

## What we Heard in Dawson City

<b>Community</b>	Klondike Visitors Association
<b>Date</b>	February 28, 2018
<b>Time</b>	12:00 p.m.
<b>Location</b>	Dawson City Visitor Information Centre
<b>Facilitator</b>	Shena Shaw
<b>Note taker</b>	Carleen Kerr Sarah Marsh
<b>Participants</b>	18

### Thinking Ahead: Round 1

In regards to sustainably growing tourism in Yukon, and regardless of whose responsibility it is:

#### What is already working well?

- A healthy tourism economy is very important to our community's economic success
- TCMF - it should be held up as an aspirational model for all YG funding models
- Programming is working well here – there is always something to do
- Crier and Buyer communications tool
- Dawson attracts some great talent
- Lots to do in the summertime
- There is a real sense of community amongst the associations and businesses
- We all want to help each other out which is really special
- Partnerships
- Programming (there is always something to do)
- Diverse audiences come here
- Crier + Buyer (central place to communicate)
- Volunteerism
- Lots to do – so much to do in and around town in the summer
- How long do tourist/visitors stay – RVers often extend their stay
- Dawson's sense of community – balance of power/help
- TCMF
- Dawson's character and authenticity
- Events as drivers

- Air access/Air North
- Sour toe: awareness (TV shows, Facebook)
- Dawson's character
- Authenticity
- Events as drivers
- Air access/Air North
- Sour toe awareness
- TCMF – we all love
- TCMF - it should be held as an example
- Talent
- Need to spread out opportunities
- Sense of communication among organizations
- Work things out amongst ourselves
- Partnerships
- In addition to the gold rush heritage, we have so much to offer, including first nation culture, arts, film festival
- It is about diversity - about what we can present to visitors and make sure that people are aware of what this community is
- Tourism brings people, primarily younger people to our community
- Young people come and then stay here and that makes us the envy of a lot of small communities in Canada

### **What can tourism partners build on/do more of?**

- Partnerships
- Even more events
- There can be a ceiling, but maybe some off season events
- Conventions and conferences are a tremendous opportunity
- We do well with partnerships, but can we package things together so that we don't overlap
- Should offer more soft adventure – not the multi-day hikes in Tombstone, but smaller paddling tours, zip lining, etc.
- We could do more when it comes to training so that our story is more consistent
- A consistent training program would help
- Educate ourselves more on the two histories of Dawson
- Balance events to avoid volunteer burnout

- We want more events but need to balance
- Yukon Quest does a great job of drawing visitors into volunteer roles
- Volunteer appreciation and retention
- Get people to stay longer
- People come up in RVs, how do we get them to stay longer and spend more?
- Get people to come in the Winter
- How do we market people to get past Whitehorse and come to Dawson?
- People always wish they had another day
- Would be great if the direction of travel had them come here first, then go to Alaska
- Better media representation on the FAMs
- Transportation (car rentals, frequency)
- Packaging
- Soft adventure
- Cultural tourism (grow with private business)
- Partnering
- Training in tourism service (consistent, accurate)
- Off-season growth
- UNESCO
- More events and conferences
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Building a more diverse employee group – not rely as much on students
- Partnerships
- Packaging – helps with over programming
- Soft adventure
- Even more events – ceiling/capacity
- Conventions conferences
- Build on training
- Consistent story
- Educate more on two histories
- Volunteer burnout – double duty as staff also volunteer
- Balance
- Appreciation and retention
- Stay longer

- Promote winter
- Different than Whitehorse

### **What opportunities do you see?**

- Off season opportunities
- Pushing the season, a bit outward with incremental increases, and eventually you complete the wheel
- More events, more support for events, more communication and partnerships between events
- Chinese New Year tourists - is there a way to market a 20 day or certain stretch of time and partner with other areas for programming?
- We would get more staffing if there were consistent events
- Opportunity for TH Citizens who are here year round could capitalize on winter tourism
- Providing employment for youth and can share their story
- Target markets – would be helpful to bring a film writer to film fest so the film community knows about the festival. If there is an arts writer, get an arts writer. A tourism writer doesn't get the word out to the target audience.
- Private business opportunities – conventions, car rentals, other cultural tourism products
- Visiting friends and family is a huge market - opportunity to celebrate and appreciate that
- Getting people to stay longer
- Advertising for winter
- Affordability and accessibility
- Awareness of the Yukon is at an all time high
- With better internet, there are opportunities for web presence (support for businesses)
- Getting people to stay longer
- Infrastructure
- Winter: more promotion for winter tourism – not just specific events
- Easier access/entry to the community – more affordable/better transport
- Yukon river opportunity – liability insurance, expertise, licencing
- Develop 'events' marketing and development in Fall/Spring – not cold of winter
- Transportation (car rentals, frequency)

- Packaging
- Soft adventure
- Cultural tourism (grow with private business)
- Partnering
- Training in tourism service (consistent, accurate)
- Getting people to stay longer
- Infrastructure
- Easier access/entry to the community
- More affordable/better transport
- Off-season growth
- UNESCO
- Visiting friends/family – appreciation
- Interest in the education piece
- There is a transient nature to the work force, so how does that lead into a trained workforce?
- With the potential UNESCO site, will we be able to meet training needs

## **Thinking Ahead: Round 2**

In regards to sustainably growing tourism in Yukon, and regardless of whose responsibility it is:

### **What could be improved?**

- Infrastructure and housing could be improved
- Building a more diverse employee group, maybe not relying so heavily on students who have to leave mid-August, and instead encouraging people to build their lives here.
- Yukon River is such a big attraction, and it has such a tie to TH, it is something that could be developed further
- Gold fields, mining tourism and ownership/responsibility of trails, and roads
- Housing
- Partnerships in Dawson are great, but working with YG often lacks urgency and passion and is different from the people we work with in town
- Product development – trail product, mining product, First Nation product, Yukon River product – and working together to package it

- Infrastructure: we need a hockey rink, paved runway, etc. so that we have a community that wants to work
- What is considered sustainable?
- Are the tour groups respecting the environment/culture (Tombstone, etc)
- 'Off season' workers – having enough work to keep workers around for winter
- Infrastructure
- What Yukon are we trying to promote? Fact vs. fiction
- What is sustainable? Bigger picture
- More diverse promotion – target market, longer stays, investment in advertisement
- Residents need time off/breaks
- Other priorities – education, programming, etc
- Internet
- Access
- Winter travel
- Local transportation
- Housing (workers)
- Training (tourism workers)
- YG training for NGOs (focus trends to be on business)
- Whitehorse – centric (training and funding)
- Ownership or responsibility for Dawson trails/wilderness
- Literal lack of roads
- Partnerships up the Dempster (Eagle Plains, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk)
- Gold fields/mining tourism
- Communication – urgency
- Capacity – users, infrastructure
- Transport
- Access
- NGO support as product deliverers
- Historical perspective diversity, eg TH
- Housing x 80
- Economic Development support for outdoor tourism
- City and TH government presence in tourism development
- Infrastructure – runway, hockey rink, water treatment plant, housing
- Diverse employee group – not students
- Yukon river

- Mining tourism – gold fields
- Ownership over Dawson trails system
- Product development/packaging
- Housing
- Partnerships
- Government lacks urgency
- Lack confidence in decision makers
- What is considered sustainable?
- The Dawson Museum strategy has lapsed so its good that this is happening
- Support year-round tourism and support targeting audiences, not just tourists
- Need to target audiences for specific events
- For any of our plans, and for any expansion, it all comes back to housing
- If we don't have the capacity for year-round housing, that's the difference
- Want to hear how all these things fit into a housing strategy, or not
- There is a gap around the pre-gold rush history of the Yukon
- Everything comes down to housing

### **What are the roadblocks and barriers of sustainably developing tourism?**

- Husky bus is just one of 52 busses going to Tombstone - are the others respecting the park, respecting the history of TH
- Is Tombstone management plan up for review this year?
- Infrastructure can be a barrier to get here
- Residents need time off in the winter, to feel like a community again, and recharge.
- Year round tourism may be challenging
- Don't want the community to become a caricature of what it really is
- Don't want to see tourism change the heritage and character of the community
- Internet – if we had better ability to connect or weren't afraid of going over our bandwidth we may be able to do better, market better
- The creative industry struggles due lack of internet capacity
- Electricity – power grid is taxed during mining/tourism season
- Lack of value from the mining industry about tourism
- Miners are busy with their own thing, don't see the value in expanding
- Building mutual understanding between tourism and mining

- Getting the City and TH on board is a barrier – not having them at the table is a roadblock
- Getting HPW on board is a barrier – not having them at the table is a roadblock
- Lack of urgency in government is a roadblock
- Physical ‘barrier’ road and airport closures
- Infrastructure
- Community likes winter as a break from summer
- Truth of the heritage – don’t make community a caricature
- Careful with what we meddle with
- Authenticity
- Internet – better, cheaper – facilitates home-based product
- Getting City and TH at the table
- HPW – get them to communicate
- Energy – taxed in summer season
- Cross-industry promotion
- Mining – mutual understanding

### Thinking Ahead: Round 3

Think about yourself as well as your neighbours, colleagues or industry partners. With those perspectives in mind:

**What do you think are the 5 most important things that need to be considered to sustainably grow tourism?**

- Want to make sure Dawson, and all communities are represented in the strategy
- Sustainable growth is an oxymoron
- Sustainable isn’t just about the environment, but also about economic sustainability which includes jobs
- Infrastructure
- Hotel rooms – number of rooms available in the summertime
- Housing strategy here can’t be like Whitehorse
- Consider temporary housing like walled tents
- Don’t feel that people realize that there is a need for a different strategy here
- We are at a weird place because of the TV shows, that will likely leave at some point and then those rooms are available
- New mine may take those rooms



- Hard to convince the private sector given all these variables
- We have room for people in the winter/shoulder seasons
- Without more campsites and more hotel rooms it feels like we are at carrying capacity in the summer months
- Travel Yukon marketing bringing in more people
- Any rooms we can add can help increase capacity in the summer
- Because it costs so much to get here, people are spending a lot less while they are here
- But, it's the opposite for Gerties
- To sustainably grow tourism in Dawson, we need a nearby market
- Why aren't we marketing Dawson in Alaska or Whitehorse?
- Support for in territory and close proximity marketing is key
- KVA is committed to focussing on this marketing and that's why it has been successful here
- Friends and family are a great opportunity, but Dawsonites don't always know how to package and sell the region
- We have a long way to go to package different experiences together to show that there is a lot of things to do here, and then promoting it so that people know before they come that there are several days of things to do here
- Somewhere down the line airfare and gas are going to get more expensive and limit people's ability to come here, so local tourism is a great option to develop for the future
- Air North is key
- Infrastructure of travel – flights, travel to and from Alaska, highways, accessibility of roads, trails, air travel, taxis
- Look to Iceland and northern communities to see how they are doing it
- Circumpolar is key because we have so many similarities
- We should look at it in a new way, and looking to these northern communities, instead of Whitehorse and Vancouver, etc.
- Look long term
- What is sustainable growth?
- Boom/bust of mining
- Shoulder seasons
- More camp sites
- Return visitors
- Friends and family packages

- Partnerships are key
- 4-6 days of things to do here
- With or without the UNESCO designation, capacity is a key consideration
- Sustainability is very important
- Grow visitation without losing what makes Dawson, Dawson
- Make sure the artists, arts, festivals are part of the strategy
- Want to see some action on the one government approach - we can't even get the Dome plowed

**What advice would you give to decision-makers (Yukon Government, Yukon First Nation Governments, municipalities, organizations, individual businesses etc.) to consider as we collectively develop the strategy for growing tourism sustainably in Yukon?**

- We don't need to develop more product, but we need to get more people on the product that we have
- Do what we are already doing better, instead of doing more
- Think outside of Whitehorse
- Capacity development – not just focussing on training, but partnerships on internships
- Understanding that outside of Whitehorse that a lot of tourism is run by NGOs, that aren't as focused on tourism, development for business is important but there is another cohort of people who might benefit from some tourism perspective and training
- Need to identify what sustainable is and create a set of targets, otherwise we don't know where we stand
- Change the direction so Yukon is the first stop on people's circle tours
- Encourage people to spend longer in Dawson because we have enough to do for people to stay longer than 2.5 days
- High school should include tourism 101, commercial cooking, etc. so we train our workforce in our own schools, instead of trying to get people from elsewhere
- Education approach should be similar to mining
- More hotel rooms – so we create events so that people come and fill the hotels when they aren't busy
- But who runs the events? Volunteers
- Winter tourism that doesn't involve more volunteers
- Strong sustainable tourism comes from strong sustainable growth in Yukon
- These issues are many issues that impact our town

- Infrastructure that supports tourism supports our town, and leads to people wanting to stay here and raise their families
- Strong communities are vital to have strong sustainable development
- Workshops to share social responsibility
- It used to be that there were living wages, but not so much anymore
- People are getting the same wages that they were getting 20 years ago
- Cost of housing and the need for employers to help subsidize housing is a challenge on employers, tenants, and the community
- Government to consider providing more funding to support events and pay volunteers
- There is a lot of support for capital and O&M costs, but lack for operational support
- Tax credit for volunteering? Write offs for baby sitters?
- Improve what we already have
- Being bold is important – don't make it bland and too government structured
- Think outside the box
- Focus on the communities
- Move the capital to Dawson
- Don't let this process be the end of it - keep the conversation going
- Better and more often communication from YG staff
- There's more than just the KVA and there are other great ideas here
- Decentralize some of YG so that Dawson has EMR, tourism, culture and business development staff based here
- Consider what is included under the umbrella of tourism
- Issue with trophy hunting being supported by Travel Yukon
- Trophy hunters can get TCMF funding
- Don't shut trophy hunting down, but government shouldn't subsidize it
- As part of the strategy, perhaps look at YG staffing in tourism because of the way we do tourism today
- Don't understand how some of the overseas roles benefit First Nations tourism
- Dawson is unique and our needs are different
- Dawson could learn from other destinations that have seasonal workers like Banff, Whistler, etc.
- Lots of places have this seasonal issue – housing and attracting and retaining workers
- Education idea is fantastic and could help solve a lot of these issues
- People are already here, that is sustainable
- And it keeps it authentic
- Expand it to support kids going and learning at camp

- Product – not more of it, more density, more stuff on off weekends
- Not more – better
- Think outside Whitehorse
- Focus on capacity development
- Understanding NGOs view of tourism
- Think outside business
- Identify what is sustainable
- Change direction – Yukon first
- Longer stays
- YG education – tourism 101 in high school
- College training
- More hotel rooms = more events = bigger burnout on volunteers
- Strong sustainable growth in tourism comes from growth in broader YT economy
- Carcross trail – came out of tourism study
- Building business models around living wage and environmental impact
- YG – look at paid volunteers through a tax benefit
- Improving what we have
- Focus on communities
- Be bold/not bland
- Move capital for Dawson
- Don't let this be the end of the conversation
- Better and more communications from YG
- Decentralize YG – have staff in the community
- Consider what's under the umbrella of tourism
- Old school approach to tourism and staffing
- Look and assess if the existing structure roles/responsibilities
- Education of Yukoners – start from within