



CITY OF BIG BEAR LAKE COMMUNITY VISION - OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY MEMO

DATE: May 26, 2023

TO: Susan Ostrander | City of Big Bear Lake

FROM: Kendall Flint | DKS Associates

SUBJECT: Big Bear Lake Community Vision
Outreach & Engagement Summary Memo

Project #22295-000

OVERVIEW

This report summarizes the Outreach and Community Engagement efforts for the City of Big Bear Lake's Community Vision effort. The City's last "vision" was created over two decades ago. With a proposed General Plan Update on the horizon, the City felt this was a great time to reconnect with both full and part time residents as well as its business community to determine if that vision had changed. During the first six month of 2023, DKS deployed a multi-channel outreach program to ask folks about their vision for this community and what they would like to see in the future. A variety of tools and tactics were used and based on the current population of Big Bear Lake, it appears that one in five residents participated in some way during that period.

BRANDING

Using iconic images including the observatory and its namesake bear, a logo was developed to promote the effort to the community. This was used on all outreach materials including the website throughout the process and may continue to be used as part of the General Plan Update.



COMMUNITY SURVEYS

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

It was important to the City to gather data to inform the Community Vision effort. In April of 2023, a 22-question statistically valid survey was developed and used for the collection of community input by True North Research. The survey was made available in both English and Spanish and the sample size was designed to capture both full and part time residents representing the unique demographics of the community. It was distributed via email, texts and by mail invitations. The survey included a variety of questions about resident and property owners' opinions on the City of Big Bear Lake and its future. With an initial target of 200 completed interviews, participation far exceeded that number with a total of 497 responses representing just under 10% of the entire population. This yielded an overall margin of error of $\pm 4.3\%$ and a 95% level of confidence.

Key takeaways from the survey included:

- Residents and property owners are focused on maintaining, rather than changing, the character of Big Bear Lake.
- The community wants the City to prioritize preserving access to the natural environment by protecting the forest, the lake itself and lake-related activities, the small town feel of the community, and the many miles of hiking and biking trails.
- Requests are often centered addressing vacation rental issues, improving current infrastructure, addressing traffic control/congestion, and addressing lake water issues.
- Residents expressed an interest in select types of resident-centric economic development, including movie houses, music, art, chain retail stores, and boutique restaurants.
- Big Bear Lake is widely perceived to be a safe place to live, although bicycling alongside roads can be risky.
- The city is doing an admirable job communicating, with email, e-newsletters, and the Big Bear Lake mobile app is perceived as most effective.

ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Once the statistically valid survey was completed, an identical digital version was made available to the public on the project website. This ensured that everyone had an opportunity to share their views. The survey was open for six weeks between May and June of 2023. Three-hundred-and-fifty-two responses were gathered. The vast majority echoed the sentiments captured in the statistically valid survey but there were some additional topics and issues that were raised:

- There are limited options for high paying jobs given the visitor-serving nature of the local economy.
- Traffic and road conditions continue to be a concern among residents.

- Many respondents cited lack of affordable/attainable housing as a key issue.

Complete survey results including all comments received are included in the appendix of this report.

PROJECT WEBSITE

A project specific website, BigBearLakeVision.com, was launched in February 2023. Since then, there have been 1,861 unique visitors to site based on IP addresses captured.

Big Bear Lake
COMMUNITY VISION

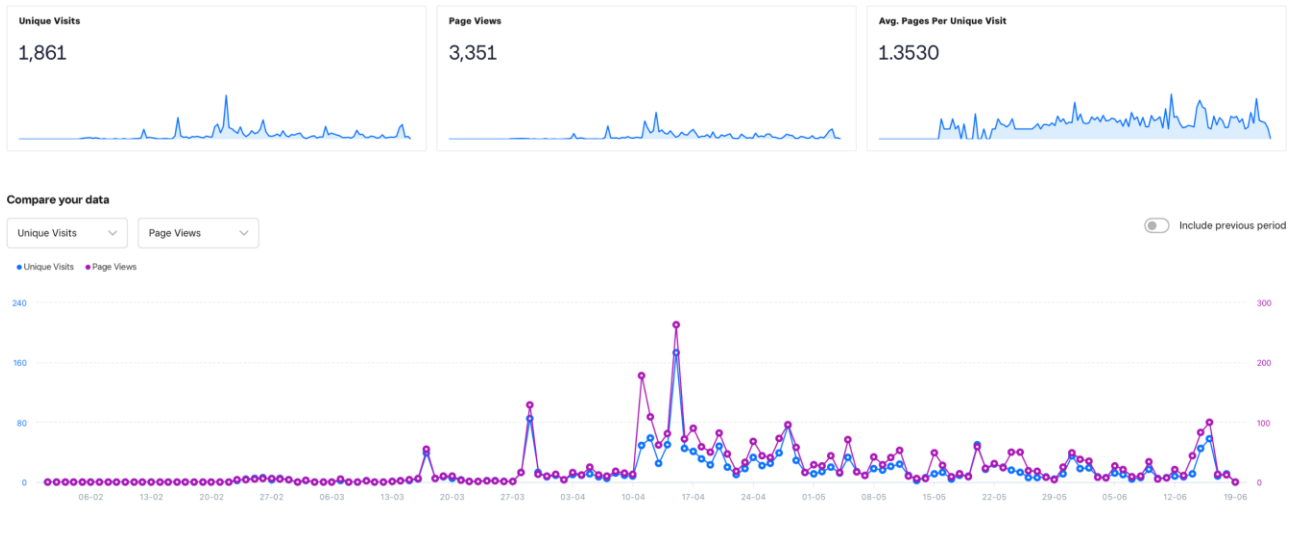
HOME YOUR IDEAS! PROJECT UPDATES VISION EVENTS CALENDAR CONTACT

What do you love about Big Bear Lake?
What does this community need to thrive?
What is the most important thing to our community members?

Join us at one of our upcoming Public Workshops!
Friday July 14, 6:30 PM and
Saturday, July 15th at 10:00 AM
City Hall

Timeline:

- January 2023: Project Launch
- February 2023: Research of Background Materials
- March 2023: Development of Community Survey
- March - April 2023: Community Survey
- April 25 - 30, 2023: Phase 1 Community Engagement / Workshops
- June 2023: Develop Draft Big Bear Lake Community Vision (We are here!)
- Summer 2023: Phase 2 Community Engagement / Workshops
- Fall 2023: Refine & Develop Final Big Bear Lake Community Vision
- Winter 2023: Present Final Big Bear Lake Community Vision



The website included all information related to the Community Vision effort including surveys, a calendar of events, a comment page and contact information page. The site also included a pair of web-based comment capture tools.

INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL

The first was an interactive mapping tool that was created to allow users to drag and drop a “pin” to a location in the City and leave a comment. Users were prompted with three questions:

- What do you love about Big Bear Lake?
- What does the community need to thrive?
- What is the most important thing to our community?

Big Bear Lake COMMUNITY VISION Big Bear Lake Community Vision

Welcome to the City of Big Bear Lake's Community Vision!

The City of Big Bear Lake is asking for community input as we work collaboratively to define our Community Vision. Our previous Community Vision was developed more than two decades ago so we want to ensure that we capture what is important to our community now. **Please provide your input about what you love about Big Bear Lake, what the community needs to thrive, and what is the most important thing to our community.**

To leave your feedback drag one of these icons at the top of the page to a point in the map to leave a comment, suggestion or concern:

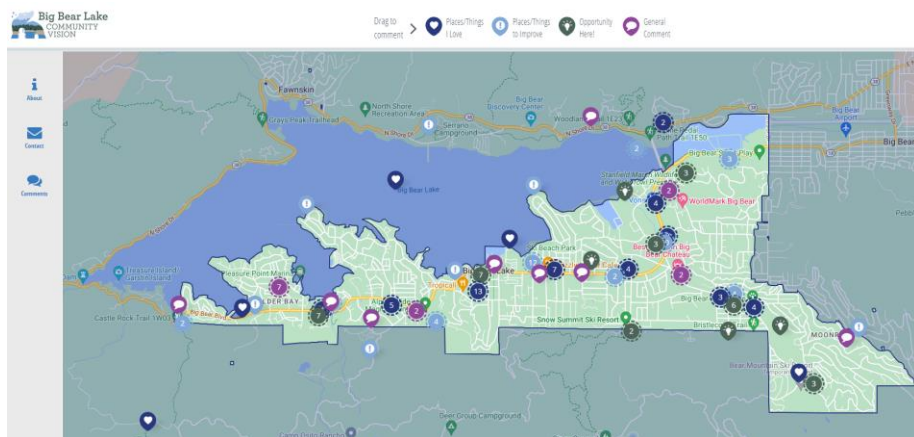
Drag to comment > Places/Things I Love | Places/Things to Improve | Opportunity Here! | General Comment

If you would like to view this in another language, please activate Google Translate by clicking this icon in the top right corner of your screen.

Si desea ver esto en otro idioma, active Google Translate haciendo clic en este icono en la esquina superior derecha de su pantalla.

¡Bienvenido a la Visión Comunitaria de la Ciudad de Big Bear Lake!

La Ciudad de Big Bear Lake está solicitando aportes de la comunidad mientras trabajamos en colaboración para definir nuestra Visión Comunitaria. Nuestra Visión Comunitaria anterior se desarrolló hace más de dos décadas, por lo que queremos asegurarnos de capturar lo que es importante para nuestra comunidad ahora. Comparta su opinión sobre lo que le gusta de Big Bear Lake, lo que la comunidad necesita para prosperar y qué es lo más importante para nuestra comunidad.



The mapping tool had a total of 653 visits with a total of 163 comments.



General Comments

- Concern about increasing the number of tourist attractions in and around the lake.
- Concerns about the general health of the lake from an environmental standpoint and a desire to invest in its care and preservation.
- Calls for beautification of Big Bear Boulevard and increase sign/code enforcement.
- Concerns about the poor condition of local streets and roads.

Opportunities

- Increase lakeside green space and amenities.
- Investment in Moonridge Corridor to make it more welcoming and diverse in terms of land use with restaurants, bars, and amenities.
- Increased parking at trail heads and other measures to improve access and keep visitor parking out of the neighborhoods.
- Opportunities to improve eBike access and safety with improved routes.
- Opportunities to improve safety and traffic flow on local roads.
- Develop local partnerships with non-profits to fund improvements/enhancements that benefit the community.

Things the Community Loves

- The local natural environment.
- Quality of local grocery stores.
- Access to medical care.

Things to Improve

- Numerous comments related to improving roads, bike and walking trails.
- Remove local blight, trash, and dilapidated buildings.
- Address homeless encampments and lack of affordable housing.
- Increase parking access.
- Consider a skate park.

COMMUNITY VISION BOARD

A second tool was used to capture individual “visions” for the future of the City on a virtual community comment wall. That tool was visited by 226 unique users.

When asked to describe the Big Bear Lake of 2043, folks expressed a desire for a community that has successfully balanced the needs of its residents with those of visitors that support the local economy. Comments were captured on a virtual bulletin board so that others could show support for “liking” or lack of support by “disliking” a comment. The top two “liked” comments both focused on preserving the look and feel of Big Bear Lake, having the focus be on the lake, the village, and the up-and-coming Moonridge corridor. The next three top liked visions really focused on the balance between the local and tourist needs. Residents said they would appreciate some of the revenue from the short-term rentals to go back into the community through means of local discounts, affordable housing and shopping, and other recreational lakefront facilities.

In general, respondents echoed the sentiments captured in both surveys:

- Support for maintaining rather than changing the character of Big Bear Lake.
- Prioritize preserving access to the forest, nature, and outdoors, the lake itself and lake-related activities, the small town feel of the community, and the many miles of hiking and biking trails.
- Requests for 'changes' often centered on keeping Big Bear Lake the same, such as addressing vacation rental issues, improving infrastructure, addressing traffic control/congestion, and addressing lake water issues.
- Interest in select types of economic development, including movie houses, music, art, chain retail stores, and boutique restaurants.
- There is a level of recognition for the need of tourists, however, placing limitations should be a goal. The obvious disconnect with visitors creates a less favorable opinion of their relationship with the visitors.
- They want a united community with recreation facilities to help bring the residents together and regain a sense of community.

Vision Statement: Big Bear Lake should be the pre-eminent Western US four-season area to live, play, work, and retire. Enabling Principles: -Safe and welcoming community -Best in class Infrastructure that serves the community -Well defined housing masterplan (for residents, for workers, and visitors) -Thriving restaurant and shopping scene -Well thought out recreational masterplan (on lake experience, on slope experience, on mountain experience, in parks, and around town experience)



💡 What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 2 months ago
Like 👍+2 Dislike 👎

Join the dark skies initiative. People visit and live in Big Bear to see the stars at night. No one should have hundreds of Edison bulbs on the front of their home on at 10pm. Same with Moonridge, all those new lights need to get rid of at least 1/2 of them, no reason to light up at 1am like a airport runway. All lights on porches should be motion sensor only. Bring back the dark skies and stop making us look like any other town down the hill.

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 2 days ago
Like 0 Dislike 0

There needs to be a cohesive aesthetic. Go to nay other small vacation town in America and they have wooden signs welcoming the tourists, regulations to make sure the aesthetics are adhered to. This is a gorgeous mountain community that needs to embrace it's history and it's environment- yet w do not. The Village did a good job a few years ago with it's beautification and making it more walkable, enjoyable, thematic- Moonridge corridor did not. It turned out ugly, overlit, no cohesiveness,

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 2 days ago
Like 0 Dislike 0

I think the town would benefit from a new concrete skatepark similar to the Volcom park in Mammoth. It would appeal to both the local youth as well as all the athletes and tourists that visit our town yearly.

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 4 days ago
Like 3 Dislike 0

The City can only regulate so much. I would like to see private property owners, particularly commercial property owners, improve and maintain their properties. They need to maintain their landscaping and their buildings to keep them attractive.

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 4 days ago
Like 1 Dislike 0

Living in Yucaipa and being an obsessed disc golf player I found myself in Wrightwood almost every weekend last summer. If those weekends were spent in Big Bear I would have been so much happier. With all of the other amenities, restaurants, lodging, camping, and night life, I would have had a great time in Big Bear. For both tourism and the residents the Big Bear area needs a disc golf course!

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 10 days ago
Like 2 Dislike 0

Hello everyone, this town could use a regional park. The parks surrounding Big Bear that offer fishing, waterslides, disc golf and nice paths to ride on generate money for the town and offer a nice controlled environment for everyone to participate. The parks we have are nice but do not bring money to the town. All the buildings at the parks were built a very long time ago. It's time for the town to bring money to rebuild our parks!

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 10 days ago
Like 3 Dislike 0

Beautify Big Bear Lake! While the city has concentrated it's efforts on the village and the Moonridge corridor, the road into town creates a poor first impression. Especially ugly are all the many derelict signs dotting the blvd, broken fences, burned buildings, businesses lacking even basic maintenance, etc. I suggest using a portion of occupancy tax revenues to help subsidize beautification programs to upgrade the esthetics of our town. Empower civic pride. Big Bear Lake - More than a village



What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 6 days ago
Like 3 Dislike 0

Hello I have been a resident for 28 years now. I have also been a Disc Goller since its inception back in the late 70's. With the way Disc Golf is growing as a Sport exponentially it would only be a win win situation for the City. Kids have a place to play a great sport. People of all walks of live come to play. Tournaments televised ones could be held here and bring even more reason to visit all year Round. I believe an 18 Hole Course complete with Numbered Baskets and Tee Pads could do this.

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | 7 days ago
Like 2 Dislike 0

I see a vibrant four season community that caters to all, permanent residents, vacation home owners, and visitors. Outdoor activities, like hiking, boating, and skiing, are the prime attractions, while indoor activities help keep us busy in the afternoons and evenings. The area needs a bigger better lake swimming area/facility, the addition of a home goods store, and more frequent road repaving. Lastly, keep the firepits in the village lit year-round!

Beautify the boulevard and moonridge with more trees, more restaurants and coffee shops on moonridge, Need a general store like target or Walmart Make the drive around the lake more accessible so traffic flows well.

What is your VISION for the Big Bear Lake? | a month ago
Like 3 Dislike 0

I would like to see more of the boarding culture grow .It's so great to have the resort for winter activities, but I want to see a renowned, one of a kind skateboard park arise in big bear lake! Every mountain town around the world has a amazing skate park in their town to compliment the resorts, and big bear does not . It would bring in more variety of people , more money, more events/sponsors, and provide a healthy outlet for the current and next generation to come .

A world class concrete skatepark that would provide our youth with a safe place to foster healthy relationships, exercise & develop a greater sense of pride for our valley. The very first winter X games took place at Snow Summit - imagine if we had a destination skatepark here in Bear that was able to host larger events? Local businesses would flourish. Something that would also draw visitors from down the hill - similar to what Mammoth Lakes has done with the Volcom Brothers Skatepark.

All comments received via both tools are included in the appendix of this report.

COLLATERAL MATERIALS

A suite of bilingual collateral materials was created to support our outreach efforts. Materials included:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Small Business Card Size Hand-Outs
- Pull-Up Banners
- Flyers



**Big Bear Lake
COMMUNITY
VISION**

- ◆ What do you love about Big Bear Lake?
- ◆ What does our community need to thrive?
- ◆ What do our community members value most?

Timeline:

- January 2023: Project Launch
- February 2023: Research of Background Materials
- March 2023: Development of Community Survey
- March - April 2023: Community Survey
- April 25 - April 30 2023: Phase 1 Community Engagement / Workshops
- June 2023: Develop Draft Big Bear Lake Community Vision
- Summer 2023: Phase 2 Community Engagement / Workshops
- Fall 2023: Refine & Develop Final Big Bear Lake Community Vision
- Winter 2023: Present Final Big Bear Lake Community Vision

The City of Big Bear Lake is asking for your help to define our Community's Vision for the future of our City. Our previous Community Vision was developed more than two decades ago so we want to ensure that we capture what is important to our community today and what residents hope to see in the years ahead.

To gather input from the community, we're hosting Mobile Workshops on our beloved Free Big Bear Trolley system, gathering input in an online survey, and holding a series of community meetings over the summer. Look for our team throughout our community. We would like to encourage everyone to participate and share the news with friends and family!

To share your vision and learn more, visit: bigbearlakevision.com





Big Bear Lake COMMUNITY VISION

- ◆ What do you love about Big Bear Lake?
¿Qué es lo que te gusta de Big Bear Lake?
- ◆ What does our community need to thrive?
¿Qué necesita nuestra comunidad para prosperar?
- ◆ What do our community members value most?
¿Qué es lo que más valora nuestra comunidad?

The City of Big Bear Lake is asking for community input as we work collaboratively to define our Community Vision. Our previous Community Vision was developed more than two decades ago, so we want to ensure that we capture what is important to our community now! Let's work together to reclaim some previous values and visions that will reflect today's population.

La Ciudad de Big Bear Lake está solicitando comentarios de la comunidad mientras trabajamos en colaboración para definir nuestra Visión Comunitaria. Nuestra Visión Comunitaria anterior fue desarrollada hace dos décadas, por lo que queremos asegurarnos de capturar lo que es importante para nuestra comunidad hoy en día. Trabajemos juntos para reclamar unos valores y visiones anteriores que reflejen la población de hoy.



To share your vision and learn more, visit:
Para compartir tu visión y obtener más información, visita:
bigbearlakevision.com

IN THE COMMUNITY

The team made a concerted effort to get out into the community to talk with residents, businesses, and even local visitors to learn more about what makes the City so special. This one-on-one engagement helped the team spread the word about the Vision effort and encourage a greater number of people to participate. Community events and pop-ups were held throughout April and May.

Big Bear Lake Branch Library April 27, 2023

Families are a critical part of the community in Big Bear Lake and as such, we wanted to connect with them directly. We met with parents attending Family Story Time at the Big Bear Lake Library and were able to provide project information and even give them an opportunity to check out the website using our mobile notebooks.



Community Connections April 27, 2023

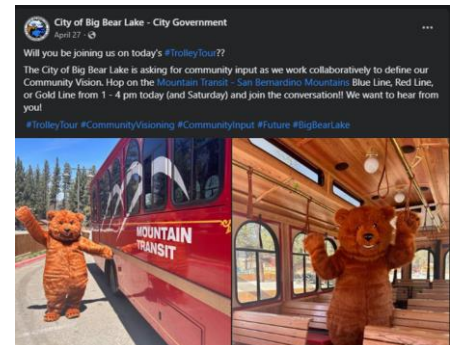
DKS visited a number of health and human services providers in the City, including the Mom & Dad Project, Community Action Partnership/Women, Infants, and Children Program, Bear Valley Community Hospital and the Standby Emergency Medical Services facility. Staff also visited the City of Big Bear Lake Department of Water, the Disposal Recycling Buy-Back Center, Big Bear Lake Masonic Lodge, and Summit Christian Fellowship. Each facility received project flyers and business cards to share with staff and clients.



Trolley Tours April 27 and 29, 2023

Mountain Transit's Free Big Bear Trolley service covers most of the City with three convenient routes (Red, Blue, Gold) that take riders to most of the visitor attractions and amenities in Big Bear, including the ski resorts, Boulder Bay, The Village, supermarkets and the airport. The outreach team, joined by City staff, rode along all three routes on April 27 and April 29, 2023, from 1:00pm-4:00pm. Riders were engaged in discussions about the City's Community Vision and were encouraged to provide comments while onboard the Trolley using Wi-Fi enabled tablets. Riders also received our project information cards so they could visit the website once they disembarked. The Tours were promoted on the project website and via City's Facebook page.

Riders LOVED the free Trolley service, and it was clear that bus drivers had relationships with regular users. The tours also gave us an opportunity to connect with hikers taking a break from the Pacific Crest Trail and seniors who used the service to get groceries and run errands. DKS staff became familiar faces on the Trolley after using the service for multiple days and were welcomed throughout the community by folks who recognized us and offered to spread the word about the community vision effort.



**Big Bear Lake Rotary Club
April 27, 2023**

DKS was invited to the Big Bear Lake Rotary Club’s regular meeting on April 27, 2023. The civically engaged membership expressed a great deal of interest in the Community Vision effort and were vocal in their support for maintaining the character of City by protecting and preserving the beauty and integrity of the natural environment. They raised concerns related to rental issues, improving infrastructure, lake water issues, and traffic safety concerns.



Community Canvassing April 28, 2023

Continuing our efforts in the community, DKS spent the afternoon at both the Von's and Stater Bros. shopping centers. The team set up near the post office which as an ideal location due to the resident's need to access their mailboxes. Locals were able to use DKS tablets to provide comments on the project website. Shoppers were also able to take project business cards with them to further engage with their community and to stay informed about project updates.

DKS also visited local businesses in the centers, dropping off project flyers for store front windows, community news bulletin boards and in the staff breakrooms. Businesses were excited to participate, and several posted our flyers throughout the store and asked for the project business cards to hand out at the registers.

Additional outreach materials were supplied to businesses located along Big Bear Blvd. and at various realtor offices along the corridor.



Wyatt's Grill & Saloon April 28, 2023

Friday nights are hopping at Wyatt's Grill & Saloon with live music, dance classes and BBQ bringing in the crowds. The outreach team arrived early to take advantage of the night's Rumba lessons and to connect with the Big Bear Lake Dance Club. This was a unique opportunity to interact with the local crowd and families, while sharing information about the Community Vision project.



The Village April 29, 2023

Considered by many to be the heart of the community, The Village was an important stop in our outreach effort. The team canvassed the Village and the surrounding area handing out flyers and

business cards to the local businesses and shoppers. Many Village shop staff posted project flyers in their storefront windows. Owners and staff alike engaged in conversations and supported the sharing of project information.



**REMAX Realtors Office Monthly Meeting
May 5, 2023**

DKS attended a virtual meeting with 28 local realtors on May 5, 2023. Discussion focused on topics related to housing, public safety, economic development, community infrastructure and general community engagement related to the Community Vision.

**Baldwin Lake Elementary School
Coffee with the Principal – May 5, 2023**

DKS was invited to attend the Baldwin Lake Elementary School "Coffee with the Principal" virtual parent meeting. Information regarding the Community Vision project, website, and opportunities for community input were shared with the 18 parents and community members in attendance. Comments were shared related to their children's safety, pedestrians and bicycles, and general road safety.