

Questions for Petersburg Borough Assembly

1. Lessons from other communities - Residents will consistently describe the fear of not wanting to become the next Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka, or Skagway. However, due to the geographic limitations of the Wrangell Narrows, the scale of ships most likely to visit are more characteristic of a community like Wrangell. Yet, residents rarely bring up Wrangell's tourism economy when discussing the future of development. Why is Wrangell's tourism economy seldom referred to and what lessons can it offer to Petersburg?
2. Infrastructure - Perhaps the greatest connection between control of tourism development and community control is infrastructure maintenance and control. Wrangell must decide what to do with their six-mile dock. Ketchikan must decide if they want to retain local management of port infrastructure amid private cruise ship dock development. For Petersburg, residents usually recognize this intersection at the drive-down dock, and residents' perspectives of its use are usually shaped by their livelihood. Data suggests the "working dock" nature of the harbors is a priority of authenticity and for tourism development. How can the community continue to develop mutually beneficial harbors or is the harbor infrastructure seen as a way to limit tourism development?
3. Local Control - Being local seems to be critical no matter the industry. Within commercial fishing, you have the issues of the "clone fleet" to local ownership of processors. In tourism, local ownership of tourism agencies and hotels is a priority as well as different levels of acceptability based on local ownership and local employment for fishing lodges. How does the acceptability of tourism development relate to local control?
4. Cultural vs. Economic Arguments - Many individuals employed in tourism directly or indirectly express frustration for individuals not understanding the economic benefits of tourism. While critical, the data also reinforces the need to forefront cultural elements, such as identity and authenticity. How would you articulate a cultural argument for tourism development?
5. Public Participation - Within my data, public participation issues around tourism development have emerged in different categories, such as fear of retaliation from others for sharing opinions, time availability or accessibility of meetings, and even a sunny day. Individuals can be more willing to discuss topics in private with those in decision-making authority but will be unwilling to state their opinion on record due to social consequences. Individuals become motivated to participate in highly personal issues such as we see in these meetings. In contrast, tourism development is a community-wide issue where responsibility and impacts are scattered. Considering participation issues such as social consequences, time, accessibility, and weather, what does participation look like for community-wide issues such as tourism?

Thank you for your feedback. This information will be kept confidential and will be used to guide the development of the community report I will give back to the community of Petersburg when I return, approximately in January 2024.

Please respond with your feedback to Ryan Naylor at rsn16@psu.edu or 610-927-7546.