed.
- **Working lunch (12:30 pm to 2:30 pm).** A working lunch extended the conversation over opportunities and concerns for the town.
- **Strategy Development and Refinement (2:30 pm to 4:00 pm).** The outline of a pragmatic strategic plan was formulated.

### *Open Session*

- **Public Debriefing (4:00 pm to 5:30 pm).** The CPAT Team shared the day's deliberations. This included suggestions for the next steps for the Town and community, necessary conditions for success, the inherent limitations, and unique opportunities of the effort.

### Post Event

This report is a summary of the above deliberations. There are obvious limitations on what could be accomplished in such a brief time frame. The intent of this effort is primarily to jump-start a viable discussion amongst the Town stakeholders.

It remains up to the Town and its residents to further discuss, refine, adapt, and implement these recommendations in a schedule of their own choosing.

## Exploratory Questions

In the weeks leading up to the two-day event, the CPAT gathered background information (included in this report as an Appendix). It also formulated the following questions to instigate early thought amongst the Town leadership and hosts. The questions in *italic* below were discussed during the round table discussions.

### Economy

- Can the current (or projected) tax base support what is needed or desired?
- What new and enhanced changes could leverage an increase in the tax base without overtly stressing the existing town infrastructure or the current residents?
- *How can the Town develop strategic partnerships with the Stevens Pass resort, United States Forest Service (USFS) or other entities that are stakeholders in the recreation-based tourism industry?*

### Transportation

- *What can be done to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity across US-2 and throughout the town?*
- *What access management strategies and intersection improvements should be considered at US-2/5th Street?*
- *How can the Town gateway treatments and wayfinding signage be improved?*
- *Are the town's roadway design standards consistent with the Town's vision or with industry best practices?*

### Environmental

- *Are there any remaining environmental issues that need attention and resources?*
- What are flood mitigation measures in place for areas under threat?

### Community and Open Space

- Can open space (i.e. school playgrounds, libraries, parking lots/spaces, parks, the community center, sidewalks etc.) be adapted to allow different purposes that will enhance the community (i.e. public markets, festivals, etc.)?

### Fiscal Health

- What fiscal priorities constrain the Town's ability to invest in itself?
- Is the infrastructure in the town too much or too little? Is it affordable? What is the right balance?

These questions remain open points for deliberation within the town residents and are relevant to discussions relating to the outcomes of this effort. These (and related questions) are key to formulating a complete development strategy for the town.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Study Area Walking Tour (Day 1, June 28th)

The CPAT team met at approximately 5 pm for the town of Skykomish Tour guided by the town's Mayor. Participants introduced themselves to each other and walked to the US-2 and 5th Street intersection to observe the entrance to the town. The tour continued to the rail grade crossing with 5th Street and proceed to the Fire station. Later the Mayor took the team to visit Skykomish Ballpark, and to the Miller River washout where floods have destroyed a section of the Old Cascade Highway. During the tour, issues and opportunities associated with traffic, streetscape, buildings, and businesses in the town of Skykomish were discussed. Some notes from the tour:

- Noted the frequency of trains passing by (average of 17 trains a day).
- Discussed the history and related opportunities of the following buildings
  - Cascadia Inn,
  - Whistling Post Tavern,
  - Skykomish Hotel,
  - Maloney's General Store,
  - Skykomish School,
  - Skykomish Library,
  - Masonic Hall, and
  - Great Northern Railway Depot.
- The Skykomish Hotel is a historical, four-story hotel in the heart of the Town of Skykomish. The hotel is owned by the Town of Skykomish and is under renovation.
- Noted missing pedestrian infrastructure at the railroad intersection.
- The only hotel available in Skykomish is the Cascadia Inn. However, there is a number of private house listings available via Airbnb in Skykomish.
- Noted that the 5th Street bridge serves as a defacto gateway to town; usually has flower decorations.



*Figure 3 Pictures from the Walking Tour.*

*Skykomish River Waterfront (left); Miller River Bridge (middle); W Railroad Ave (right)*



- The Skykomish Deli recently changed ownership. One corner of the building is located on State right of way.
- Noted the waterfront was recently rebuilt.
- Visited the Great Northern Railway Depot which includes a visitor center, museum, and gift store. There are free train rides offered to the public. The small gauge railroad park operates from May through October during weekend and holidays.
- The Town of Skykomish has a long history of oil leakage from the 1890s to the 1970s, when the Skykomish rail yard was used for trains to refuel. The contamination was discovered, and the cleanup efforts finished in 2008. During the cleanup, the town's historical and residential buildings have been lifted up, carted off for contamination removal, and returned after.

## US 2 and 5th Street intersection



*Figure 4 US 2 and 5th Street Intersection, Google Street View*

- The Big Bear Cafe that is located across US-2 from Skykomish is permanently closed. However, it was opened for a gourmet hot dog pop up. Residents had challenges crossing US-2 and could only reach it by car.
- There is a towing company located right before the US-2 and 5th Street intersection that is surrounded by a fence and traffic cones.
- Drivers don't follow traffic rules when going from the gas station to the deli
- There is an EV charger near the deli - an opportunity to attract more people.

## Skykomish Ballpark

- The ball field is the site for the Fourth of July Firework Celebrations, Music in the Park Concert, Sky Art Week, and Old Timers Picnic.
- Features campgrounds with fire rings, picnic tables, outdoor kitchen, and restrooms. The campground is located next to the river. It is possible to book the campground online for \$10 per night.

## Miller River Washout

- In January 2011, the flood destroyed a 100-foot section of W Old Cascade Highway and damaged Miller River Bridge.
- The washout cut the safest way to the communities that are located on the west side of the Miller River.
- King County is planning to install “dead end” roundabout at the eastern side of the W Old Cascade Highway.

## Dinner

The Mayor arranged a dinner for the CPAT team where participants informally discussed the approach to Day 2 strategy.



*Figure 5 View at the Miller River Washout from the Eastern Side of W Old Cascade Hwy*

## Roundtable Discussion (Day 2, June 29th)

The second day of the CPAT event in Skykomish was centered around a roundtable discussion with participants from the Core Discussion Group and guided by the CPAT team. The Core group led the conversation, identifying goals and priorities and asking questions of the CPAT team and other members of the Core group for input on working towards those goals. The following is a summary of the discussion on Day 2. Complete meeting notes taken by the CPAT team can be found in the Appendix section.

## Identification of Goals and Priorities

Mayor Tony Girder welcomed the participants together and made introductions. The CPAT team then facilitated an open house forum in which core discussion group members were given a short five-minute allotted time at the outset to state their goals and priorities. The goals and priorities of the participants included a number of issues involving transportation, development and positioning the town to be involved in an increasing outdoor recreation industry.

The entrance to the town at the intersection of US-2 and 5th Street was raised by nearly all participants. Several participants expressed concerns with the speed, safety, visibility, especially with snow management, congestion and aesthetics at the intersection. Some sought to attract tourists and visitors via new or restored gateway signage and a possible rest area and public restroom near the intersection. Concerns were also raised about safety at the intersection of Old Cascade Highway and US-2, near the ballfield and campground. The traffic speeds make active transportation crossings of US-2 a safety concern which has been cited as a hindrance on development north of US-2. Active mode connections to the ballfield and campground east of the Town without using US-2 is desired. The speed limit on US-2 was reduced to 50 mph in the past, but without further modifications to the roadway, and a plan for access

management, the speed limit will not be reduced further. The town would like to see the posted speed limit reduced between the tunnel west of town and the intersection with Old Cascade Highway to the east and future opportunities for active mode crossings and parallel routes.



*Figure 6 Pictures Taken from the Walking Tour. Temporally Lifted House (left); View to the Skykomish Hotel (middle); 5th Street Bridge (right).*

Within town, participants noted that crossing the railroad is a safety concern. An overpass across the highway or rail tracks was raised but was considered unlikely. Implementing a quiet zone at the rail crossing would be desirable, especially if future development is to be encouraged. The Miller River washout has forced a number of homeowners who are not within the town limits but used to come to Skykomish without using US-2, to be cut off. Restoration of the washout, even just as an active transportation connection is desired.

Participants strongly supported maintaining the town's "cute and charming" character in all future development. They foresee a significant increase in mountain biking recreation, with the pending development of a new regionally significant mountain biking trail. This increased visitor traffic is likely to spur increases in the hospitality business opportunities in town.

The town's transportation planning documentation is not sufficient at the time to support the desired changes on US-2, position the town for grant funding, or assist WSDOT and other state agencies with incorporating the desires of the Town into their future plans.

## **Exploratory Questions Revisited**

After the open discussion of goals and priorities, the CPAT team discussed with the Core participants the Exploratory Questions posed in the background report prior to the meeting. These questions were intended to initiate a thoughtful dialogue on these issues, but not all resonated with the Core group and were discarded for further discussion during the CPAT event.

### **Economy**

Participants confirmed that the Town's tax base does not exist, and the Town is dependent on grant funding for projects with a significant capital cost. The development of tourism, as an economic opportunity, is highly desired. There is a potential for significant growth in retail/services supporting recreation tourism. A passenger railroad stop in nearby Monroe creates economic opportunities for the town. The town is viewed by several other agencies and stakeholders in the local tourism economy as a partner and they are interested in working with the town to be prepared for and take advantage of projected significant increases in tourism.

## Transportation

A roundabout on US-2 at the 5th Street intersection is desirable for the Town and by WSDOT, although there are a number of remaining issues that need to be addressed before the project could proceed. A roundabout would allow entrance for highway traffic and opportunities for gateway and wayfinding improvements. A physical barrier into town, such as landscaping, could slow traffic. Participants confirmed that traffic volumes are much higher going east towards Stevens Pass and Leavenworth on weekends. Traffic congestion, both real and perceived, can affect the number of tourists going east from the Puget Sound region via US-2. Many reportedly use I-90 as an alternative, particularly to go to Leavenworth.

The roundabout being installed at the Miller River Highway is a concern for public safety, current and future connectivity at the washout. Transportation improvements are required near the ballfields and campground for access and safety, especially as use of both facilities increases. The high frequency of passing trains (17 trains per day) is a noise concern and occasionally blocks the entrance to the south side of town and Old Cascade Highway. The blockages are a concern for emergency access, in addition to the inconvenience for residents. Blockages can last a few minutes to a few hours or even days at a time and are not predictable.

## Environmental

The participants indicated that they had few environmental concerns at this time that were not already being addressed by other projects and commitments.

## Community and Open Space

Participants cited drug issues on either side of Old Cascade Highway and in the periphery of town, especially at the Miller River washout. If development of a rest area and/or public restroom were to occur near the intersection of US-2 and 5th Street, there would be enforcement issues. Enforcement of a reduced speed limit and slowdown lane at 5th Street could also be a future concern, especially with the limited enforcement resources of the Town.

## Demographics/Employment/Education

The Core group noted that the town is growing, and that the original assumption that there would not be substantial growth in the town's population in the foreseeable future was not correct. The growth of rental properties versus growth of owner-occupied properties was raised as a concern. Participants generally agreed that the town would adapt to and embrace relevant new technologies and approaches to development.



*Figure 7 Roundtable Discussion*



## **Fiscal Health**

Fiscal constraints are primarily related to the lack of sufficient tax base. The expense of Town-owned infrastructure was discussed primarily related to Town-owned properties, especially near the trailhead of the under-development Maloney Rock Trail mountain biking facility. The Town would like to see some of these properties used to develop the parking, hospitality, residential and other support services needed to support the Maloney Rock Trail, as well as nearby Stevens Pass.

## **Strategic**

The Core participants confirmed that the Town's relationship with the County and regional agencies is generally good and can be built upon. The region is supportive of the Town's pursuit of grant funding, provided certain documentation requirements can be met.

## **In-Depth Discussion Topics**

Following the formalized goals and priorities discussion and revisiting of the exploratory questions, the CPAT team and Core discussion group focused on those topics that were of most interest to the Town. The issues discussed focused on:

- Transportation
- Agency Support and Partners
- Recreation and Tourism Opportunities
- Hospitality, Lodging and Housing
- Town Master Plan

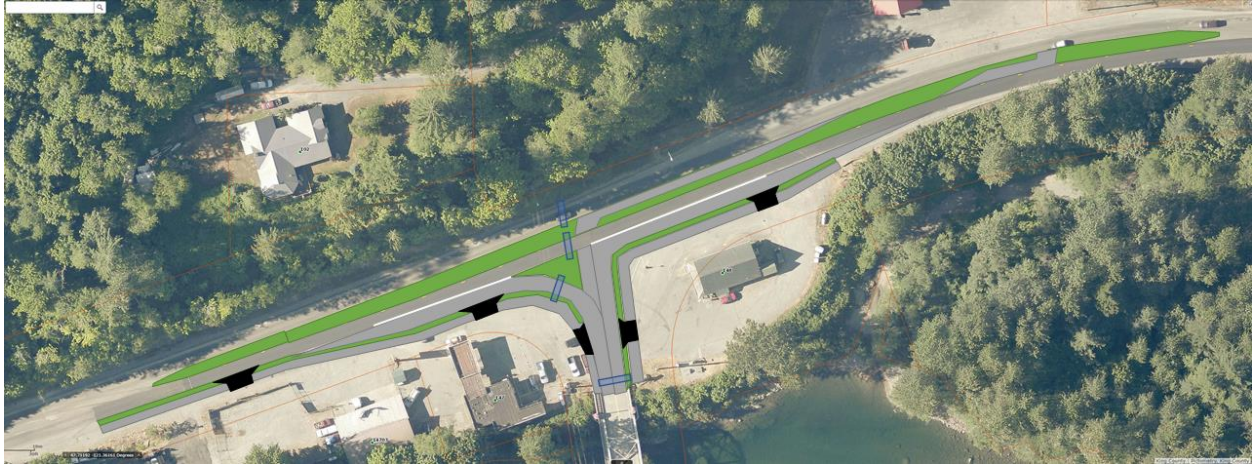
The following summarizes the discussion within each of these focus areas.

### **Transportation: US-2 and 5th Street intersection**

The Town is united in their opinion that the speed limit on US-2 is too high. The recent reduction in the posted limit from 60 to 50 had minimal impact. WSDOT indicated that further speed limit reductions to US-2 without engineering changes (access management, roundabout, etc.) are a compliance concern and would increase the enforcement burden. The Town has a desire for increased use of electronic speed feedback signs.

The Town of Skykomish and WSDOT agree on the eventual implementation of a roundabout at US-2 and 5th Street. With incomplete information from the Town in a Comprehensive or Transportation Plan (economic growth, safety, etc.), WSDOT has, at present, been unable to justify construction of a roundabout. WSDOT encouraged the Town to complete these plans to assist with the justification and potential grant-funding of a roundabout. The design of a roundabout would need to provide an access to nearby businesses including the Sky Deli, gas station, etc., as well as accommodate snow clearing at the intersection. The town is interested in addressing access management issues before the roundabout as a phased approach and adopting WSDOT access management standards.





*Figure 8 Potential Phased US 2 Intersection Improvements with Medians and Turn Lanes*

Among the issues addressed by a roundabout, accessibility for residents during peak weekend traffic make turns out of 5th Street difficult with few gaps in the stream of vehicles. Large trucks, such as those used for logging transport, are a concern when making a turn to 5th Street or Cascade Highway.

Further east and west of the Town along US 2, participants noted that sight distance and bicycle access is poor at the tunnel on US-2 near Money Creek campground (east of the Town). The narrow bridge east of town is also a safety concern for bikes and may impact current and future recreation.

In discussing signage on US-2, the town expressed the need for wayfinding signage to raise awareness of the town and its recreation activities. The Town also has interest in working with WSDOT to use variable message signs (VMS) with information about congestion and available parking further down US-2 to help drivers (east and westbound) make decisions about continuing or stopping off in town. Traffic on US-2 is seen as “not worth it” to go to Skykomish or Stevens Pass. A potential solution could be a collaboration between communities, and WSDOT, to provide parking and shuttles to the points of interest, including awareness of these services via VMS.

### **Transportation: Other Roadways**

The Miller River washout was a concern mentioned previously by the Core participants. King County is in the process of installing a dead-end roundabout and improving existing culverts. The Town is concerned about “undesirable uses” at the dead-end and the permanent cut-off of access to the east, rather than restoration of the connection. This cut-off is a concern when trains block other accesses, as well as, affecting property values to the west (but outside of town limits). The Town has a desire for a non-motorized/emergency use connection.

At the intersection of Old Cascade Highway and 5th Street, there are a lot of U-turns when people come to town and return back to US-2. The town is interested in creating a mini-roundabout to support the safety of U-turns, but noted that it needs to accommodate ladder trucks and snow cleaning machines from the fire station that is located on 5th Street and Old Cascade Hwy.

### **Transportation: Railroad**

As described in earlier Core group discussions, trains occasionally stop in the town blocking the crossing of Cascade Highway for hours at a time. Trains try not to block the 5th Street intersection. There is little

the Town has been able to do about this, but feels it needs to be considered in transportation decisions at roadways outside of the Town that provide alternative access, especially for emergency services.

The Core group expressed interest in a shuttle passenger train between Monroe and Skykomish. The presence of double and single tracks along the US-2 corridor may be an issue for this type of service. WSDOT indicated that this could be included in the State rail plan, but that the Town would need to include it in their Transportation Plan.

### **Transportation: Transit**

The Core group discussed that transit service to the Town is sparse. The nearest Community Transit line stops at the park and ride lot in Gold Bar. King County Metro has provided Community Van through their Alternative Services program to the Town. This relies on volunteer drivers and is not intended as a fixed route service. The Town expressed a desire to add service similar to recent recreation buses to Mt. Si and other destinations along I-90. The crossing of the County border between Monroe (Snohomish County), as the gateway to the Puget Sound, and Skykomish (King County) could pose an issue with expansion of transit service.

### **Transportation: Airport**

The Town's grass-runway airport is open seasonally, but with minimal use. There is no tower, and most traffic consists of helicopters for emergency services. The use of the airport as parking outside of operating season was mentioned but would require snow removal. The airport is currently used by the town on occasion for recreational uses. An update to the state airport comprehensive plan is upcoming, but the town would need to update their Transportation Plan in order to coordinate with that updated plan. The update may include fencing in the airport to restrict uses at all times of year.

### **Transportation: Active Transportation**

WSDOT encouraged the Town to develop an Active Transportation Plan with details on circulation of bicycles and pedestrians within the town, including across US 2. With the development of numerous bike trails at and near Stevens Pass, as well as the Maloney Rock Trail, bike traffic along US-2 and within the town is expected to rise dramatically. The Town hopes to have a plan for the facilities needed to support this growth before it occurs. The Town is interested in active transportation improvements throughout the town and connecting to the ballpark and campground area.

### **Agency Support and Partners**

Skykomish is located in King County but is "functionally" in Snohomish County. King County does advocate for the Town and allocates resources for grants, flood control and public services. The Puget Sound Regional Council, of which Skykomish is a member, has a rural town centers program which provides funding opportunities for active transportation needs. But, the program requires a more extensive Transportation Plan than the town's current Comprehensive Plan.

The USFS is expecting the Maloney Rock Trail to bring a lot of traffic to the town. This traffic, being tourism-related, will peak on summer weekend dates. The trail will have some on-site parking provided by the USFS, but additional parking in-town with shuttle services and safe self-parking in town will be a concern. The USFS recommended that the Town be very proactive about guiding visitors to locations

where they are desired, through infrastructure and wayfinding signage. The trail may be open as early as 2020 if environmental permitting and construction proceed as planned.

The USFS is also working on developing a snow sledding hill just south of the Town center. The project is in permitting stage and would require some grading changes but could be operational by 2019. This hill would bring additional winter traffic to the area, creating an all-year recreational tourism demand for parking and hospitality services.

Stevens Pass ski resort, which was purchased in 2018 by Vail Resorts, is a willing partner for the Town. The resort is investigating alternatives for expansion of parking but could look to the Town of Skykomish for partnering opportunities. The resort is also expecting that commercial and residential development all around the resort, to which Skykomish is the closest town, will be increasing quickly in the next few years.

### **Recreation and Tourism Opportunities**

Numerous outdoor recreation opportunities exist in and around Skykomish. The aforementioned Maloney Rock Trail and Stevens Pass trails will be seeing an increase in mountain biking traffic in the coming years. Stevens Pass, already a large ski area, was recently purchased by Vail Resorts, and is expected to increase in size in the coming years and generate more economic opportunities in the area. The USFS is developing a sled riding hill near town, in addition to the Maloney Rock Trail. The Town already supports river rafting and has a desire to increase water access for this activity, focused on the east side of the 5th Street bridge, as the west side is less accessible for users of all abilities.

All of these new opportunities will impact the Town's available parking supply. Core participants were concerned that they do not have enough designated parking. The Core group recognized the need to leverage the opportunity to increase commercial offerings in the Town, including repair shops, gear rental shops and restaurants. The Big Bear property, north of US-2, has previously contacted the Town about making the property more saleable, but most improvements are reliant on previously discussed modifications to US-2, including reduction of the posted speed limit.

The Town also recognizes that it is well positioned to see an increase in "day-use" recreational opportunities and leisure recreation. The same facilities that can serve the more active recreational activities can also support the "stroll by the river" recreational users. These users may overlap, which would place additional strain on the Town's parking supply, transportation system (especially active transportation) and hospitality services. The discussion of these opportunities further underscored the need for an expanded Transportation Plan.

### **Hospitality, Lodging and Housing**

To support the expansion of recreational tourism and leisure tourism, the Town's hospitality and lodging resources will need to increase. The Core group discussed the need to expand lodging offerings beyond the one existing property in town. The Town has pursued a "chain" lodging property in the past, but the lack of business weekday traffic, the economics do not favor this type of development. Smaller lodging properties (under 20 units) would be ideal. The group discussed looking to campgrounds as potential lodging resources. On a typical basis, these properties are occupied through the summer with regional campers and do not have on-demand availability.

The group discussed the expansion of Airbnb and VRBO rental properties. The number of these properties in town has expanded greatly, but the town has little control over them. The Core group discussed the creation of a co-op for consistent marketing, rates, minimum standards, etc., which would allow the Town to capture market data. This data could help to facilitate development of other lodging in the Town. A Town permit requirement for Airbnb or VRBO properties would be simpler to implement than a co-op but does not carry the benefits of consistent marketing and may be difficult to enforce.

Housing was discussed by the group as it relates to Stevens Pass. The majority of current Stevens Pass employees live in Leavenworth, as Skykomish lacks the housing options, restaurants and other activities of Leavenworth. Rental rates in Leavenworth are beginning to price out Stevens Pass employees. With the potential expansion of Stevens Pass and other recreation, the Town hopes to address housing stock availability, perhaps using existing Town-owned land, and wants to make sure that policies are in place for parking and local road improvements.

## **Town Master Plan**

Skykomish is seen as a town that is “waking up” from decades of reclamation projects. With limited, if any development for years, and all of the previously discussed opportunities, the Town’s master plan needs updated. The Town owns a number of properties near the Maloney Rock Trailhead and the Core group discussed using this resource for a new/relocated town center, town hall, public bathrooms, shuttle center and public conference/event venue. The Town is interested in future public festivals and events in support of recreation. The ballfield is seen as a significant asset as a festival venue, as well as the property along Railroad Avenue. The limited parking on the site may be a factor in what can be planned but is related to the lack of parking to support recreational opportunities and USFS development.

The Town has a desire for a Master Plan to include provisions to protect the town’s character. The Railroad Avenue corridor in particular has a very specific aesthetic and would need to be preserved. The group discussed a desire to incorporate Dark Sky policies, such as specific requirements for downward-facing lighting, shielded lighting and reducing glare, to protect the Town from light pollution and preserve potential stargazing recreational opportunities.

## **Strategy Development and Refinement**

- **Strategy Development and Refinement (2:30 pm to 4:00 pm).** The CPAT team and core discussion group articulated a summary of the proceedings for presentation to an open house of stakeholders.

## **Open Session Observations**

- **Public Debriefing (4:00 pm to 5:30 pm).** The CPAT Team assisted by the Mayor, Town staff, and invited participants to share the findings of the day’s deliberations. Approximately 20 Skykomish residents and stakeholders joined the open session including representatives from the Stevens Pass Mountain Resort and King County. Overall, the presentation response was positive with additional questions about active transportation planning. The issues discussed during the open house resonated with the residents and they expressed support about the possible solutions to existing problems. The Stevens Pass representative brought the housing issues for the resort’s

employees - the majority of employees live in the Leavenworth area, which is approximately 35 miles from the resort. The representative expressed interest in the opportunity of housing development in Skykomish as an alternative option, especially given the shorter distance between Skykomish and the resort (15 miles). Moreover, the rising cost of living in Leavenworth was brought to the attention.



*Figure 9 Public Debriefing by CPAT Team*



# DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

## Big Picture

Today, the town is situated on the highway between Leavenworth and the Puget Sound region. Among the existing businesses, the Sky Deli and the gas station on US-2 cater to these transient visitors. The CPAT team suggests developing the town of Skykomish as a destination location by leveraging the existing natural resources of the surrounding area and creating more lodging and food opportunities.

As a short-term strategy, the team suggests setting up some Quick Wins, which are intended to generate immediate benefit and can be completed quickly. Quick Wins are intended to act as a catalyst for future developments. Suggested Quick Wins for Skykomish could include new gateway signage, the use of the 5th Street bridge as an icon and development of an Entrance/Visitors Center. Improvements to the US 2 intersection could also be a Quick Win, but is dependent on funding and agency partners.

## First Step: Update the Transportation Plan

The first step recommended for the Town is an update to the Transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan. This will be necessary to support:

- Quick Wins for the Town of Skykomish
- Any projects or initiatives involving improvement at the intersection with US 2
- Selection for grant funding to improve active mode transportation within the town
- Support for recreational expansion
- Coordination with state agencies

It is not necessary to fully revise the Transportation Element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. A Transportation Master Plan that is under a separate cover and outside of the timing limitations, agency coordination, and hearing process requirements for Comprehensive Plan updates, but that is referenced in the Comprehensive Plan, would serve the needs of the Town.

The purpose of this Transportation Master Plan is to document the Town's vision for its transportation future. This document is critical to the success of that vision, as it will assist in coordination with other agencies, as well as ensure that there is continuity of vision as the leadership of the Town changes. The document can be updated as growth occurs and priorities change. A continuing documentation of changes will help to make a smoother transition to new goals and priorities, both internal and external to the Town.

Critical elements of the Transportation Plan would include:

- Identify all of the topics of discussion covered by the CPAT group, as well as other transportation areas that the town residents are concerned about.
- Identify the Town's priorities for making transportation improvements to address those concerns
- Suggested funding mechanisms for achieving those improvements.
- Expected economic and recreational initiatives that the town foresees in the short term and the desired projects to address the needs of those new initiatives, including:

- A downtown parking plan
- Trail support services plan
- Active transportation plan for pedestrian and bicycle circulation in support of the trail, ballfields, campsites, school and downtown core

Improvements identified in the Plan only need enough definition and detail to support grant applications and state agency long-term planning objectives. Select improvements could be moved to the next level of conceptual design to identify any constraints or impacts. This Transportation Plan will give state agencies official guidance on the Town's priorities and desires when entering into their own long-term planning processes. This could increase the Town's ability to impact long-term plans for the railroad through town, the airport and US 2. The Plan would also open additional potential avenues of funding with other state agency and federal funding partners.

## Strategy Plan Overview (Years 0-3)

The development of and execution of a Transportation Plan is the most important short-term (years 0-3) recommended plan for the Town. This plan will guide the short-term revitalization, or "waking up" of the community, and help to realize the significant potential gains from the burgeoning recreation industry happening in and around the Town.

The Town of Skykomish will need to document the desire for improvements at the intersection with US 2. Specific mention of improvements to aesthetics, town wayfinding, access to the highway for residents and tourists and most importantly safety for all modes of travel should be made. While the Town has made some progress towards developing a roundabout concept the form of improvements to address these concerns should be non-specific. This leaves open the possibility of a phased approach or other intersection design concept.

The Town should also be deliberate and strategic about the development of parking and circulation, especially for active, non-motorized travel within the Town and between US 2 and the Maloney Rock trailhead. The early management of this movement of vehicles and people will have significant long-term benefits for residents and the perception of the Town as a place to stay and eat, shop and stay before, during and after the use of recreational facilities.

## Strategy Plan (Years 4-6)

In the four to six-year range, the CPAT recommends revisiting the strategies and Plan that were adopted in Years 0-3 and hold an updated strategy session to re-evaluate next steps through a follow-up event. If the Town is seeing progression towards its goals and feels that coordination with partner agencies is functioning well, there may be no significant changes at this time. The Town should review projects that have been completed and identify any follow-on projects that are desired. The true impact of new recreation and development changes should be considered in a potential revised Transportation Plan.

## IN CONCLUSION

It is the CPAT's hope that this short and concentrated exercise will inspire the Town of Skykomish and its residents to develop the transportation and development plans needed to be prepared for the coming changes and opportunities in the recreation tourism industry. The potential for the town to capture the hospitality and support services for this potentially exponential growth in the all-season recreation in the surrounding area is a rare opportunity. The change in ownership at Stevens Pass and the associated potential for investment and development, as well as the increases in recreation tourism in warmer seasons for mountain biking, hiking and river-based activities will bring changes to the area. These changes could have a dramatic effect on the economy, development and transportation network of the Town. Development of the Town to accommodate these new opportunities, while maintaining its character and a town that residents are proud of can be accomplished with clear direction, consensus among stakeholders and a focus on identified goals and priorities.

The CPAT team feels strongly that it is never too early for the Town to be proactive in taking on these tasks and have identified some concrete steps to take in the short term. The Town has already made progress in this direction. The hosting of the CPAT, the coordination with recreation stakeholders and developers, and engagement with WSDOT on concepts for US 2 improvements all demonstrate a willingness to be proactive that should be continued. The town has a willing and supportive network of state agencies and local partners and should leverage these resources as much as possible.

# APPENDIX

## ***Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018***

### **CPAT Team**

#### **Premeeting overheard**

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- Public bathrooms are desired/needed
- Roundabout highly desired
- Replace tow yard with a rest stop, RV park, kiosks; currently used for on-site storage

#### **Attendees:**

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- Todd Brunner – Skykomish, town council, construction company
- Henry Sladek – Skykomish, owner-operator Cascadia, town council (10+ years)
- Steve Koch – Skykomish, parks rec and tourism director
- Roger Wagner – bac consultants
- Tony Girder – Skykomish, mayor, teacher
- Gene Egan – Skykomish, works with Tony on transportation issues, past council member
- Steve Lerner – Skykomish, utility superintendent, owner of the Sky Deli (5th st and US2)
- James Knisley – Skykomish, fire chief
- Barb Briggs – WSDOT, traffic office
- Thomas Noyes – WSDOT, management of mobility planning
- Andrew Bryden – US Forest Service, manages recreations and public services. Liaison for proposed mountain bike system.

#### **Goals & Priorities**

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Around the room, what are your goals?

- Gateway signage directed at tourists and visitors, raise community awareness
  - Restore or consider old “art deco” neon gateway sign
  - Rest area/public restrooms to support passing traffic and future recreation
- Reduce speed, safety and congestion at turns to/from 5th Street from US 2, access management
  - Active transportation crossing desired
  - Better entrance with controlled intersection desired
  - Improve visibility at intersection, currently a hazard
- Improve aesthetics at 5th Street and US 2 intersection (existing barrels)
- Reduced speed zone between tunnel and Old Cascade Highway
  - Reduced speed on US-2 in this zone – 35 mph desired
  - Address safety concerns with turn at either limit of this speed zone
  - Safety concerns with blind turn near campground at City Ballpark
- Railroad crossing safety concerns
  - Possibility of overpass across highway/rail tracks
- Maintain town character; “cute and charming”
- Increase bicycling recreation through trail creation, spurring further hospitality business
- Repair/replace Miller River washout; possible non-motorized only connection
- Non-motorized connection to the ballpark and campground without using US 2



## ***Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018***

### **CPAT Team**

- Finish Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan and TIP for grant eligibility
- Town has been “on hold” for years due to cleanup but is ready for infill and commercial development of vacant properties, sewer system available
- Development of parcel north of US 2 dependent on access management and US 2 crossing
- Quiet Zone for train traffic
- Snow management (visibility issues at US2 and 5th St intersection)
- Make Skykomish as a destination
- Towing property can be converted into an entrance center/bathroom
- Improving connections with north side of town
- 

### **Assumptions**

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- No tax base – confirmed, most work comes from grants
- Tourism is an opportunity that is most desirable
- Potential for significant growth in retail/services supporting recreation
- Roundabout at Miller River Highway
- Improvements near campground
- Train – every 4 hrs. – blocking entrance to town on old highway
- Drug issues on either side of old highway and in the periphery
- Roundabout into town allows entrance for highway traffic, much higher going east towards Stevens Pass/Leavenworth leading up to the weekend
- Traffic congestion inhibiting more tourists going east through US-2 (using I-90 instead)
- Railroad stop in nearby (Monroe) creates economic opportunities
- Enforcement issues
  - Public restrooms
  - Slowdown lane coming into town
- Some physical barrier into town would be better (such as landscaping instead of slowing down traffic dramatically)
- 

### **Discussion – Economic Opportunities**

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- Resource allocation from King County a positive, plus donations for library
- Train connection to Monroe?? – a shuttle for tourists (hikers, skiers)
- NEED A DESTINATION IN TOWN that can support lodging
  - BnB/Airbnb
  - Co-op rental model
- Grading improvements along the right of way (ROW) near bridge
- Tourism Opportunities
  - Mountain biking
  - Biking on highway is dangerous

## ***Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018***

### ***CPAT Team***

- Trail to Stevens Pass using old highway
  - Event/Race to increase potential for town to create more lodging areas
- Daytime destination – Stevens Pass and Lodging at Skykomish
- Leverage Bridge as an icon
- Shuttle to Foster River/ Scenic Vista
- Create a signature trail for Skykomish (like an environment trail)
  - Could be Maloney trail
- Added benefits of bike rental, bike shops, Evergreen Mountain Bike for advertisement
- Observation Platform to look at town
- Parking and Street development in town
- Discovery and cleanup of contaminants hampered growth of town (1980 – 2015)
- Marketing dark sky for improving economy
- Bike trail connecting Duvall to Index
- Pedestrian across tracks can be improved

### **Discussion - Transportation**

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#### *US 2 / 5th Street*

- City and WSDOT agree on eventual implementation of the US 2 roundabout
  - Weekend traffic volumes make turns out of 5th Street difficult, few gaps
  - Large trucks (logging) a concern when making a turn to 5th Street or Cascade Highway
  - WSDOT aware of congestion issues, Sultan area is at capacity
    - Congestion/volume impacting recreation and tourism near the pass
- Sight distance poor at tunnel at US 2 near Money Creek campground, needs warnings to US 2
  - Bike actuation for flashing signal to address very narrow tunnel pavement width, offset centerline
- US 2 speed limit reduced from 60 to 50 recently
- Traffic enforcement provided in town by King County
  - Public restrooms would increase enforcement requirements
  - Further speed limit reductions without engineering changes to US 2 are a compliance concern without increased enforcement
  - Desire for electronic speed feedback signs
- Narrow bridge east of town is a safety concern for bikes, may impact recreation levels
- WSDOT has studied a roundabout at 5th Street and US 2, but due to incomplete information in comprehensive plan (economic growth, safety, etc.), was unable to justify its construction
  - Seasonal heavy traffic, but traffic fairly flat at about 5000 ADT over long study period
  - No available WSDOT program or priority funding for construction at this time
  - WSDOT willing to work with the City, but needs it in the comprehensive plan and will look to the City for funding (grants, City funds, state funds, etc.)
- City can adopt WSDOT access management plan by state statute
  - It's in everyone's interest to have access, but wide open is not the best access

## ***Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018***

### ***CPAT Team***

- City has interest in expanded ITS including VMS about congestion, available parking further down the road to help drivers make decisions about continuing or stopping off in town
- Need wayfinding signage to raise awareness of town and recreation activities
- Traffic on the US 2 is “not worth it” to go to Skykomish or Stevens Pass. Potential solution could be a collaboration between communities to provide parking and shuttles to the points of interest.
- No bed/bike infrastructure to cross US 2.
- If roundabout will be designed/build – need to provide an access to nearby businesses including Deli, gas station, etc.
- The town is interested to start addressing access management issues before roundabout.
  - An option to adopt WSDOT access management standards
- The snow is on the road about 3-4 months a year – have to plan for concerns about the snow cleaning

### ***Other Roadways***

- Miller river washout
  - King County planning to install “dead end” roundabout, improve culverts, starts soon
  - Town not supportive of County’s plan, removes a connection when trains block, dead end attracts undesirable uses
  - Properties on other side of the washout are losing value
  - Desires a non-motorized/emergency use connection, maybe a relocated bridge
  - The washout cut the safest way to the communities that are located on the west side of the Miller River
- City has adopted King County roadway standards
- Need wayfinding signage within the City to guide future recreation tourism traffic
- Need access to the ballfield area that isn’t along the current shoulder of US 2
  - Study looking at 9 possible routes, including ped/bike bridge with direct access
- **City needs a non-motorized plan with details on circulation for WSDOT funding/planning**
- Old Cascade Hwy and 5th St
  - There are a lot of u-turns when people come to town via 5th St, drive through the town and then return back to US 2.
  - The town is interested in creating a mini-roundabout to support the u-turns
  - Need to be designed for ladder trucks and snow cleaning machines from fire station that is located at 5th St and Old Cascade Hwy.

### ***Rail Concerns***

- Trains sometimes park overtop of Cascade Highway crossing for hours at a time, but try not to block 5th Street connection
  - Staging and requirement to clear rail tunnel for 20 minutes
  - Occasional train stoppages for multiple days, typically 20 minutes – 4 hours
- Train (shuttle) run between Monroe and Skykomish
  - May be an issue for double/single tracks
  - Old Pullman cars set up as housing (hotel or longer term)

## ***Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018***

### ***CPAT Team***

- Have had conversations with Snohomish County (Tom Tigen) about this
  - Could be included in state rail plan, City needs to engage/update Comp Plan to include it
- Ped/bike Railroad crossing at 5th St and Railroad Ave
  -

### ***Transit***

- King County Metro has recreation/hiking busses to Mt Si, etc., could add service
- King County Metro has added community van service for Skykomish
  - Volunteer drivers required for infrequent trips
  - Aimed at disadvantaged/non-driving populations, rather than commuters/convenience
- Community transit goes to Gold Bar and stops (park & ride)

### ***Airport***

- Airport (grass runway) is open from 1st of June to October
- Sees minimal use by fixed wing aircraft
  - Used for recreation (“golf tournament” and dog walking)
  - No tower, uncontrolled, planes do a visual check before landing
- Possible use as a parking lot outside of operating window, snow removal required
- New state airport comprehensive plan coming, but City’s lack of Comprehensive Plan will limit ability to coordinate with that state plan unless developed quickly
  - State may be planning to fence in airport to limit non-aircraft uses
- Aid helicopters and fire-fighting helicopter use is more frequent
  - A paved helipad is in development at the airport
  - Skykomish fire station serves as Stevens Pass EMS and would also serve new trails
- **Action item:** any shared use opportunities with the air field? Parking, etc

### ***Active Transportation***

- Active transportation items
  - Active transportation division of WSDOT – on and adjacent to state highways
    - Statewide active transportation plan update
- Comp plans are as much inside looking as they are outside
  - Other agencies look to cities’ comp plans to guide their planning operations
- PSRC BPAC
- Bike trail from Stevens pass
  - Paved bike paths
  - Huge bike attractions, high altitude training
  - Would start from new parking lot and come down to Skykomish
    - Follow old cascade highway
  - Trying to get iron goat trail opened up
- The town is interested in bike/ped infrastructure improvements throughout the town (Old Highway, connection to the Ballpark).
- Since there will be a bike trail from Stevens Pass to Skykomish, need to plan the facilities that will support the future growth.

## **Discussion – Regional Issues**

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### *County Support*

- Skykomish is politically part of King county, but functionally Snohomish County
- King county does advocate for them, allocates resources
  - Block development grants
  - 4Culture – building restoration
  - Flood control district
  - County operates the library
- King county has shuttles to the trailheads, but there is no service to Skykomish – it would be great to have shuttles to Monroe (at least) or Stevens pass and stop at Skykomish. The closest bus service is in Gold Bar.
- PSRC rural towns centers and corridors program
  - Funding opportunity for active transportation needs

## **Discussion – Recreation**

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- Desire for improved water access for river rafting on the east side of the 5th Street bridge or at the Ballpark.
  - Concern with trailer access based on roadway geometry, available right of way
  - Current steep access on the west side isn't ADA compatible and difficult to get in equipment without blocking local roads
  - Water level is low in August at the Ballpark, but it's ok near the bridge.
  - Skykomish has ROW to the river.
- Economic development (rafting and other recreational uses) will impact available parking
  - Concerned that they don't have enough
- Mountain biking tourism opportunities (outside of town) for year-round recreation
  - Stevens pass open to bike access (day use), relatively new service
  - Old cascade highway might connect directly in the future
  - Down-the-mountain bikes aren't road capable
  - **Capture opportunities for restaurants, repair shops, etc.**
- Bike tourism currently at 2-3 weeks a year, likely to expand
- They see people from Canada and Oregon coming for competitions and festivals
- Maloney (Peak) Trail – mountain bike trail south of town
  - Future signature mountain biking trail and hiking trails, over 2,200' elevation change
  - They have a trail head in town which could have a future fee shuttle to serve the trail, or (free?) shuttles to the Forest Service parking lot (drivable) up the hill
  - Working with County and Forterra to acquire the property
  - Evergreen bike alliance has been in contact about constructing the trail
    - They'll build and maintain trail with volunteers
  - Trail is already flagged for environmental studies



## **Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018**

### **CPAT Team**

- Mountain bike pump track already in place next to miniature railroad
- The City has been contacted by the owner of Big Bear and they want to make it more saleable
  - Any improvements would require a traffic study be submitted to WSDOT, compliant with access management (current and future)
- USFS sledding hill another day use opportunity
- Participation in Snohomish County sustainable tourism raised awareness that they haven't really paid attention to leisure recreation and focused on active recreation
  - Lack of day-use opportunities in the area, "where do I go for a stroll by the river"
- Public bocce ball court (future fee if damage occurs) coming in downtown area
- Gear rental could be potential business opportunity when more people will be attracted to the area.
- River coalition – walking along the river, picnic areas.

### **Discussion – Lodging**

---

- No lodging other than Cascadia, need to expand lodging in town
  - Economics of commercial (chain) lodging, they don't have it and won't unless they develop the destination aspect of the market, needs 200 units
    - No business activity to fill rooms Monday-Thursday and make economics work
    - Needs to be a true destination (mountain biking or skiing) to attract a chain
  - Smaller lodging operation (<20 units) would be ideal
- Nearby and in-town campgrounds are full through the summer with regional campers, not recreation tourism
  - Town has moved into developing campsites with the level of services and support to allow charging of reasonable fees
  - The campground has an online booking system  
(<https://www.hipcamp.com/washington/skykomish-ballpark/skykomish-campground> )
- Potential to create a co-op that markets the best rentals in the area, replace individual VRBO and Airbnb listings
  - Consistent marketing, market data, minimum standards and enforcement/nuisances
  - If marketing and management are high quality, occupancy is high, convince owners
- City permit required for VRBO and Airbnb may be easier than co-op, but difficult to enforce, doesn't have consistent marketing benefit

### **Discussion – Housing**

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- 90% of employees of Stevens Pass live in Leavenworth, despite longer drive
  - Skykomish offers less things to do, restaurants, housing options
  - However, the Stevens Pass employee are not able to afford housing in Leavenworth because of the growth in rent prices
- Make sure there are policies in place for parking and local road improvements
- They're looking at forest service land (where shop, post office and some residents are)
  - Would be the end of the Maloney Trail

## **Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018**

### **CPAT Team**

- Develop facilities there for the end of the trail; bathrooms, shuttle terminal, parking
  - They own the land to do that
- Population declined from 60s to 80s
  - Normal based on resource extraction
  - 80s-2015, because of contamination, nothing happened
  - “Patient just coming out of surgery, putting it into rehab”

### **Discussion – USFS**

---

- USFS is seeing an increase in unsafe parking on US 2, extending into travel lanes; they’re working through parking issues as funding and other resources allow
  - Day use is seeing huge increases, 350 cars parked at 80-car lot at Lake Serene
  - Looking to construct a lot at Eagle falls with WSDOT, BN and other partners (City?)
- Climactic warming is shifting uses along the highway
- Graffiti on rocks a big issue
- Hoping to put “real” facilities in places they’re getting undesirable use
- Maloney trails “will bring a lot of people to this town”
  - Saturday/Sunday on a summer afternoon could see 1-2,000 people come through town
  - Trails will bring economic opportunities for shuttle services, but safe parking in-town will be a concern
    - Parking on-site being developed, significant number of spaces available
  - **Get in front of guiding visitors to locations you want them to be (parking, routing to trailhead, restaurants and lodging, restrooms, emergency services, etc.)**
- USFS trail head will be a fee site (NW Forest Pass) with a vault toilet
- Parking fees aren’t site specific, pooled at regional office and redistributed out to the forest
- USFS working on merging NW Forest Pass with Discover Pass
- Forest service is the owner of the project, Forterra leading
  - Build with WA Trail and Evergreen mountain bike alliance, with a 10-year renewable MOU for trail maintenance (no cost to the City for trail maintenance)
- Because of the land type that’s up there they need two summers of environmental surveys for botanical species, looking to have environmental completed by 2020 and possible trail open that summer
- Tulalip tribal coalition is involved as a partner, concerned on all recreation project expansions
  - Tribe thought is forest service is inviting more people and tribe wants to protect their heritage uses and their historical sites
  - USFS is in government to government agreements with the Tulalip to protect their culture and heritage and they do not make movements without Tulalip’s approval
  - Mitigation (murals and artwork) bring the Tulalip presence into the recreation areas
  - “Sky” is truncating a tribal name of “Skykomish”
- Categorical exclusion in progress for a small sledding hill in Skykomish (3rd/4th Street area)
  - Some grading and vegetation work required
  - Hoping to have up and running by late 2019

## ***Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018***

### **CPAT Team**

- No legal method to ticket/restrict access to USFS lands, but no restriction on shuttle services
  - Shuttle services with a downhill guide would require USFS permits
  - Organized races/events would require USFS permits

### **Discussion – Stevens Pass**

---

- Stevens Pass parking is a major discussion, a lot in the works including parking fees
  - Potential for a transit system with a transfer point in Skykomish
- Stevens Pass has been sold to Vail Resorts
  - No longer just investors holding until the next sale
  - Scale of dreaming and valley real estate interest has shifted significantly

### **Discussion – City Master Plan**

---

- Potential to develop properties near future trailhead for Maloney Peak, owned by the City
  - Could include town center, town hall, public bathrooms, shuttle center, public conference center or event venue
  - Parking is limited on-site and would be a significant component of design
- The City is lacking a comprehensive master plan with all the concepts together to plan out these facilities (recreation, municipal, parking, etc.) for the future
- New levy from reclamation project protected the western part of the town, changed the velocity and flow of the water. Flooding remains a concern, but not included in this plan
- There is interest in future public festivals and events (e.g. music fest, jj hill festival, 4th July picnic, meteor shower), especially as recreation opportunities ramp up, but on-street parking is a concern
  - Rebuilt ballpark would be another potential festival venue
  - RCW requirements for festivals in excess of 2,000 attendees
  - History of successful festivals along Railroad Avenue
- No existing dark skies policies or requirements, but interested in having them to protect other recreation opportunities
- Develop street light policies to protect Skykomish from the light pollution at night
- Develop policies to preserve Skykomish historic character along Railroad Ave

### **Discussion – Priorities**

---

- Creating an access management plan, then enforcing it and eventually and comprehensive plan
- Getting grants for designs, then construction grants; need 50-75% compatible designs
- Option of leasing ROW from State (for deli area that is WSDOT property)
- Possibility of mixed-use lanes for pedestrian and bikes
- Maloney Trail Economic opportunities
  - Parking issues

## ***Notes from the roundtable discussion, June 29th, 2018***

### **CPAT Team**

- Traffic congestion
  - Leverage the town amenities
- Issues with ROW at Big Bear
- ITS for traffic on US-2 to force people to go into Skykomish
- Potential for overflow parking at Skykomish airport
- Iron Goat Trail – becoming more bike-friendly
- Lack of leisure recreation such as strolling along the river or flat trails
- Requirement of music festival needs to conform with King County standards

### **Discussion – Visioning**

---

- DEVELOPING SKYKOMISH AS A DESTINATION
  - With??
    - Mountain biking
    - Hiking
    - Signature trail (Maloney trail)
    - Star-gazing
    - Skiing at Stevens Pass
  - How it helps town??
    - Develop lodging that leverages activities
  - Quick Strategy
    - Gateway signage
    - Entrance center
    - Bridge as an icon

# Skykomish Gateway Background Report

CPAT Roundtable Agenda & Background Report  
June 2018



A discussion with the Washington State American Planning Association's (APA)  
Community Planning Assistant Team (CPAT)  
For the June 29th Workshop



American Planning Association  
**Washington Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*



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## Purpose & Study Area

The Town of Skykomish has invited the Washington State's American Planning Association Chapter to bring a CPAT (Community Planning Assistant Team) to help invigorate the town. The goal of this exercise is to help Skykomish address comments in the state Department of Transportation Skykomish Planning Study dated August 24, 2017. WSDOT conducted a planning study in Skykomish in 2017 where socio-economic, land use, and transportation related data sets were evaluated and analyzed. Moreover, the public meeting with the Town of Skykomish was held where community concerns and issues related to US 2, and town's active transportation vision were discussed. WSDOT concluded that traffic analysis did not reveal a baseline need for prioritized infrastructure improvements at this time. The Study recommends that Town update its comprehensive plan and incorporate several initiatives including an access management plan; an active transportation vision and policies; and a bicycle/pedestrian wayfinding signage plan.

## Who is CPAT?

The Washington chapter of the American Planning Association (APA) offers communities (cities, towns, neighborhoods, rural villages) assistance of professional planners and specialist in articulating visions, solving problems or resolving issues. This invited CPAT consists of professional *volunteers* with extensive experience in urban design, urban strategy, planning, economic development, and transportation planning.

## Participants

### CPAT Volunteers:

- Patrick Lynch, AICP – Transpo Group, Transportation Planner, CPAT Co-Chair
- Bob Bengford, AICP – MAKERS, Land Use Planner, CPAT Co-Chair
- Ryan Peterson, PE – Transpo Group, Traffic Engineer
- Rishabh Ukil – MAKERS, Landscape Designer
- Polina Butrina – Transpo Group, Transportation Engineer
- Emma Argiroff – UW Graduate Urban Planning Student

This group has been working with the Mayor of Skykomish, Tony Grider, to assemble a core team of varied interests and stakeholders with whom to have focused discussions.

### Core Discussion Group

With the Mayor's input, a core group of approximately 10 individuals is being assembled to help formulate a viable future strategy. This group will include representatives from the Town of Skykomish



Council, Washington State Department of Transportation, King County, US Forest Service, and Stevens Pass Resort.

The discussions with this group will occur in closed sessions and follow “Chatham House Rules”. This means nothing any individual may say will be attributed directly to that person. This is a well-established basis to assure open and frank discussions.

### **Chatham House Rule**

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed”.

### **Community & Regional Stakeholders**

A wider set of community and regional stakeholders will be invited to the event’s welcoming session at the beginning of the day. This includes public officials and staff from the Town of Skykomish, local experts and community leaders in real estate, business, health, education, environment, transportation, utilities, wine industry, and recreation, and active Skykomish residents.

### **General Community Members**

Members of the public will be invited to the afternoon/evening open house to hear the results from the event and are encouraged to comment on the concepts and strategies.

## Process

The following 4 steps outline the process for this CPAT effort:

### **1. Community discussion of issues relating to the improvement of Skykomish (open session)**

The CPAT team will facilitate an open house forum in which selected community voices will be given allotted time to state their concerns and suggestions (3 minutes each). Any remaining time will be given to anyone attending to do the same. This session will cover aspects of:

- Visionary ideas for long-term future
- Short, medium and longer term economic and business development prospects
- Transportation issues including: routing, traffic calming and streetscape improvement
- Development of a town entry and gateway
- Community improvement
- Strategic development opportunities
- Leveraging any locational advantages (including proximity to Stevens Pass Resort)

### **2. Refine and develop strategies for improving Skykomish (closed session)**

Following the comprehensive morning discussion, the CPAT team and a select group of round table panelists will focus on a smaller set of concepts and strategies that could be examined in greater detail. CPAT members will assist in the creation of design concept visualizations and annotated maps documenting key elements of the strategies.

For an effective and targeted discussion, this and the following closed charrette session (#3) both require the continuous participation of no more than 12 individuals, plus city and the CPAT team and staff in a round-table format. The final list of core round-table invitees will be the outcome of a detailed advance consultation with Mayor's office. These participants will comprise solely of individuals with decision making authority in their parent organizations. To be effective, the Mayor's office agrees to help ensure these selected individuals will be able to fully engage in the dialogue (i.e. not be passive observers), and remain present for the entire duration of this charrette.

All round table dialogue will be held using "Chatham House" rules, which means no comment made, or recorded during this closed session will be attributed to any participant. This is meant to insure as free and frank a discussion as possible.

### **3. Create an Action Plan Outline to implement improvement strategies (closed session)**

For each strategy developed by the team, the action plan will identify priorities, time frame, implementing party, and other details essential to realizing desired outcomes.

### **4. Debrief the community (open session)**

The findings of the closed session will be presented in an open house setting. The round table participants will remain available to answer questions from all attending stakeholders.

**Note:** The outcome of this involvement is intended to stimulate broad community discussion. It will be up to Skykomish and its citizens to further discuss, refine, adopt and implement any recommendations that emerge from this effort in a schedule of their own choosing.

## Roundtable Structure & Agenda

The intended deliberations will occur over one day (June 29th, 2018). Events for the day will be structured as follows:

### **I. Mayor welcome and group introductions (9:00 to 9:30)**

Mayor or designee welcomes the participants and the participants introduce themselves. The project sponsor describes the day's goals, encouraging creative and resourceful participation from all attendees.

### **II. Round robin discussion to identify big picture goals (9:30 to 10:30)**

Facilitated by CPAT sponsor and chair. The group will begin to list strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats related to the top priority goals and the key project areas, including the US 2 and 5th Street intersection.

### **III. Break out groups and walking tours - (10:30 to 12:00)**

The CPAT team and workshop participants may break up into teams to tackle the key project areas. The teams will discuss issues associated with each area and conduct a walking tour of the area –led by Skykomish public officials, staff, or key stakeholders. The groups will observe opportunities for public improvements, signage, and private development and the whole range of access, identity, and community design issues associated with the areas.

### **IV. Working lunch– (12:00 to 1:30)**

Over lunch, the breakout groups will appoint a spokesperson and report their observations and findings after the simultaneous discussion and walking tour. Discussion for the rest of lunch focusing on obstacles and solutions based on the information from the walking tour.

### **V. Combined Work Session - (1:30 to 2:30)**

Each breakout group will report out to the larger group. Each group will identify their priority action steps and ideas about resources and implementing strategies for each goal. The deliverable from this session is consensus on priorities.

### **VI. Develop action plan that assigns tasks, timeline and resources - (2:30 to 4:00)**

CPAT team will do this separately.

### **VII. Public open house (4:00 to 5:30 p.m.)**

Present the action plan in a PowerPoint format, generally discuss the day's work and emphasize the next steps on the part of the Town and CPAT. This will be marketed as a separate event.

## Post Event

In the weeks following the event, the CPAT team will prepare a summary of the day's discussions and a list of recommendations for implementation priorities, building on the presentation made at the Executive Work Session. This will be in a letter form including an action plan. You may choose to produce a more polished report based on this action plan for publicity, resource implementation and official adoption.

## Exploratory Questions

A preliminary assessment of background material made available by the city and other agencies raises several questions that will be open for discussion.

### **Economy**

- Can the current (or projected) tax base support what is needed or desired?
- What new or enhanced changes could leverage an increase the tax base without overly stressing existing town infrastructure, or the current citizenry?
- How can the Town of Skykomish develop strategic partnerships with the Stevens Pass resort, USFS, or other entities that are stakeholders in the recreation-based tourism industry?

### **Transportation**

- What can be done to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity across US-2 and throughout Town?
- What access management strategies and intersection improvements should be considered at US-2/5th Street?
- How can the Town gateway treatments and wayfinding signage be improved?
- Do the Town's roadway design standards consistent with Town's vision and industry best practices?

### **Environmental**

- Are there any remaining environmental issues that need attention and resources?
- What flood mitigation measures are in place for areas under threat?

### **Community and Open Space**

- Can open space (i.e. school playgrounds, libraries, parking lots/spaces, parks, the community center, sidewalks etc.) be adapted to allow different purposes that will enhance the community (i.e. public markets, festivals, etc.)?

### **Fiscal Health**

- What fiscal priorities constrain the Town's ability to invest in itself?
- Is Skykomish's infrastructure too much or too little? Is it affordable? What is the right balance?



## Regional Context

The town of Skykomish, Washington is located in King County along the South Fork Skykomish River. It is approximately 20 miles southeast from Gold Bar, 16 miles west of Stevens Pass Mountain Resort, and 51 miles northwest of Leavenworth. The town of Skykomish is roughly 0.34 square miles, or 217.6 acres. U.S Highway 2, or Stevens Pass Highway, serves as one of the town's main roads bringing in visitors from both sides of the Cascades.

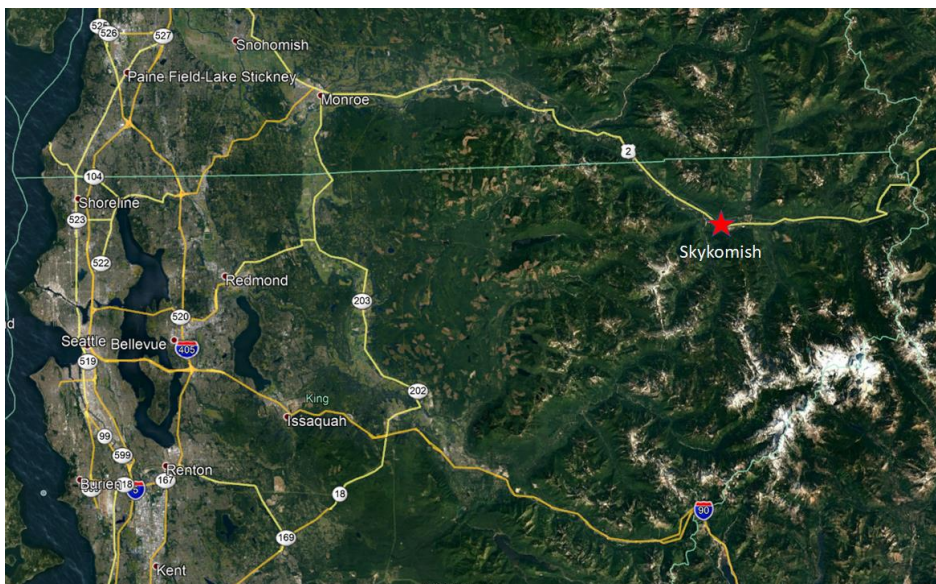
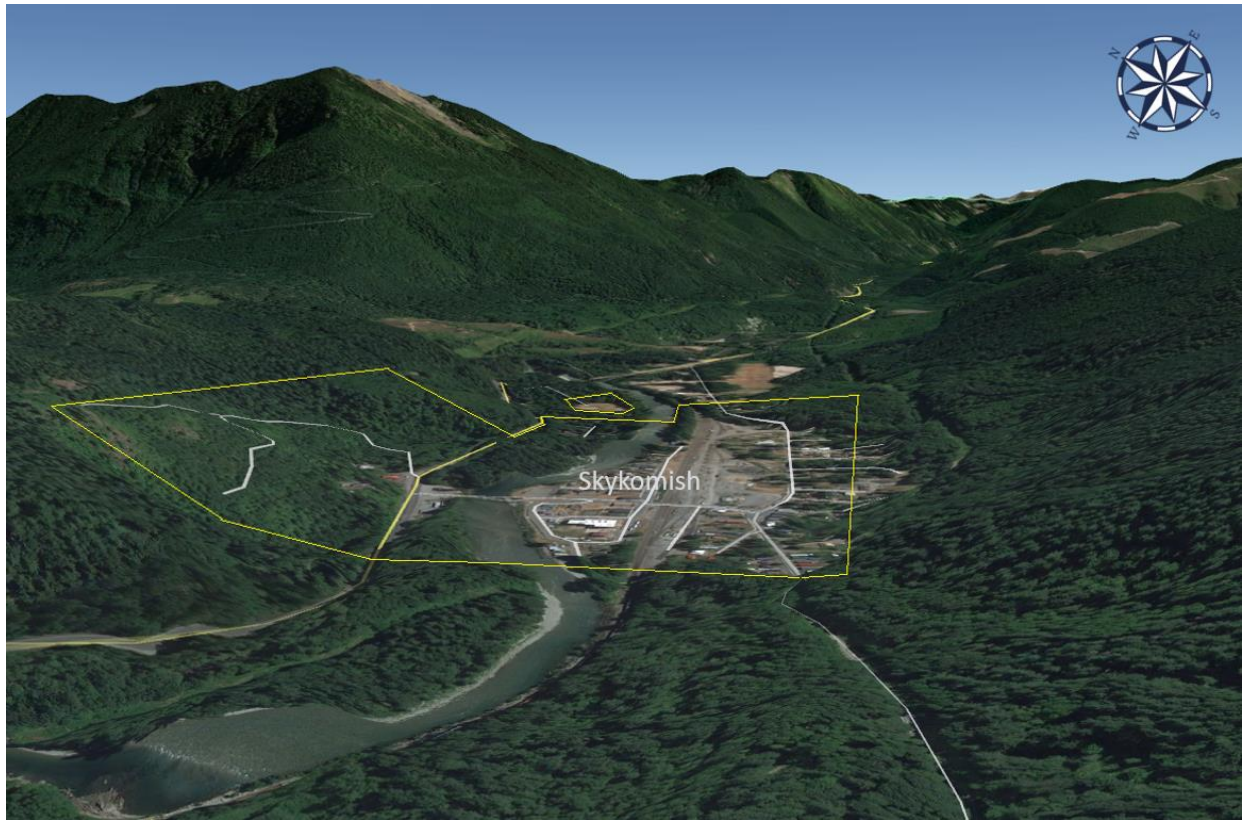


Figure 1: . Skykomish Town Location, Google Maps

Skykomish is considered the gateway to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, a roughly 394,000 acre-area in the Central Cascades. This wilderness area hosts some astonishing sites, including the Enchantment Lakes area, numerous mountain peaks, and 700 lakes and mountain ponds. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail cuts through this area, running from Stevens Pass to Snoqualmie Pass.



Figure 2: Skykomish Town Limits, Google Maps



*Figure 3: 3D map of Skykomish Town, Google Earth*



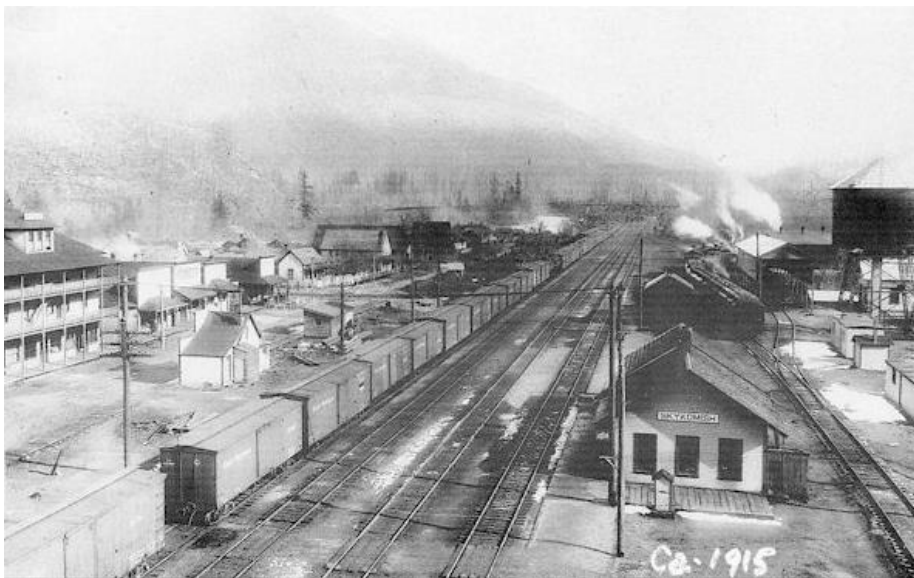
## History

Skykomish was originally settled in 1893 by John Maloney, who created a siding for the Great Northern Railroad. On June 18, 1893, the first scheduled train, engineered by Patrick McEvoy, passed through Skykomish (McEvoy later settled in Skykomish and opened a saloon known as the Olympia). During this time, Skykomish provided many other accommodations for railroad workers, including a supply store, post office, hotel and restaurant with card rooms. The town was incorporated on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1909, with Maloney as mayor.



*Figure 4: Great Northern Railway Trains (Department of Ecology, n.d.)*

In 1894, the first depot was built on the south side of the tracks. In 1922, this depot was moved to the north side of the tracks when the division point of the railroad was re-established in Skykomish. From 1922 to 1923, many run-down buildings along the south-side were removed and replaced with a park, called Depot Park. Additionally, the Cascadia Hotel was constructed, replacing a boarding house.



*Figure 5: Image of Skykomish circa 1915, by Lee Pickett- Courtesy Mrs. Dorothy Pickett (Dellinger, n.d.)*

During the height of railroading in the 1920s, there were approximately 500 permanent residents in Skykomish. Up to eight passenger trains per day stopped in the town, including some of the finest



trains, such as the Empire Builder and Great Northern Flyer. The notorious ‘Dinky’ train provided daily transport from Skykomish to Seattle. During this time, an eight-mile tunnel was constructed through Stevens Pass for the Great Northern Railway. In order to get trains through the tunnel, the railway was electrified from Wenatchee to Skykomish.

Over the years, railroad activity from the Great Northern Railway, now BNSF Railway, contaminated Skykomish’s groundwater and soil with oil, lead, arsenic, and other heavy metals. From 2005 to 2011, BNSF Railway, worked under the oversight of the Washington Department of Ecology to remove contaminants and restore water and soil quality. Major accomplishments included the removal of over 350,000 tons of contaminated soil, the removal and recycling of approximately 218,000 gallons of oil, and restoration of 21 properties and 2 wetlands. They are working on a plan to complete the cleanup of the Skykomish School during the summer of 2018. The town is now mostly free of contaminants.



*Figure 6: The cleanup process in the Town of Skykomish (The Seattle Times, Greenfield Advisors.)*

Today, much of Skykomish’s economy is focused on tourism, especially after the Stevens Pass ski area was enlarged in the 1960s and 1970s. The town’s beautiful natural surroundings and historic past generate much of this tourism. Unfortunately, many historic buildings were destroyed in a 1970 when a fire that erupted in the business district. However, the town center hosts many of the surviving railroad buildings, paying tribute to its romantic past.

## References

Berryman & Henigar, 2005  
Dellinger, n.d.  
Department of Ecology, n.d.  
Town of Skykomish, n.d

## Parks & Recreation

The town of Skykomish is surrounded by a breathtaking natural environment and hosts a variety of outdoor activities from hiking to whitewater rafting. The town also features historic railroad buildings from the early twentieth century railroad era.

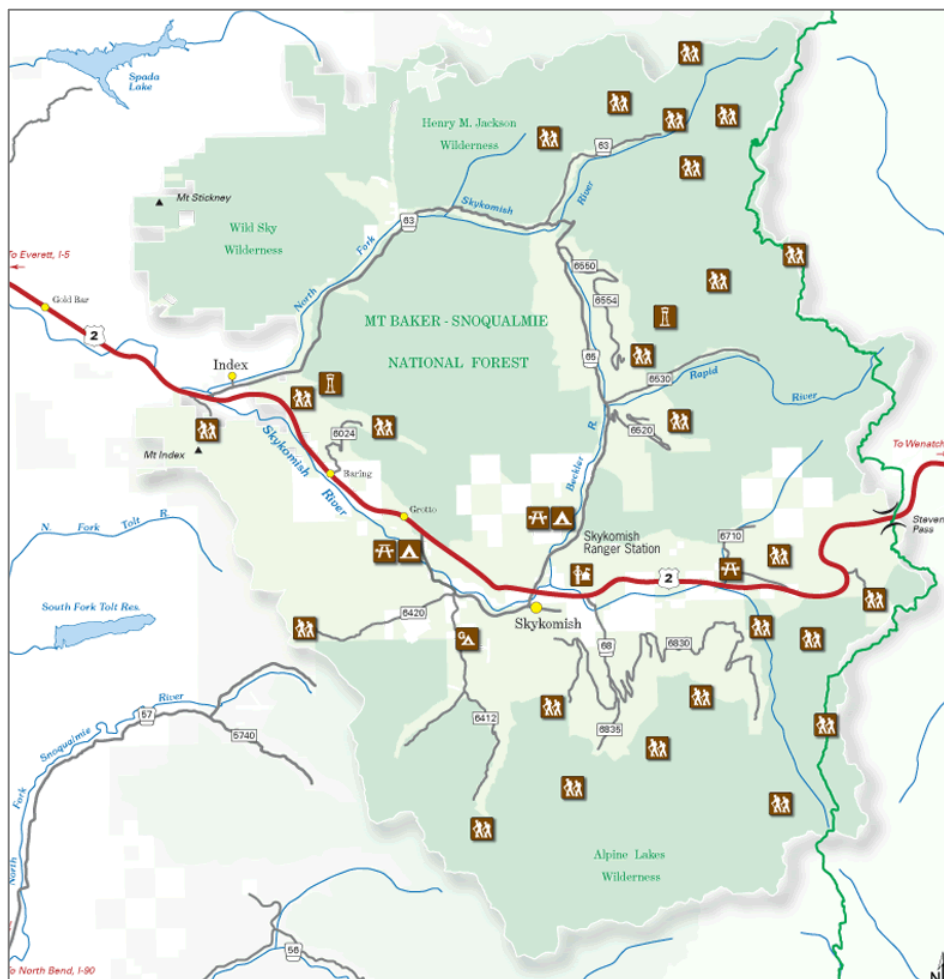


Figure 7: Camping, hiking, and picnicking opportunities in the Skykomish region (U.S. Forest Service)

### Parks

- **Skykomish Ballpark:** This beautiful baseball diamond is hidden away from Highway 2, surrounded by old-growth forests. It is the perfect place to host events, such as the Fourth of July Fireworks Celebration, Old Timers Picnic, Music in the Park, and antique car shows.
- **Railroad Ave Park:** Located next to the railroad tracks, this park is a popular with train enthusiasts and photographers. Skykomish Open Air Farmers Market is hosted here from May until September.
- **Skykomish Depot Park:** This park features the Town Visitor Center and is home to the historic Skykomish Great Northern Depot and Great Northern & Cascade Railway, a miniature, rideable railroad.

## Recreation

- **Johnston Ridge Trail:** This 8.2-mile round-trip trail challenges mountain bikers physically and technically. The views along the route, especially of Scorpion Mountain are breathtaking, and definitely worth the challenge.
- **Skykomish Peak Circumnavigation:** A beautiful 24-mile round trip hike west of Skykomish.
- **Road 6516-110, Klinger Ridge:** This nearly 5,000 ft summit provides a panoramic view of the Skykomish River and mountain peaks in the Alpine Lakes area, including Mount Daniel and Chimney Peak.
- **Iron Goat Trail:** This ADA-accessible trail provides a pleasant pathway through second-growth forest along the Great Northern Railroad route. Hike this trail in the spring to see a beautiful display of wildflowers.
- **Maloney Creek:** A tributary to the Skykomish River, this creek also provides important habitat for salmon.
- **Skykomish River:** Great for sightseeing, salmon fishing, and watersports such as kayaking. This river also provides rafting opportunities for all levels, from lazy floats down the river to class V whitewater adventures.

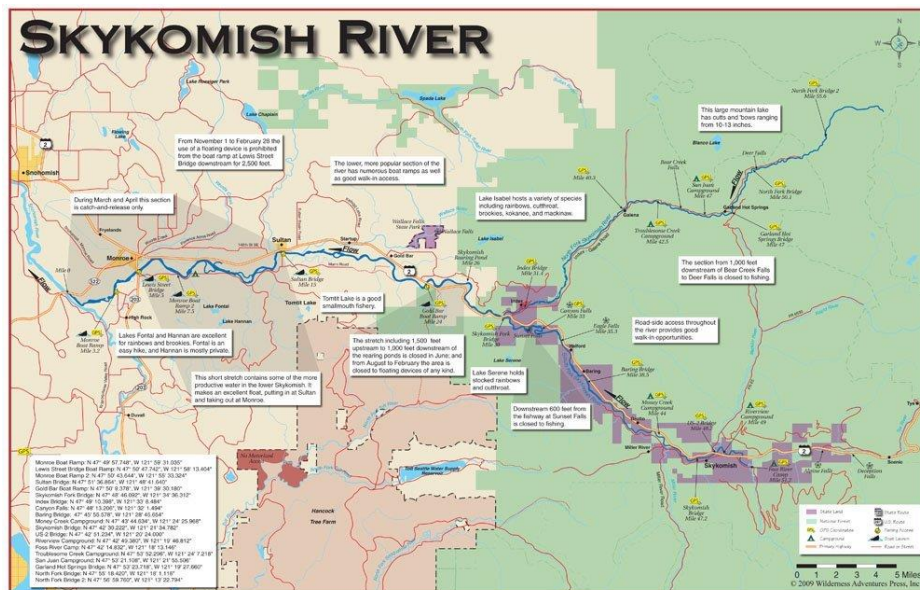


Figure 8: Skykomish River Fishing Map

## References:

Town of Skykomish, n.d.

## Demographics

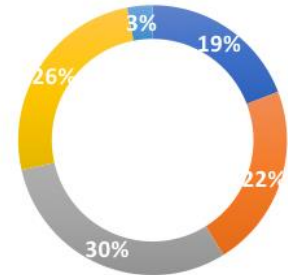
The town of Skykomish is the least populated incorporated town in King County. The Washington Office of Financial Management estimates the 2017 population to be approximately 200 people. This indicates that the population has remained stable since the 2010 Census recorded a population of 198. According to the 2010 Census, Skykomish's population is relatively evenly distributed between the age groups of 0-19 and 20-39 years, with a slightly higher percentage between 40-59 and 60-79 years, and a smaller percentage of residents over 80. The median age of Skykomish residents is 51.9 years. Skykomish is approximately 57.1% male and 42.9% female. Its ethnic makeup is approximately 95.5% white, 1.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1.5% Asian, 1% African American, and 0.5% mixed race. Approximately 1.5% of the population is Hispanic or Latino by any race.

As stated by the 2010 Census, there are 95 households in Skykomish, with an average of 2.08 people per household. Family households make up 47.4% of the total, and 14.7% of households live with related children under the age of 18. Non-family households make up 52.6% of the total; 44.2% are live-alone households. The total number of housing units in Skykomish is 168, with a 43.5% vacancy rate. The rate of occupied housing units is 56.5%, with a 76.8% owner-occupied rate, and 23.2% owner occupied rate.

### References:

U.S. Census, 2010

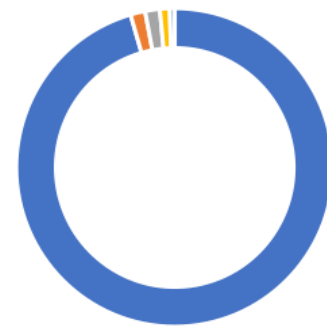
### Age Distribution, 2010



- Under 20 years
- Between 20 and 39 years
- 40 to 59 years
- 60 to 79 years
- 80 years and over

Figure 9: Age Distribution, U.S. Census

### Ethnicity, 2010



- White
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black
- Two or more races

Figure 10: Ethnicity Distribution, U.S. Census

## Economy

### Employment

The total number of jobs in the Town of Skykomish is relatively small with an estimated 59 jobs in 2015. Employment has increased substantially between 2012 and 2013 from 63 jobs in 2011 to 156 and 162 in 2012 and 2013. After, number of jobs dropped to 54 in 2014.

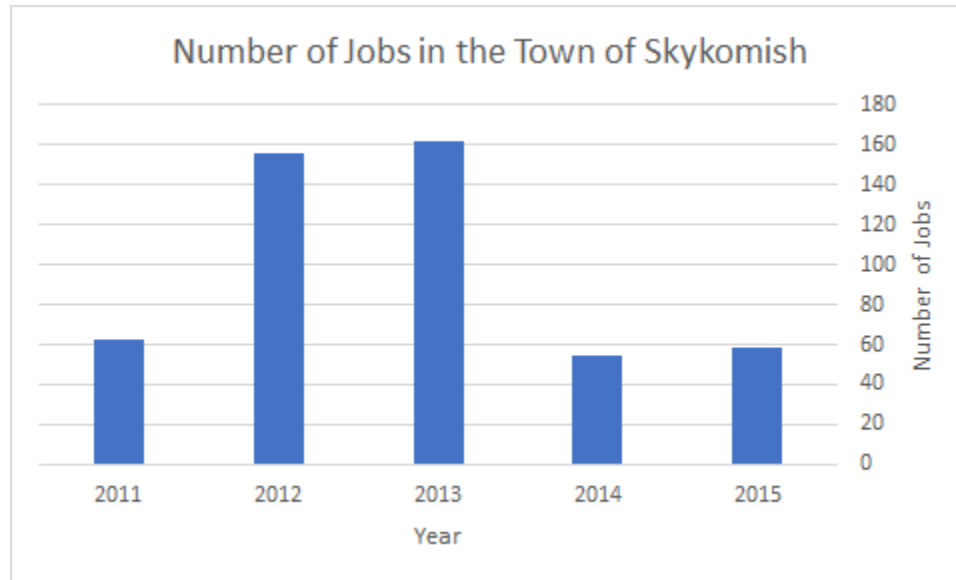


Figure 11: Number of Jobs, US Census, Longitudinal Employee-Household Dynamics

The most common job groups in the Town of Skykomish in 2015 are Educational Services and Transportation and Warehousing.

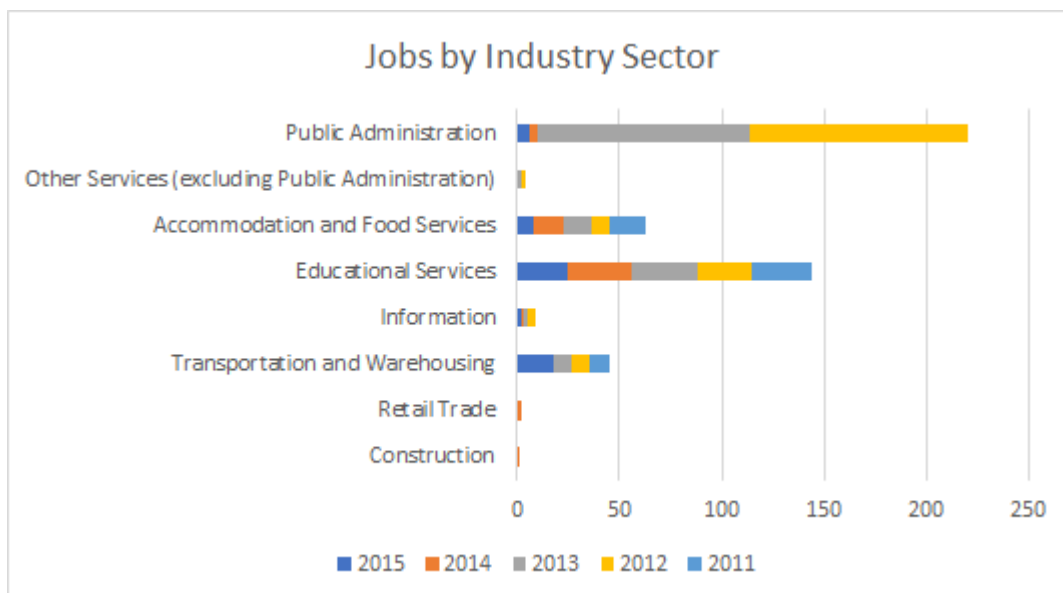


Figure 12: Number of Jobs, US Census, Longitudinal Employee-Household Dynamics



In 2015 majority of jobs in the Town of Skykomish were in Education and Transportation and warehousing sectors. Between 2014 and 2015 there was a spike of number of jobs in Public Administration sector.

According to Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) survey, no residents of the Town of Skykomish work in the town. Conversely, the large majority of those who work in the Town of Skykomish also live elsewhere and commute to the Town of Skykomish. However, LEHD survey was conducted in 2015 and the information might be outdated.



*Figure 13: Commute Inflow-Outflow, US Census, Longitudinal Employee-Household Dynamics*

### **Taxable Retail Sales**

Total taxable retail sales in the town (adjusted for inflation) have been decreasing from 2008 (\$20.9 million) to 2012 (\$5.4 million). The peak of taxable retail was in 2008 due to the amount of taxable retail sales generated by construction activity in the town.

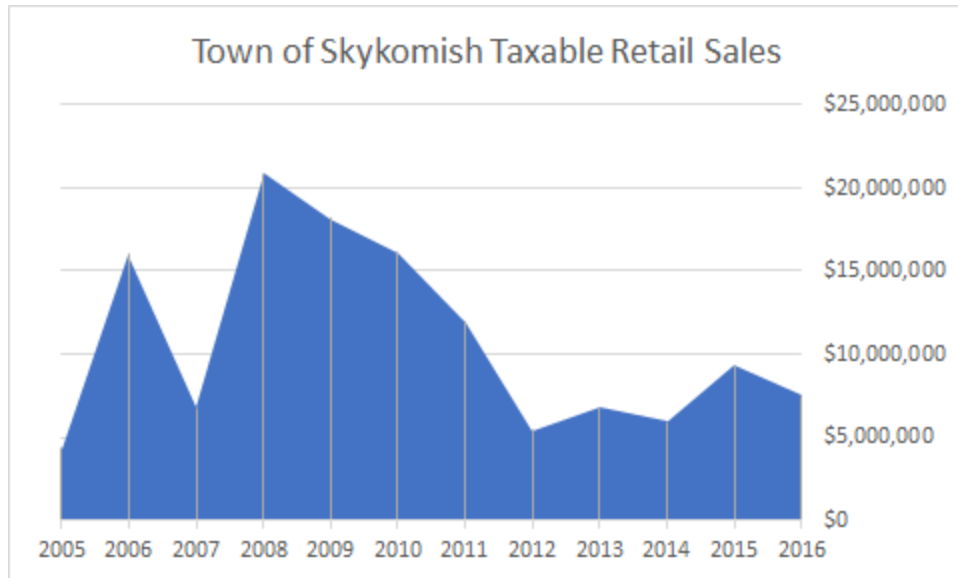


Figure 14: Washington State Department of Revenue

**References:**

U.S. Census, Longitudinal Employee-Household Dynamics  
Washington State Department of Revenue



## Education

The Skykomish School District consists of one K-12 school, which also serves the communities of Grotto, Timberlane, Mill Town, Baring, and Index. The school district offers a variety of programs, including full-day Kindergarten, an after school and summer school program, extra-curricular activities, and courses such as Microsoft Academy. Additionally, the town is a regional center for environmental education given its beautiful location.

According to the Washington Office of Public Instruction, there were a total of 57 students in the Skykomish school district at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, 30 of which were male, and 27 were female. Approximately 10.5% of students were of Hispanic or Latino descent, and 89.5% of students were white. In May 2017, 81.6% of students were receiving free or reduced-price lunches. By the end of the 2016-17 school year, enrollment had declined slightly to 49 students. (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2017).

The American Community Survey estimates for educational attainment are divided into two groups based on US Census data. The first group is ages 18 to 24 years and the second group is 25 years or older. In 2016, there were only 2 Skykomish residents in the 18-24 year age group, both of which had attained a high school education. For the 25 year and older age group, approximately 7.7% of the group had no high school diploma, 31.6% had graduated from high school or equivalent, 34.2% had some college and no degree, 8.5% had an Associate's degree, 9.4% a Bachelor's degree, and 8.5% a graduate or professional degree.

Education Attainment for  
Population 25 years and Older,  
2016

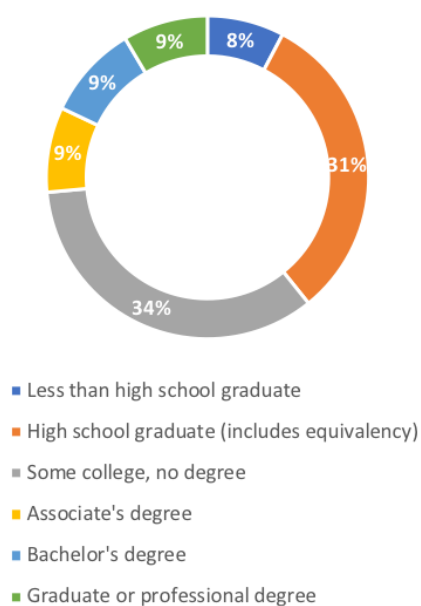


Figure 15: Education Attainment, American Community Survey

### References:

American Community Survey, n.d.  
Skykomish School District, n.d.

# Transportation

## Relevant city planning documents

### *Skykomish Comprehensive Plan (2015 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update)*

The plan contains all the geographic and functional elements, summarizes the major policies and proposals of a town. Recent planning activities were integrated, such as the Vision for Skykomish and the Shoreline Master Program.

### *2005 The Vision of Skykomish*

In 2005, the Town received funding from the Washington State Department of Ecology for a community visioning project. The objective of the visioning project was to “paint a picture” of the future of Skykomish that represents the community and would guide decisions related to cleanup activities. The vision was adopted in August 2005. The vision served as the foundation for later parks and shoreline planning, as well as the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update.

### *2005 Skykomish Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan (PTOS)*

The Comprehensive Plan contained general language that addressed planning for parks, trails, and open space. However, the Town did not have parks plan in place at the time of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update. For the development of PTOS, themes were established by the community through public input to categorize existing parks, trails and open space areas in Skykomish and to formulate recommendations for future parks planning.

### *2010 Shoreline Master Program Update*

The Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is a planning document that outlines the Town’s shoreline goals and policies and establishes regulations for development occurring in that area.

## Streets and highways - Regional Context

The town of Skykomish contains a network of roads and pedestrian facilities. The majority of the roads are owned and operated by the town with an exception of US Highway 2 (US 2) and minor private roads. The Town of Skykomish is accessible to the Eastern and Western Washington through the US 2 that is a designated as a Highway of Statewide Significance. US 2 provides connection to Monroe (34 miles) and Everett (50 miles) to the west and Wenatchee (73.3 miles) and Cashmere (62.6 miles) to the east. The town of Skykomish is divided to the north and south by the South Fork Skykomish River and US 2.



Figure 16: Stevens Pass Greenway Scenic Byway Map, American Community Survey, WSDOT

US 2 runs across the Washington state from the city of Everett to the city of Newport. One of the US 2 National Scenic Byways, the Stevens Pass Greenway that starts from Monroe, WA to Peshastin, WA, passes through the town of Skykomish. US 2 starts as a four-lanes highway at Everett and turns to two-lanes highway at a diamond interchange with SR 9. There is one roundabout on the US 2 stretch between Everett and Skykomish located between the City of Sultan and Startup. US 2 contains sharp curves and narrow shoulders. There are several left-turn pockets and a two-way turn lane in the Town of Skykomish vicinity on US 2. Shoulder widths range from 0-8 feet, with most being very narrow.

US 2 connects Western part of Washington State to the Stevens Pass Ski Area, trailheads for the Pacific Crest Trail (in addition to many more trailheads in the Wenatchee National Forest and Mt. Baker / Snoqualmie National Forest), and places of interest such as Leavenworth. According to Stevens Pass Master Development Plan, an average skiing season length is 130 days of the year and it brings 3,175 skiers per day to the area. Over the last 10 years, the Stevens Pass Ski Area visited 412,575 skiers and snowboarders per season. The Town of Skykomish is located 16 miles west from the Stevens Pass Ski Area and is the closest accommodation area to the resort.

### **US 2 and 5th Street Intersection**

The Town of Skykomish can be accessed via 5th Street and US 2. This T- intersection is uncontrolled, there are no pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Current speed-limit is 50 MPH along this part of US 2.



*Figure 17. Aerial view to 5th St and US 2 intersection*





Figure 18. Google Street View to 5th St and US 2 intersection, EB direction along US 2



Figure 19. Google Street View to 5th St and US 2 intersection, WB direction along US 2



Figure 20. Google Street View to 5th St and US 2 intersection

### Functional Street Classification

Table 1 lists the Town of Skykomish streets by functional classification. All other streets within the town are classified as local access. There are no streets classified as minor arterials.

Table 1. Functional Street Classification

Street Name	Classification
US 2	Principal Arterial
5th Street N	Collector Arterial
Cascade Highway East	Collector Arterial
Cascade Highway West	Collector Arterial

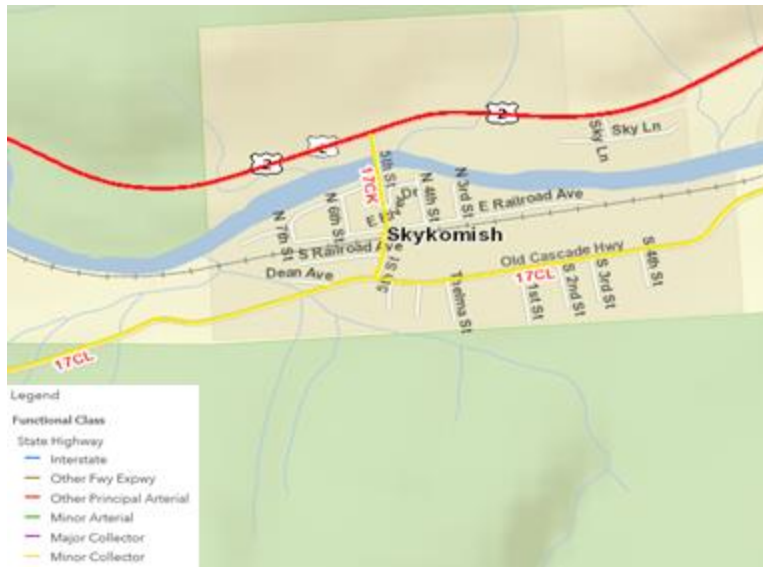


Figure 21: Functional Street Classification, WSDOT

## Street Inventory

The town of Skykomish maintains an inventory of all Town streets. The street system encompasses about 2.13 miles of Town-maintained roads and about 0.65 miles of federal/state highway (US 2). The Fifth Street Bridge is owned and maintained by the state of Washington. WSDOT had identified no weight limits for the bridge.

## Traffic Volumes

US 2 is the most heavily traveled roadway in the Town. The annual average daily traffic (AADT) for the segment of US 2 in the Town of Skykomish has been relatively consistent over the last 20 years (Figure 16). It was 4,700 vehicles per day (VPD) in 1996, 4,500 VPD during the recession year of 2008 and 5,000 VPD in 2015.

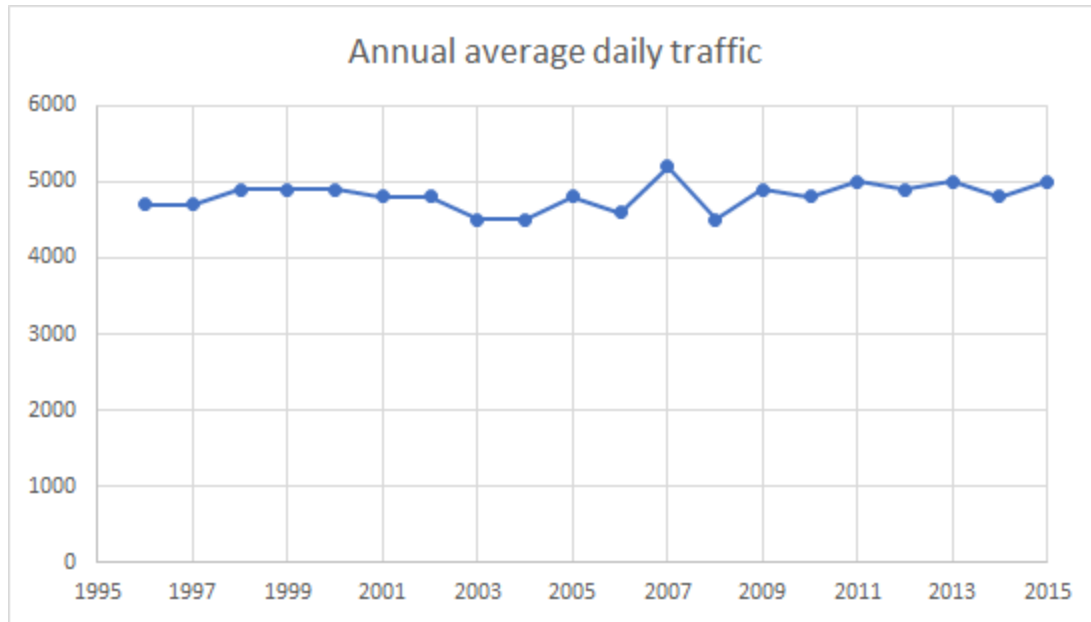


Figure 22: Annual Average Daily Traffic for the Segment of US 2 in the Town of Skykomish, WSDOT

Traffic flow variations over 24 hours are shown for each travel direction in the Figure 17. Two-way traffic peaks from 10 AM to 4 PM (457 VPH). Eastbound traffic volumes peaks at 10 AM and Westbound traffic peaks at 4 PM.

The peak demand of 457 VPH represents a LOS D traffic flow condition on the highway. Although not as favorable as the desirable guideline of LOS

C for 2-lane highways in rural areas, this flow condition is acceptable given the fact that the subject highway segment is traversing through a local community with features such as no-passing lanes and a 2-way left turn lane.

The AADT variation by day of week consists of a Tuesday low of 3,100 VPD and a Sunday high of 7,700 VPD as illustrated in the graph below:

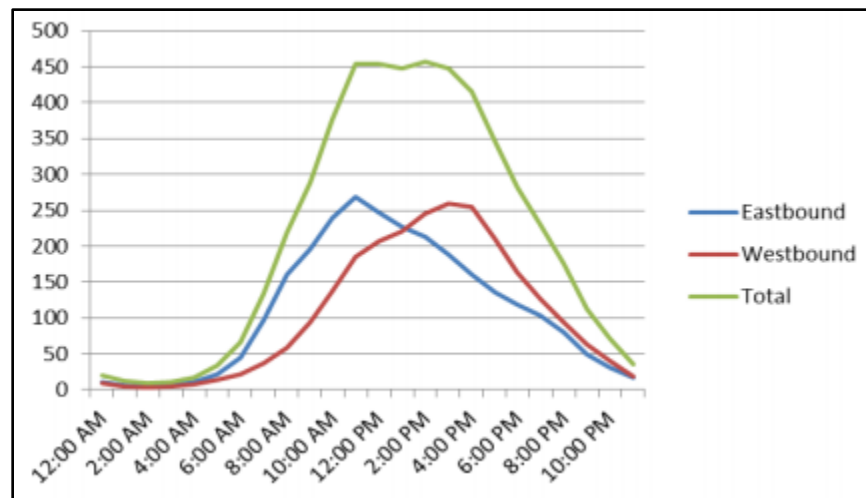


Figure 23: Average Traffic Volume by Time of Day, WSDOT



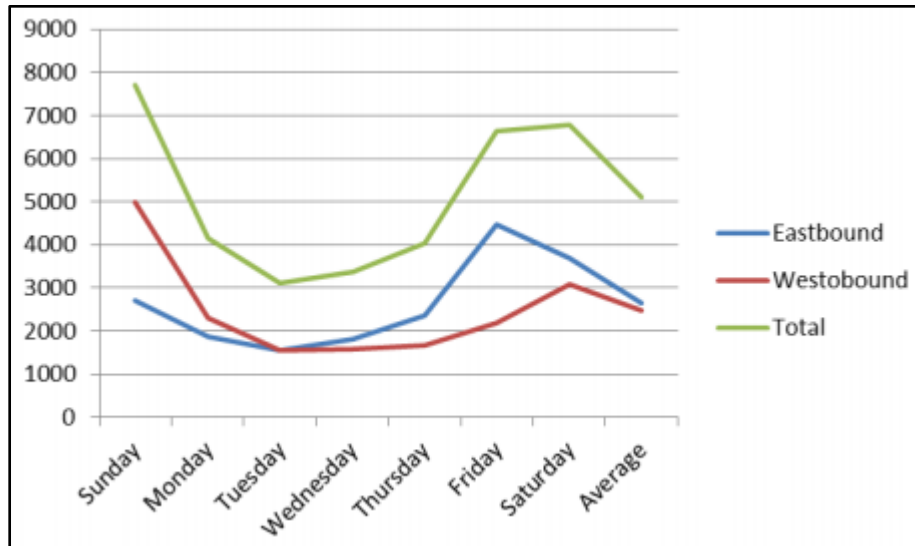


Figure 24: Average Traffic Volume by Day of the Week, WSDOT

The month-to-month comparison of AADTs shows a November low of 2947 VPD and a December high of 6950 VPD (see graph below). Note that the monthly variation of both eastbound and westbound is consistent with one another. Traffic volumes show that there are two peak seasons – one is in the summer during a hiking season and another one is in winter during a skiing season and winter holidays.

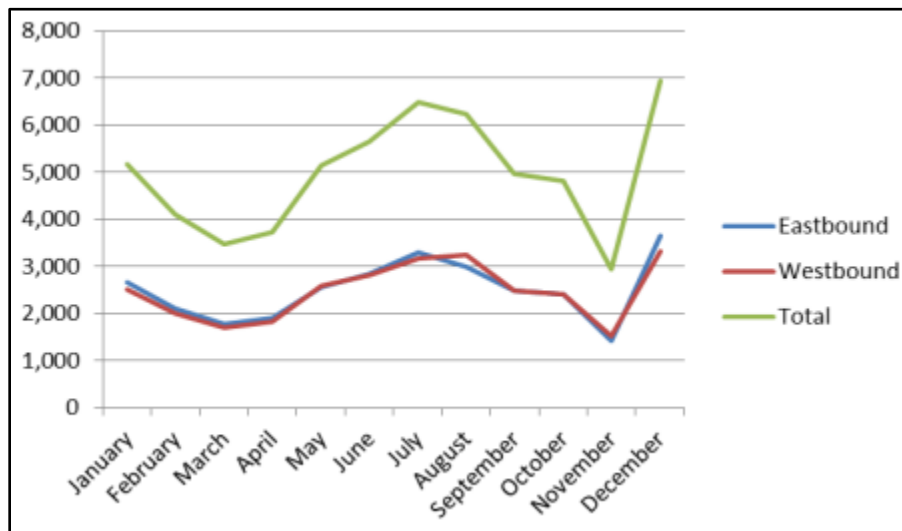


Figure 25: Average Traffic Volume by Month, WSDOT

The average truck percentage is 6% per 2015 Annual Traffic Report. The light truck percentage is 3% and heavy trucks percentage is 3%. Traffic volumes have not been recently measured on other local streets.

## Road Safety

The collision history within the Town of Skykomish limits was reviewed to identify any locations where adverse safety conditions may exist. Collision data provided by WSDOT for the most recent five-year period (January 1, 2013 through available 2018) was reviewed. Table 2 summarizes the number of collisions by severity type and table 3 summarizes the number of collisions by collision type.

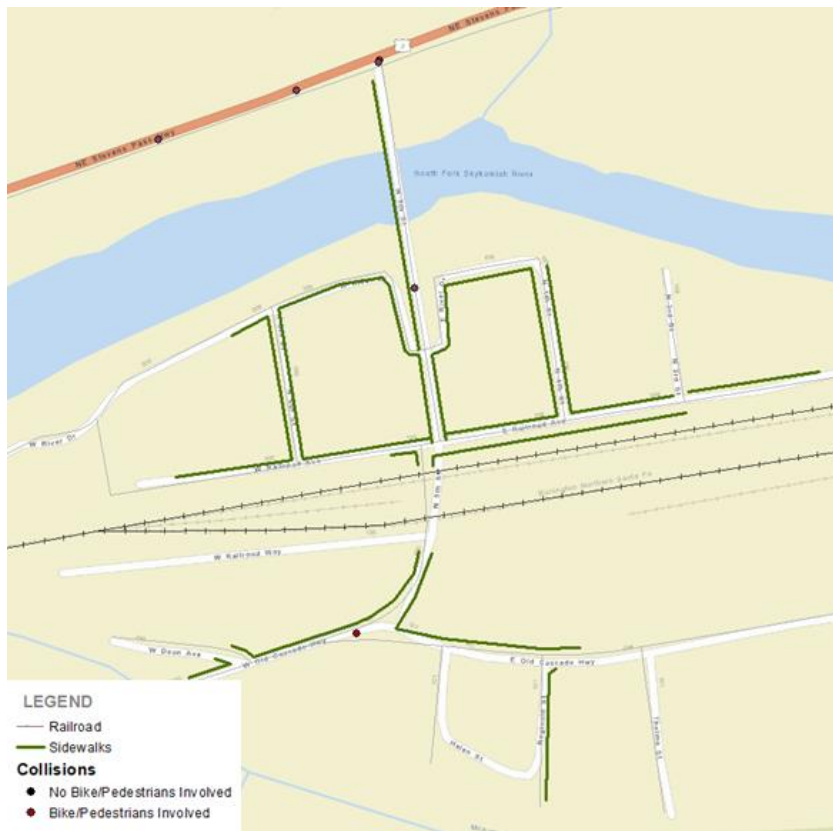


Figure 26: Collisions within the Town of Skykomish, WSDOT

Table 2 Collisions in the Town of Skykomish by Severity Type, WSDOT

	Severity Type			Total
	PDO	Injury	Fatality	
2014	2	1	0	3
2015	1	1	0	2
2016	0	0	0	0
2017	1	0	0	1

Of the 6 total collisions at the Town of Skykomish during the five-year period, one involved bicyclist and resulted in minor injury. This collision was not related to intersection and occurred along W Old Cascade Highway. There are no bicycle and pedestrian facilities along W Old Cascade highway. Another collision occurred at the intersection of W Riverside Dr and 5th Street N and involved one vehicle. The rest four collisions occur along US 2. One of those was intersection related and occurred at the town's entrance.

Table 3 Collisions in the Town of Skykomish by Collision Type, WSDOT

	Collision Type							
	Fixed Object	Approach Turn	Rear End	Head On	Pedestrian /Bicyclist	Angle	Sideswipe	Other
2014	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

WSDOT reported collision data from MP 48.50 to MP 50.50 along US 2 from 2011 to 2015 in the recent Skykomish Planning Study. They are summarized by the following table:

Table 4 Collisions along US 2 by Collision Type, WSDOT

	Collision Type						
	Fixed Object	Rear End	Opposite Left Turn	Angle	Pedestrian/ Bicyclist	Other	Total Collision
2011	2	1	0	0	0	2	5
2012	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
2013	4	0	0	0	0	1	5
2014	2	1	1	0	0	2	6
2015	0	1	0	0	0	3	4
Total	9	4	1	0	0	9	23

The data shows one opposite direction and zero entering-at-angle collision, which are low for state highways of comparable characteristics such as numbers of intersections and driveways. The four rear-end type of collisions are typical for comparable highway sections however. The nine fixed object crashes, four overturns, and three sideswipes will be investigated further to identify possible contributing factors and associated corrective actions, as appropriate. The collision severity for the highway segment, as presented in the table below is low, compared to state highways having similar characteristics. The 4 crashes in 2013 are a bit anomalous in light of the fact that the speed limit was reduced from 60 MPH to 50 MPH between MP 48.48 and MP 49.21 in February of that year. The speed reduction was undertaken in response to a local request that was prompted by land use changes along the north side of SR 2.

### Parking

There is no off-street parking. However, on-street parking is available on the town's streets.

## Bicycle/Pedestrian

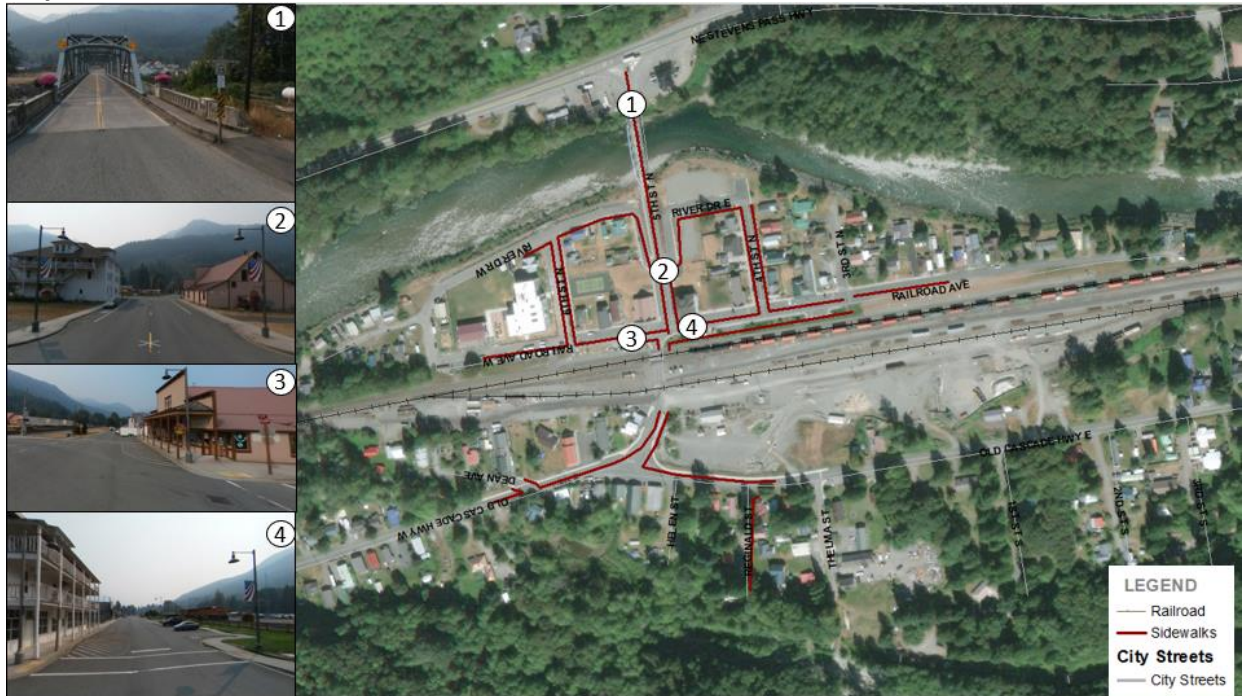


Figure 27: Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Map, WSDOT

Sidewalks are provided along the north side of Railroad Avenue east of N 6th Street, and on the south side from 5th Street N to 3rd Street N. Sidewalks are also located on both sides along 4th Street, 5th Street south of 5th Street and River Dr W intersection, and 6th Street. Sidewalk improvements were made during the BNSF cleanup. Most other streets in Town do not have sidewalks. Some bicyclists traveling to Stevens Pass or across the Cascades travel along Cascade Highway (Old Stevens Pass Highway) through Town either to enter Skykomish or as alternative to traveling along US 2. The Town lacks dedicated pedestrian and bicycle connections to other communities in the Skykomish Valley or beyond. Generally, the shoulder of US 2 is the only pedestrian or bicycle connection between Skykomish and areas to the east and west.

## Transit Service

There is no public transportation system in the Town of Skykomish. The City of Gold Bar, located 20 miles west, is the eastern terminus for Snohomish County Community Transit (CT) routes 270 and 277. Both routes provide service along US 2 to Everett Station. Route 277 provides direct access to Boeing's Everett facility.

Amtrak has Thruway Connecting Service to and from Seattle or Everett to Skykomish. Also, from Wenatchee or Leavenworth to Skykomish. Northwestern Trailways have daily service between Spokane- Moses Lake- Ephrata- Quincy- Wenatchee- Leavenworth- Stevens Pass- Skykomish- Everett- Seattle- Tacoma. Greyhound also has a bus from Seattle, but there is no return trip available on Greyhound.

## Aviation Facilities

One mile east of Skykomish, on the south side of US 2, the WSDOT Aviation Division operates Skykomish State Airport. From Town, the airfield is accessible by traveling east out of town on Cascade Highway. The Skykomish State Airport is included in the Washington State Airport System Plan.

## Railroads

East-west rail tracks run through Skykomish parallel to US 2 and on the south side of the Skykomish River. The Burlington Northern-Santa Fe (BNSF) mainline from Seattle to Chicago passes through the Town of Skykomish on the south side of the Skykomish River. There are currently no railroad connections or stops in the Town of Skykomish.

Currently, this rail line is active and considered as one of the Washington state economic corridors that transports greater than 5 million tons of freight (R1). There is one at-grade railroad crossing in the town's vicinity that is located at 5th Street N.

## Truck Routes

Truck traffic into Skykomish includes that associated with rail yard activities, waste hauling trucks accessing the waste facility to the east of Town, and smaller trucks completing pickups and deliveries. No traffic counts on trucks are currently available.

However, the community reports that most truck traffic accesses the Town off of US 2 and Fifth Street. US 2 is considered as an alternative freight route by WSDOT in the town's vicinity.



*Figure 28: Aerial view to the railroad crossing in the Town of Skykomish, Google Earth*

## Transportation Concerns

- Rights of way are not fully developed.
- There are no pedestrian or dedicated bicycle connections between local Town streets and regional trails.
- No transit services.
- Safety issues along US 2, and the community has expressed concern about the impacts of rerouted vehicle and truck traffic.
- There are no safe ways to cross US 2 for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- No visible entrance to the Town of Skykomish at US 2.
- High traffic speeds on US 2 at the 5th Street intersection entrance to the Town.

## References:

Stevens Pass Master Development Plan, 2007  
WSDOT Skykomish Planning Study, 2017  
Skykomish Comprehensive Plan, 2015



## Community Facilities

- **Skykomish Depot Park** is an important focal point of the town hosting a variety of historic buildings, including the Skykomish Great Northern Depot, which now serves as a Visitor's Center and museum, and the historic town hall.
- **Skykomish River** and associated riverfront public lands and views are a major feature of the Town Sportsman Park, located on the north side of the river by the Highway 225 bridge, includes a boat ramp and picnic facilities.
- **Maloney's Store Building** was originally built by John Maloney in 1893. Today, this building serves as the home of Skykomish Historical Society.
- **Skykomish School District Facilities** provide additional space such as gyms, soccer fields, tennis courts, baseball & softball fields for the community.
- **King County Library, Skykomish branch** is a social hub for the city offering a wide variety of services to the community and surrounding area.
- **Skykomish Food Harvest Community Food Bank**, which borrows space in the Masonic Lodge building, provides nutritious produce and is supported by Hopelink, Good Neighbors Association and many dedicated volunteers.
- **US Forest Service (The Skykomish Ranger Station)** is located approximately 1.5 miles east of the town of Skykomish. Hosts 18,000 visitors per year.
- Other amenities include grocery stores, the U.S. Post Office, and Cedar Sky Cabin.



Figure 29: Map of a few amenities in Skykomish, Google Maps

**References:**

Town of Skykomish, n.d

Skykomish Historical Society, n.d.



## Floodway & Floodplain

The Town of Skykomish is located along the Skykomish River, a flooding source. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), much of the town of Skykomish is in the Special Flood Hazard Area, or 1% annual chance flood area (shaded on the map). This flood event may occur between a base flood elevation of approximately 923- 940 feet.

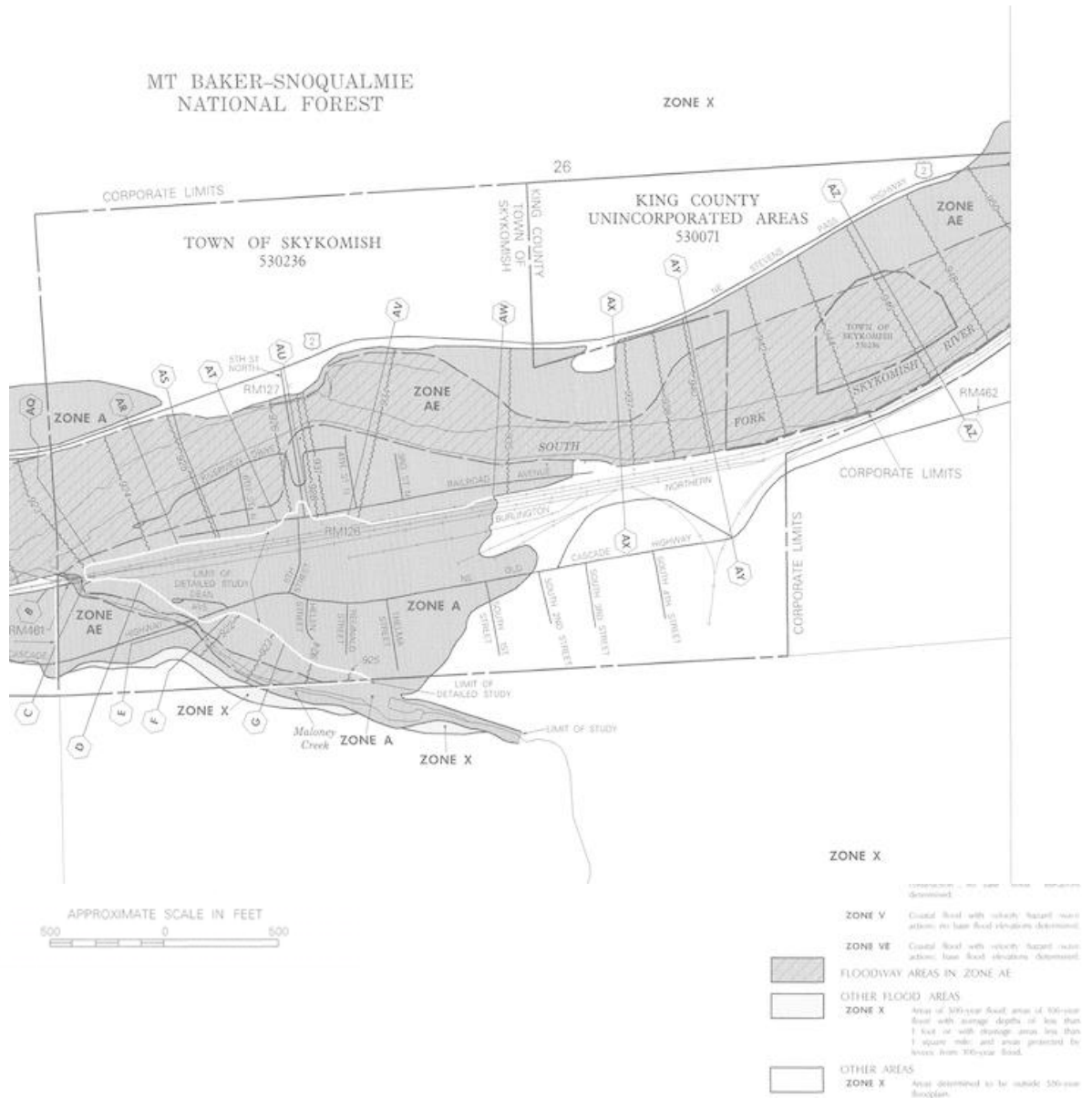


Figure 30: Flood Insurance Rate Map, FEMA

## Land Ownership

As seen in the Land Ownership map below, a majority of Skykomish land is privately-owned, with the primary exceptions being several public parks and municipal facilities within the town center. According to the state Office of Financial Management, there were 165 residential units in Skykomish in 2014. Housing occupancy varies considerably on a seasonable basis. Land capacity within the Town is substantial, especially upon the potential for future development of the 50 acre parcel on the northside of US 2 and the former Forest Service parcel highlighted on the Land Use map. Steep slopes and getting good consolidated access off of Hwy 2 are/will be the biggest constraints to development of this area.

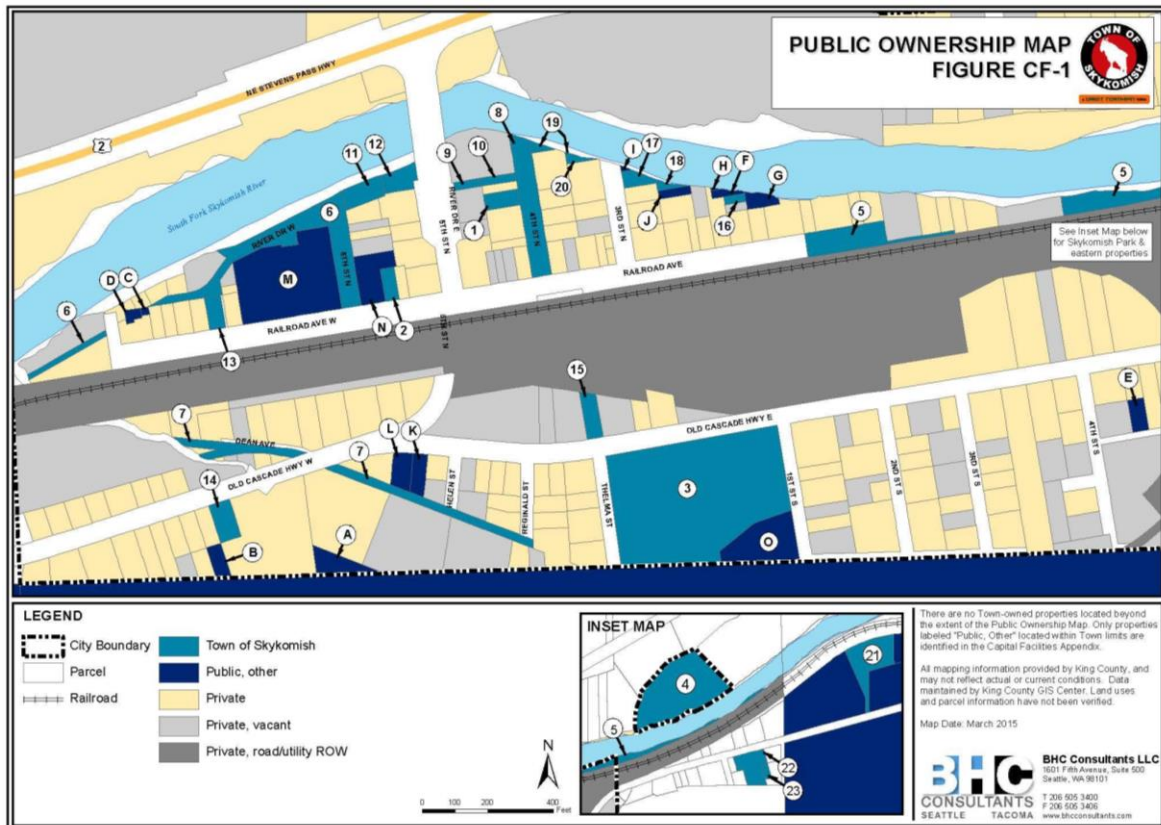


Figure 31: Land Ownership Map, BHC Consultants

A 2015 analysis of vacant land and redevelopment potential provides an estimate of the capacity to accommodate new growth. Residential land capacity in the Town was calculated by multiplying the acreage available for development by the assumed future development density. The King County Buildable Lands Report (BLR) for Skykomish records approximately 63 acres of available land. With approximately 50 acres constrained by critical areas and a 20-percent market factor applied, there are approximately 10 net acres available for development in Skykomish. Using an assumed future density of 3.5 dwelling units per acre, the residential capacity was estimated to be 35 new housing units. However, this estimate is subject to change as the Town has built a sanitary sewer system and potential residential density could increase. An average density of 4-5 dwelling units per acre could support an additional capacity of nearly twice the BLR estimate.

## Land Use & Zoning

The existing land use map below highlights the majority of parcels within Skykomish are vacant. For those that are occupied, single-family represents the dominant land use and is primarily located south of the river, most of which are older plated lots.

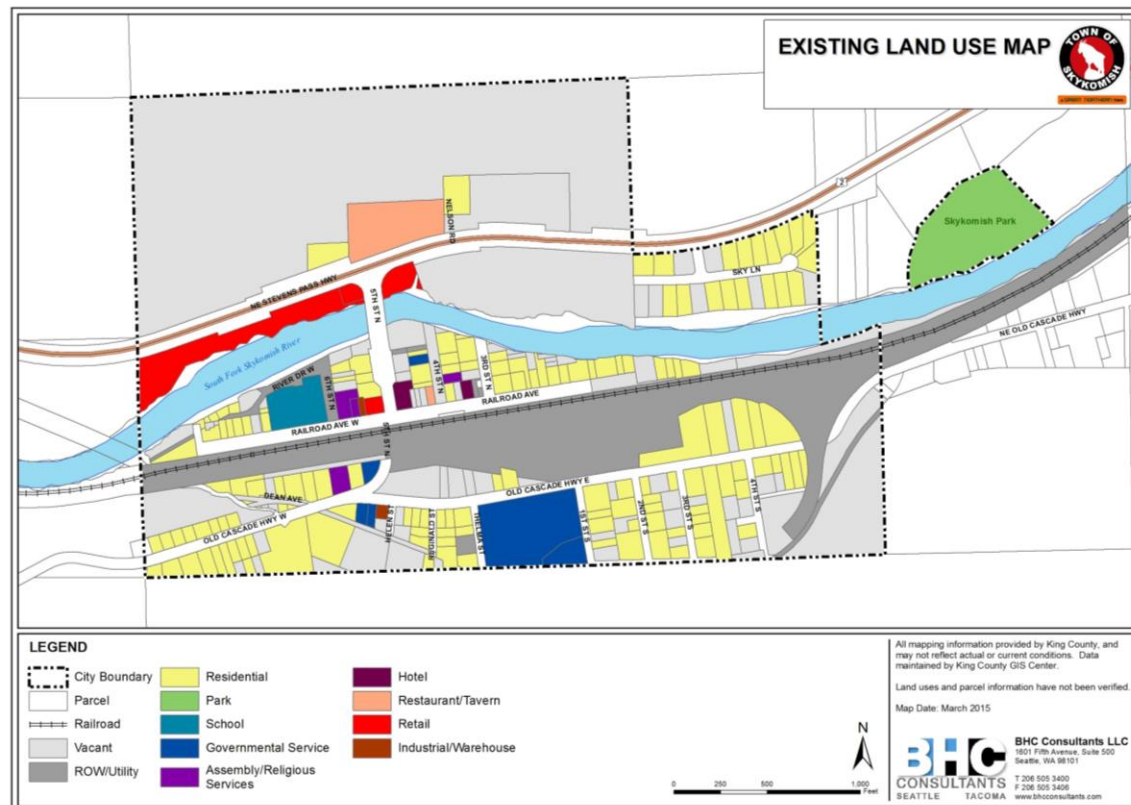


Figure 32: Land Use Map and aerial highlighting development patterns, BHC Consultants and Google Maps

As seen in the zoning map below, there are opportunities to increase the amount of residential (R-5,000) south of Highway 2 using infill development and residential (R-5,000, R-10,000) and commercial



to the north of Highway 2. These concepts are further detailed in the previous Land Ownership section. Development of these areas will require substantial coordination and investment to ensure efficient, safe routes exist to mitigate the Highway's impact to the community and increase opportunities to draw visitors to Town.

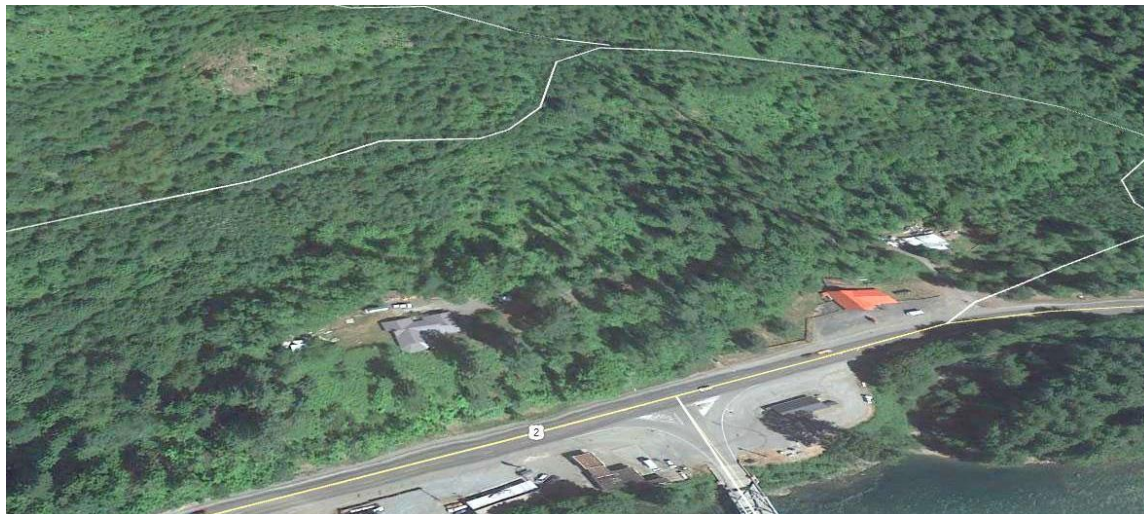
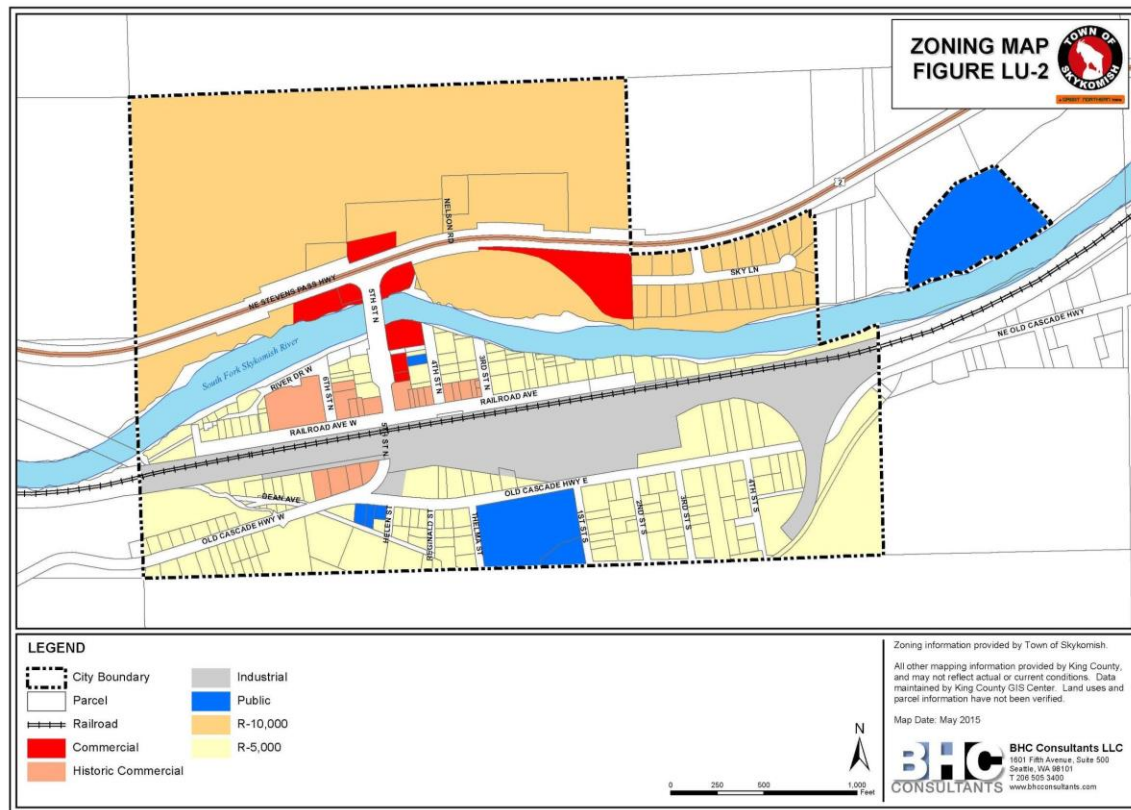


Figure 33: Zoning Map and aerial highlighting development sites north of Highway 2, BHC Consultants and Google Maps.

## References

- American Community Survey. (n.d.). *Educational attainment: 2012-2016 American Community survey 5-year estimates*. U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml#>
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- WSDOT (2017) *Skykomish Planning Study*. State of Washington.