

## Rockaway Beach Community and Destination Management Planning Workshop #1 Report – October 2, 2023

### Values

- Sense of community
- Weather
- “Best of everything”
- Clean – no tent cities
- Homeless issues are limited
- Big beach
- Abundance of outdoor recreation
- Biking opportunities
- Good school district
- Close to hospital and healthcare services
- Good birdwatching – birds of prey
- Walkability
- Lots of volunteer opportunities
- Affordable housing (compared to other coastal towns)
- Walk to beach, lake and forests
- Long-term local nonprofits
- City and state parks
- Balance of busy peak season, slower off-season
- Livability – space between houses
- Beach, fishing, kayaking, rockhounding, horses
- Nature preserve
- Bakery, grocery stores, shops (antiques) restaurants

## SWOT

### Strengths

- Three parks
- Volunteering is strong
- Easy access via Hwy 101
- Mom and Pop businesses
- New city center restaurants (The Roastery & Tie Breaker)
- Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad
- Visitors Center/Red Caboose
- Surrounded by natural resources
- Walkability
- Access to healthcare
- Local fire station
- Accessibility to people in public services
- Public access to outdoors (not private restrictions)
- Public Works Dept.
- City staff
- Crises bring community together
- Largest concentration of visitor businesses in the county
- Economy based in visitors – support with many hotels and STRs

### Weaknesses

- 101 through Rockaway
- Lack of building/signage standards in heart of town
- 3 weed stores including one in heart of town
- Lack of indoor recreational options, especially for kids
- Lack of ADA beach access
- Lack of ADA rooms
- No emergency connection during power outages
- Tourism thrives but \$\$ do not equate to funding for many services
- Need better internet coverage
- Hwy 101 only access for big trucks (no bypass route)
- Many side roads have potholes
- Lack of enforcement on illegal camping and fires
- Emergency services limited
- Dogs are often not leashed, or run loose
- No recycle center
- Lack of workforce for local businesses
- Affordable rental homes for long-term renters (often get changed to STRs)
- Lack of workforce housing
- Large Short-term rental companies are replacing locally owned agencies
- Basketball court in need of repair
- Manzanita/Nehalem Bay/Wheeler better positioned on historical preservation, beautification & indoor recreational options

## Opportunities

- Holiday lighting for events
- Expand to include nationwide tourism marketing
- Improved code enforcement, such as for trash
- Market to birdwatchers
- Market to hunters
- Use lodging tax for emergency services and facilities
- Improve bike trail access along transmission lines
- Create festivals for niche markets (Kite festival is an example)
- Create an educational and cultural center (science, history, etc)
- Lake Lytle opportunity for year-round economic impact – new dock, ADA kayak launcher, fishing area, concession stand (food truck?)
- Improve wayside
- Dark skies initiative
- Kids' indoor activity space
- Trolley in summer and for events to ease traffic congestion
- Develop strong history & culture of tourism
- Highlight Main street historical buildings
- Convert empty US Bank building into a culture/education center
- Wayside- great beginning, more opportunity for phase 2 inclusions
- Improve beach access points, add accessibility solutions
- Connect “back street” access
- Customer service training
- Road improvements
- Develop large property area at Phyllis Baker Park
- Improve basketball court
- Increase shoulder season visitation
- Target visitors (need more discussion on this one)
- Improve emergency preparedness
- Reinstate Park and Recreation department
- Develop or convert spaces for venues and activities
- Equip buildings for activities
- Improve interior of community center
- Collaborate with agencies/form a partnership to improve venues and activities

## **Threats**

- Natural disaster
- Lack of funding for infrastructure/emergency services/other needs
- Competition for tourist dollars: Manz., Nehalem, Wheeler said to be in a better position in several areas
- City dependent on tourism dollars
- Overtourism – city overwhelmed in peak season
- Lack of business staffing
- Rising housing prices may make it unaffordable to live here
- Return of a pandemic
- Higher inflation
- Recession
- Lack of trades workers
- Lack of project leaders
- Turnover of staff

## **Desired Assets**

- Create Ocean Awareness program/signage to prevent tragic accidents
- Incorporate Twin Rocks and Nedonna areas (cost vs benefits)
- Community College satellite campus
- Salmonberry Trail coastal section
- Create a hub in the heart of town: Upgrade buildings, zoning aligns with sustainable tourism, future focus, historic photo murals, new murals, revitalize empty buildings (US Bank), history/culture museum
- Beautification and historic preservation of Rockaway Beach
- Develop a walking tour
- Designate camping area for homeless
- Seek grant opportunities for workforce to buy homes

## **Workshop #2, October 23, 6pm: Categories and suggested projects**

Meeting will focus on deeper discussion and review of input from Workshop #1

### **Outdoor Recreation**

- Improve bike trail along transmission lines
- Complete Salmonberry Trail amenities in cooperation with coastal cities

### **Community Development**

- Need indoor activity spaces for kids
- Equip venues for indoor activities
- Reinstate Park and Recreation department
- Improve interior of community center
- Collaborate with agencies to improve venues and activities
- Consider incorporating Twin Rocks and Nedonna Beach (need benefits to outweigh costs)
- Create community college satellite center in Rockaway
- Add historic photo murals
- Designate a camping area for homeless
- Seek grant opportunities to help workforce buy homes

### **Sustainability**

- Local recycle center

### **Emergency Preparedness**

- Need emergency connection during power outages
- Use lodging tax for emergency management
- Need improved emergency services to prepare for natural disasters
- Prepare for another pandemic – put plan together

### **Business Development**

- Lack of workforce for businesses
- Lack of trades people
- Set signage standards
- Customer Service training
- Develop venues for tourism meetings/community activities
- Upgrade buildings with zoning aligned with sustainable tourism
- Revitalize empty buildings
- Concession stands at Lake Lytle (food truck in peak season?)

## **Tourism and Cultural Development**

- Improve cultural offerings to compete with Manzanita, Nehalem, Wheeler
- Beautification and historic preservation of Rockaway Beach
- Create a cultural education center in heart of town – US Bank building?
- More festivals for niche tourism – birding, holiday lighting, etc.
- Market Rockaway nationwide
- Summer trolley to ease traffic congestion
- More marketing of Rockaway culture and history
- Highlight main street historic buildings
- Increase shoulder season visitation
- Create Ocean Awareness program (prevent accidents, educate)
- Develop a walking tour (theme?)

## **Accessibility**

- Improve beach access for all, including ADA
- ADA rooms at hotels

## **Livability**

- Dark Skies program
- Kids' indoor activities space
- Connect “back streets” access for residents – connective paths

## **Enforcement**

- Code enforcement for trash
- Lack of enforcement on illegal camping and fires
- Dogs off-leash or run loose

## **Infrastructure**

- Improved internet access
- Truck route alternative to Hwy 101
- Develop large empty property area at Phyllis Baker Park
- Potholes need filled on side roads
- Basketball court repairs
- Improve wayside
- Lake Lytle opportunities – new dock, ADA Kayak launcher (needs substantial dock), fishing area