

## What we heard in Haines Junction

<b>Community</b>	Haines Junction
<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, March 28, 2018
<b>Time</b>	5 p.m.
<b>Location</b>	Haines Junction Curling Rink
<b>Facilitator</b>	John Glynn-Morris
<b>Note taker</b>	Carleen Kerr Denise McCann
<b>Participants</b>	12 participants

### Thinking Ahead: Round 1

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

#### What is already working well?

- Existing business owners work hard
- Yukon Housing Corporation focus on community residential development is fantastic for the communities
- Carcross Commons model is working well because it supports seasonal and micro businesses
- There is generally momentum with small businesses and start up's
- Generally, the population is committed to being in Haines Junction
- Creative population
- Backpacker travelers are keen to come to Haines Junction and work
- Businesses are finding these independent travelers through non-government channels
- There is good cooperation between businesses and CAFN
- We have spectacular natural geography
- Having Parks Canada here is a strength
- There is local pride
- Sense of momentum in Haines Junction

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

- There is a demand for local guiding and that could build youth capacity
- The internet allows us to tell more stories to more people and promote things
- See growth and am excited
- Curious about winter tourism and growth potential

#### What opportunities do you see?

- Build youth capacity through guiding opportunities
- Internet to better tell our story and attract people

- Improve range of dining experiences
- KFN and CAFN planning to build eco-lodges, will lead to spin-off opportunities
- Maximize events like the Kluane Chilkat International Bike Relay and the Poker Run in ways that better connect with the community
- Market the Yukon to Yukoners
- How do we get the Whitehorse 'weekend warrior' to Haines Junction?
- Create bundles or packages for weekend experiences
- Create a 'discover Haines Junction' package
- Opportunity for labour force development
- Growth of winter tourism could lead to overall tourism growth
- What are the dreams of our residents?
- Opportunity for CAFN, citizens, residents to work together?
- Curious about the relationship between conservation and tourism given Parks Canada's presence in the region
- Curious about business development potential

### **Thinking Ahead: Round 2**

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

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

- Recognize that many tourists come through the Yukon but not to the Yukon
- Labour force availability and willingness to work, there seems to be a lack of initiative
- Expectations on wages and how the private sector can respond
- Accommodation is limited and the costs to build and maintain are high
- Labour sponsorship is really geared towards Whitehorse
- Labour sponsorship is not practical for Haines Junction due to the seasonal and multiple employer nature of the community
- Not sure if labour sponsorship is a federal government or Yukon government policy problem but it does not work for us, even if workers want to come here
- Lack of services
- There is a supply-demand positive feedback and the trajectory is down
- Transportation within town is lacking – we don't have Husky Bus
- Haines Junction has no business district
- The Alaska ferry schedule works only one way for supporting Haines Junction businesses
- Readiness
- Haines Junction was not prepared to take advantage of the popularity of the 'ice caves'
- Most locals saw it as a problem, so why can't we better leverage that?
- Yukoners visit a community once - we need them to come back again
- Information gap for tourists in Haines Junction
- Recognition of different needs outside Whitehorse

- How do people from the Yukon feel about being tourists in the Yukon?
- Yukon government thinks it's all about Whitehorse – need a bigger role for communities
- It is beautiful here but what can tourists do?
- Unclear on the role of the municipality in supporting tourism
- Want people to know that Yukon is more than Whitehorse and Dawson City
- Impact of a larger tour operator leaving cannot be underestimated – but maybe we were over dependent on one business

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

- Access to capital can be a roadblock
- Financing is very difficult because the banks see tourist ventures in the communities as a risk
- How can YG influence the banks?
- Banks do not want to fund construction
- Yukon Housing Corporation will only fund residential and not commercial projects
- The Business Development Bank of Canada is also limited in what they will finance
- The sides of the highway are contaminated
- BDC will not easily finance businesses without remediation
- The contamination issues such as tanks along the highway are YG's problem but YG does nothing about it
- This issue impacts the ability for community beautification
- How can YG support financing?
- What would encourage somebody to start and run a business given the current issues of financing and insurance costs?
- Concerned about the youth's future – their ability to be part of and contribute to our community
- Not sure residents actually want Haines Junction to change
- If tourists want something different, community may not want to grow tourism
- Centralization of Yukon government and Parks Canada has had a negative impact on the community
- There are less full-time public servants in Haines Junction and this has an impact on the community – particularly over the winter months
- What is the future of Yukon communities?
- How can we invest in them to keep them vibrant?
- There needs to be services like towing and basic stuff like having access to a mechanic if tourists want to feel their needs are being met
- Right now, we are lacking basic services
- Last summer when a couple old RVs broke down, tourists had to wait over 50 hours to get a tow from Whitehorse
- If those people would have shared their negative experiences online, that would impact future RVers coming to Yukon
- We need to think about these things.

### 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?**

- Rental accommodation - right now it is an issue
- Improve the aesthetics so that your first impression of Haines Junction is positive
- Promote Yukon to Yukoners
- Support infrastructure development
- To support winter tourism, host more meetings in Haines Junction
- Yukon government workshops and training should take place in the communities
- Create more options and availability for financing to build and improve existing businesses
- How to encourage the just-out-of-high-school kids to start working and maybe one day own their own business
- Include First Nation people in knowledge
- Develop more product
- Keep the VIC open year-round
- More effective highway signage
- Promote Winter opportunities in the small communities such as Northern Lights
- Promote the Yukon to Yukoners because 8 months of the year most of our guests are from the Yukon
- Support financing for small businesses in the communities
- Clean up the highway corridor in Haines Junction
- More effective visitor information centers in the communities - such as longer/more hours
- Develop a centralized business area in town
- Support community services like a mechanic
- Build capacity on the land and infrastructure - for example how much money are we ready to put toward out houses considering the fragility of wildlife?
- Greater service development
- Promotion of outdoors such as accessible guiding
- First Nation knowledge
- Yukon government should hold more meetings workshops and training programs in the communities

**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?**

- Don't forget the communities, and their needs / opportunities 12 months of the year
- Keep all Yukon communities in mind (not just Whitehorse, Dawson and Carcross)
- We have a beautiful place, help us market it, including the winter
- Invest in community services (access, ambulance, accommodation) and put pressure on banks to de-block financing
- Don't forget about the communities
- Not at any costs
- Promote land knowledge
- Emphasis to educate the lower 48 about what is in the Yukon, and that it is more than the Klondike
- Add more community reps on the Steering Committee
- More government assistance in business networking to draw upon their strengths, obtain business grants, development plans for things to support businesses
- A healthy community and vibrant tourism are interrelated