

CHAPTER TEN - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Economic development seeks to strengthen a community through the expansion of its tax and employment base. A strong tax and employment base allows the community to support a higher quality of life for its residents by improving public services (parks, schools, libraries, sewer and water services, police, fire and emergency response, garbage and other governmental services). Ideally, economic development should balance economic vitality with stability, environmental protection, and preservation of the City of Sequim's *small town character*.

A strong economy is essential for achieving Sequim's vision of the future. That vision calls for locally-based jobs and the on-going development of retail and entertainment businesses that serve the needs of City residents. Sequim's high quality of life is, and will continue to be, a major contributor to its economic success. We would like our City to be known as a safe community with attractive neighborhoods, well-designed buildings and excellent schools.

Our community's youth are recognized as a very significant part of what makes our community so unique. And it is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan Update to incorporate their roles and involvement in this City's future. Thus there are Goals, Policies and requisite Projects supporting efforts and programs to bring youth into the process of developing our City, so that we ensure they are able to stay in this community, earning family wages from career path oriented businesses. And an equal focus with significant energy has been directed towards the retention and use of the extraordinary intellectual capital and work ethic our retirement age citizens bring to Sequim.

Our city has a very significant older population who bring in vast amounts of experiences and intellectual capital that the City, government agencies, business and other organizations need take advantage. And these same individuals who are for the most part retired need to feel that they bring economic worth to the community. This means that employers and others need to provide opportunities and benefits that encourage the senior citizens to get involved or become employed in the community's businesses, governing agencies and other organizations.

The City presently relies on outside agencies it contracts with to provide specific economic development promotion services and facilitation. These organizations (such as Clallam County EDC, Sequim Chamber of Commerce and North Olympic Peninsula Resource and Conservation Development) offer limited time and staff to focus on particular industry sectors for soliciting and responding to outside inquiries from prospective employers and companies interested in moving into the area.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

In planning for the future economic development of the City, the following concerns relating to the economic viability of the Sequim community were identified:

- The need to provide family-wage jobs that offer meaningful employment and career-path opportunities for our families, community youth, as well as our older citizens and future Sequim residents.
- The need to recognize the importance of the retirement and health care industries as economic development opportunities for the region.
- The need to encourage the development of long-term employment opportunities for community residents so that young people can remain in the community.
- The need to value the importance of tourism to the sustainability of the regional economy.
- The need to understand the dynamics of “downtown” Sequim as a regional commercial center.
- The need to recognize the importance of telling the region that Sequim is “wired” for efficient telecommunications, internet access, and that it has broad band width offered by several local providers through both cable telephone and satellite services..
- The need to recruit companies that offer technology-oriented jobs, with career paths.
- The need to understand the importance of recognizing the current contributions of the agricultural community.
- The need to value the importance of the cultural activities, events and features to the tourism businesses.
- The need to acknowledge the impact of well-educated and well-trained individuals who work in the services industries.
- The critical need for making provisions for “affordable housing” solutions for the underemployed, and younger families.
- The need to assist existing businesses to grow and prosper in our community.
- The need to recognize the potential to create employment opportunities within walking distance of home.

EMPLOYMENT

Sequim still has difficulty providing the type of job opportunities, which would allow the City's young people to remain in the community after graduation from high school, or encourage them to return after they have completed additional education and training. There is still the concern of many students desiring to remain part of the Sequim community but

feel they are unable to do so because of the lack of high quality employment opportunities and that have essential career paths.

A diverse economy is still immensely important to the achievement of Sequim's *Vision Statement*. Already there are numerous jobs available within the retirement and health care fields, commercial and retail sectors, construction and remodel trades, and in the hospitality, tourism, food and beverage industries. But there is very little else that would add technology type jobs here in the City. The Economic Development Council of Clallam County organization known as the *Clallam netWorks* has introduced and developed industry clusters to promote continued expansion in these areas.

The rapidly expanding service sector has created a number of employment opportunities. Many of these newer jobs typically offer lower salaries, especially in the personal service area. Few offer real benefits in health care or transportation assistance. Both of these factors are very important since many of these employees are either elderly or have to commute from the outlying communities, like Forks, Joyce, Diamond Point, Port Townsend and Chimacum. As companies become more mobile due to the shift from a resource-based economy and with advances in telecommunications and computer technologies, quality of life issues will become increasingly important criteria in site selection.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This North Olympic Peninsula Region offers unparalleled scenic and experiences to delight every age, lifestyle and activity level. Tourism activities abound and include the local festivals, the water activities, as well as hiking in the foothills of the Olympic Mountains or along the shorelines of the Strait of Juan de Fuca or Sequim Bay.

DOWNTOWN CORE

Using the guidelines provided in the Growth Management Act, the City has a draft sub-area plan for the "downtown core," which in 1996 was envisioned as an area bounded by Bell Street (south), Sunnyside (east), Cedar Street (north) and Third Avenue to the west. Today this downtown core is going through a very thorough review and is expected to be expanded in all four directions: Prairie or Hammond (south), Brown Street (east), Fir Street (north) and Fifth Avenue to the west.

The term "downtown core" means an area that has a relatively clear definable boundary that conducts a particular type of business (eg; commercial/retail) for a larger consumer population (ie; regional). The area so described above reflects a significant core [sic] of the local retail trades and specialty shops; and it anticipates the expansion of more of the same including new restaurants, art galleries and other pedestrian oriented services.

The use of a Sub-Area Plan designation as anticipated for this downtown core allows for increasing densities by way of in-fills, residential units combined with commercial facilities (upper floors) and multi-family buildings. The existing Downtown Sub-Area Plan draft has a residential element, which considers the need for increasing density in this Sub-Area. This increased density is complementary to these existing and new commercial, retail,

cultural and recreational spaces that are linked by the planned pedestrian-friendly trails and walkways.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT GOALS

“Goals” are measurable and observable outcomes that the *Comprehensive Plan* anticipates in conformance with the Growth Management Act.

EDG-1

Seek to promote existing businesses and seek to attract new business and industries which do not adversely affect the environment; strengthen and diversify the economic base; expand and enhance the tax base; improve wage and salary levels; increase the variety of job opportunities and utilize the regional labor force.

EDG-2

Maintain and enhance year-round opportunities for sustainable tourism based on the area’s natural resources, historical and agricultural heritage, and based on the community’s cultural amenities.

EDG-3

Participate in local and regional organizations that conduct economic development research and who develop regional strategies that will effectively market the City and the Sequim-Dungeness Valley region.

EDG-4

Seek and support viable and significant employment opportunities that represent career-path oriented jobs for the community’s youth, families and older residents, by directing the City’s economic development contractors to focus on specific cross-sectors of industry, which offer those kinds of employment opportunities.

EDG-5

Preserve central core areas [such as the downtown core] as walk-able/pedestrian friendly areas of diverse businesses, intentionally without vast expanses of parking lots.

EDG-6

Strive to make the City of Sequim the first fully wired and wireless city on the North Olympic Peninsula; and inform those City contractors, who recruit businesses and who seek economic opportunities for the City, of this technological capability

EDG-7

Team with those various providers of telecommunication technologies to inform enterprises seeking to relocate to the North Olympic Peninsula of the capabilities that the City offers as a wired and a wireless city.

EDG-8

Develop a list of specific economic projects for the City's economic development contractors to work on, with metrics to measure performance.

EDG-9

Advocate employment, teaching, business counseling and volunteer opportunities which employ the areas large population of retirees, taking advantage of their wisdom, experiences, education, talent, affluence and influence they bring to this community.

EDG-10

Assist businesses and organizations located or locating to Sequim area who are interested in employing citizens and residents of our community to look at the incredible potential of our larger retirement population on this east end of the County.

CHAPTER TEN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT POLICIES

“Policies” are the guidelines as to how the staff and the readers of the *Comprehensive Plan* shall achieve the goals of the Economic Development Element of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

EDP-1

Work cooperatively with the Sequim Chamber of Commerce, the business community, employees and community residents to foster a good business climate and maintain a high quality of life.

EDP-2

Encourage the expansion of a diverse economic base that provides economic opportunity for all residents, including the community’s youth, senior citizens, retired populace, unemployed, the under-employed, and special needs populations, through implementation of appropriate economic development strategies and plans, goals, policies and regulations.

EDP-3

Encourage public and not-for-profit organizations to enter into partnership and/or collaborative arrangements with private business interests to facilitate economic development projects that would not otherwise occur without the cooperation of both the public and private sectors.

EDP-4

Provide opportunities through zoning for the concentration of complementary businesses that can attract increased numbers of customers and that can provide needed services or products and/or consumer goods for the shopping region’s uses within the downtown core, as defined in the Sub-Area Plan.

EDP-5

Encourage infill and redevelopment of underutilized commercial sites.

EDP-6

Locate moderately-sized, convenience-oriented retail and service developments adjacent to residential neighborhoods; encourage small-scale neighborhood commercial uses directly within residential areas.

EDP-7

Ensure that commercial projects are established with minimal impact on surrounding land uses, are consistent with related community appearance/design guidelines, and assure pedestrian as well as vehicular access.

EDP-8

Assure the continued availability of properties designated for mixed-use that are suitable for a mix of business and commercial developers and residential builders; include properties developed by both private and public entities; and provide access to multi-modal transportation services

EDP-9

Provide incentives for mixed-use and commercial developments that preserve important open space and natural areas or that provide for active recreational facilities.

EDP-10

Support a coordinated approach to marketing Sequim as a tourist destination, which would include encouraging visitors to use Sequim as "home base" while visiting the region's attractions (e.g. Olympic National Park, Victoria).

EDP-11

Encourage opportunities for telecommuting and home businesses that are consistent and compatible with the character of adjoining residential properties and neighborhoods.

EDP-12

Acknowledge that future economic growth, including but not limited to technology-related development, may require advanced telecommunications and/or other specialized infrastructure. This infrastructure should be included at the completion of each new development.

EDP-13

Ensure that Level of Services (LOS) standards and "concurrency management systems" are consistent with these economic development goals and policies.

EDP-14

Ensure that better communication exists between educational and training providers (such as Washington State University, Peninsula College, Sequim School District and other private trainers), businesses, employees and residents to better meet community needs with an emphasis on providing continuing education, work-skills upgrading, mentoring, and lifelong learning programs suitable for large and small employers.

EDP-15

Encourage cooperation between educational institutions, government agencies and local businesses in providing young people and our senior citizens with an exposure to a wide variety of local employment and business opportunities.

EDP-16

Balance the community goals as defined by the City of Sequim's *Vision Statement*, with the need to support the development of building sites for retail, office and manufacturing businesses in an effective manner.

EDP-17

Ensure that development standards continue to accommodate the specific needs of businesses, where appropriate, throughout the City and its UGA.

EDP-18

Encourage the proactive provision of infrastructure and services necessary to attract and serve new commercial and mixed-use development.

EDP-19

Focus on attracting new businesses and employers to the downtown core that add new opportunities to the community rather than duplicating existing businesses.

EDP-20

Recognize that the youth of our community represent the economic future and viability of our City and the Sequim-Dungeness Valley, and incorporate the economic stimulus efforts around that potential labor force with meaningful and career-oriented employment opportunities.

EDP-21

Strengthen and diversify the local economy economic opportunities are available to retain and support the senior community made up of well-educated retirees, and the upcoming youthful workforce and their families so that they are able to continue to live and work in the community.

EDP-22

Attract “environmentally-clean”, light industrial and manufacturing uses to Sequim to broaden employment opportunities for community residents.

EDP-23

Seek to facilitate economic growth in the industry sectors related to technology, scientific research, agri-business (value-added), agri-tourism, eco-tourism, retail, professional services, technology fields, retirement, health care and related fields.

EDP-24

Facilitate the establishment of appropriately scaled home-based ("cottage-style") businesses as an important contributor to the local economy.

EDP-25

Maintain and enhance year-round opportunities for sustainable tourism based on the area's natural resources, historical, and agricultural heritage and based on the community's cultural amenities (without diminishing the quality of the life of residents).

EDP-26

Permit, promote, encourage and support small-scale value-added agri-business and agri-tourism opportunities within the City and its Urban Growth Area.

EDP-27

Provide, maintain and encourage information technology infrastructure development (including fiber optics, T-1 lines, broadband, cable and wireless) throughout the City that is adequate to attract and accommodate desired economic growth in technological sectors.

EDP-28

Ensure there is sufficient prime commercial and mixed-use zoned lands that will continue to accommodate the community's desired economic growth over the next 20-year planning horizon.

EDP-29

Contribute to the creation of an economic environment in which annual wage rates in the City meet or exceed the goal for “family wage” earnings through the adoption of supportive economic development plans, employment goals and policies and favorable business regulations.

EDP-30

Encourage the relocation of new businesses that fill the unmet commercial, retail, professional, technological, cultural, recreational and industrial needs of the community.

EDP-31

Designate and protect the availability and expansion of commercial and mixed-use lands within the Urban Growth Area through zoning regulations.

EDP-32

Support the Sequim Chamber of Commerce and the Clallam County *netWorks* Clusters, especially the Tourism, Technology, Retail/Commercial, Education, Finance and Agriculture Clusters, as they recruit and develop compatible businesses for and within the community.

EDP-33

Support additional development of lodging, dining and specialty retail facilities as well as master planned resorts, to which the City can provide urban services in order to enhance the tourism opportunities both within and outside the City and its UGA.

EDP-34

Provide regulatory relief for special events, when feasible, that bring quality activities and events to the community as well as create or enhance the tourism aspects and retail sales enhancements for the local businesses.

EDP-35

Consider revisions to development regulations when and if they place unreasonable burdens on home occupations or cottage-style enterprises.

EDP-36

Assist economic development contractors, whenever possible, to actively seek both state and federal funds to assist in the recruiting and the providing of incentives to bring quality employers into the City and its UGA. The City should use such funding to retain, expand and improve existing business operations within the community.

EDP-37

Support agri-tourism within the City and its UGA as a means of enhancing economic development opportunities throughout the community.

EDP-38

Encourage pedestrian-friendly areas with parking islands located throughout the City.