

Element 3: Economic Development

Introduction

Wahkiakum County's new comprehensive plan has an economic development element summary. The Wahkiakum Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee developed a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan as part of the comprehensive plan update. This plan is a stand alone plan, but the highlights of the plan are summarized in the next 18 pages. As part of the planning process, the steering committee sponsored a series of community meetings to establish a community vision as a first step. Next, they identified economic sectors where the county has a natural competitive advantage. Following a series of workshops with panelists speaking about the county's strengths, weaknesses, and potential for growth in each identified sector, the group developed strategies to encourage specific types of growth. The economic strategy has been analyzed against other elements of the plan (housing, transportation, community facilities) to determine effects and to evaluate how well the plan supports the community's vision.

Plan Goals

1.1) Promote economic diversification that supports the creation of family-wage jobs in order to:

- a) allow young people the opportunity to live, work and raise families within Wahkiakum County*
- b) develop the tax base necessary for maintaining quality schools and other public services*
- c) provide a ready local market for retail goods and services*
- d) offer local employment opportunities that contribute to community involvement*

2.2) Encourage growth and employment opportunities that are compatible with the rural character of the county by:

- *a) encouraging small- to moderate-sized employment opportunities rather than large growth centers*
- *b) targeting investments in site-specific infrastructure in order to avoid sprawling development patterns*
- *c) addressing the impacts of growth on surrounding land owners*

3.3) Support economic development efforts that seek to:

- *a) increase access to the tools and resources needed for economic growth*
- *b) encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses*
- *c) support value-added enterprise that generates additional local income from the local natural resource base*
- *d) offer a range of economic diversity to reduce the impact of cyclical swings in natural resource-based industries*
- *e) minimize the tax-supported costs of new development*

See link on Wahkiakum County Website for the Economic Development Summary: Go to www.co.wahkiakum.wa.us homepage and look for Economic Development Summary Link.

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Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

The first phase of developing the economic strategy for the comprehensive plan involved an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the county's short and long-term economic vitality. This SWOT analysis entailed a look at both external and internal factors that could help or hinder the county's growth. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee held a workshop to identify these factors, as shown in the accompanying chart.

<p><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>access to Seattle/Portland markets</u> ▪ <u>strong sense of community, welcoming attitude</u> ▪ <u>school system, training potential, community support</u> ▪ <u>proximity to Port of Kalama FTZ</u> ▪ <u>proximity to Longview/Kelso, I-5 and ports</u> ▪ <u>cadre of skilled artisans, writers, musicians</u> ▪ <u>low cost of land, low tax rate</u> ▪ <u>quick permitting, personalized service/access</u> ▪ <u>availability of land—ownership patterns, quantity, undeveloped</u> ▪ <u>industrial/manufacturing skills base</u> 	<p><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>distance from markets</u> ▪ <u>suitable land base for large operations</u> ▪ <u>infrastructure gaps—rail, T-1 lines, SR 4 capacity</u> ▪ <u>career paths/training opportunities</u> ▪ <u>range of opportunity to attract & retain youth</u> ▪ <u>lack of visitor accommodations</u> ▪ <u>small workforce</u> ▪ <u>available housing stock</u>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>water transport (barge access potential)</u> ▪ <u>career training in new areas</u> ▪ <u>tourism—adventure, sports, etc.</u> ▪ <u>value-added potential for resource products</u> ▪ <u>networks to bring end market close to production</u> ▪ <u>electronic marketing</u> ▪ <u>potential for visitor attraction, direct sales, e-commerce, long-distance sales</u> ▪ <u>educational opportunities for arts & crafts culture</u> ▪ <u>cooperative business support services</u> ▪ <u>under-employed workforce</u> ▪ <u>services to emerging demographic markets</u> ▪ <u>cottonwood leases/ag tax benefits expiring</u> ▪ <u>non-traditional agriculture</u> ▪ <u>streamlined/coordinated infrastructure and services</u> 	<p><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>regulatory impacts to timber and agriculture</u> ▪ <u>trade policies (federal)</u> ▪ <u>competition with industry in Cowlitz and nearby areas</u> ▪ <u>reliance on tourism and services for economic growth</u> ▪ <u>reliance on incentives & lures, with real long-term costs</u> ▪ <u>demographic trends lead to more service demands</u> ▪ <u>land availability due to prior subdivision</u>

Economic Strategy

A “Community Potential Matrix Diversification Strategy Detail” developed by Richard L. Gardner, Ph.D., and owner of Bootstrap Solutions, was used as a point of beginning for identifying areas of potential competitive advantage. The matrix describes twenty potential sectors for economic growth and identifies both indicators of potential success as well as implementation steps.

The table below shows how raw rankings were grouped to find similar rankings among economic sectors. **Activities scoring “7” or higher were selected for inclusion in the economic strategy for the comprehensive plan.**

Rank-Ordered Results

<u>High + Medium</u>	<u>SECTOR / ACTIVITY</u>	<u>H/M/L Rank</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>Value-Added Forest Products</u>	<u>7/2/0</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>Business Retention/Expansion</u>	<u>7/2/0</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>Attracting Lone Eagles</u>	<u>5/4/0</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>Local/Regional Tourism</u>	<u>4/5/0</u>
<u>9</u>	<u>Value-Added Agriculture</u>	<u>2/7/0</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>Plugging Retail Leakage</u>	<u>5/3/1</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>Entrepreneurship Development</u>	<u>3/5/1</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>Pass-Through Visitor Services</u>	<u>3/5/1</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>Telecommunications</u>	<u>3/5/1</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>Business Recruitment</u>	<u>1/7/1</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>Arts & Entertainment</u>	<u>3/4/2</u>
<u>7</u>	<u>Attracting Retirees</u>	<u>1/6/2</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>Cultural Tourism</u>	<u>1/5/3</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>Bedroom Community</u>	<u>1/5/3</u>
<u>6</u>	<u>Environmental Restoration</u>	<u>0/6/3</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Attract/Retain Government Offices</u>	<u>0/4/5</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Destination Tourism</u>	<u>0/3/6</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Health Care</u>	<u>0/3/6</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Energy Diversification</u>	<u>1/1/7</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Transportation Hub/Distribution</u>	<u>0/2/7</u>
<u>-</u>	<u>Value-Added Mining</u>	<u>0/0/9</u>

*Where scores are tied (in both total and sequence), no particular order is indicated.

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Following this exercise, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee spent six months of workshops listening to panelists talk about economic opportunities for each of the identified categories. These speakers provided information about current trends and innovative ideas as well as roadmaps and barriers to success. During each workshop, committee members were asked to select at least five ideas that they believe offered some potential and merited further examination. They individually ranked their choices and staff aggregated the results to help pinpoint specific strategies within each sector. It is these activities that formed the basis of the recommended Economic Strategy. These sectors include:

- ❖ Value-Added Agriculture
- ❖ Value-Added Forestry
- ❖ Riverine & Value-Added Fisheries (later added to the strategy)
- ❖ Technology & Telecommunications
- ❖ Tourism / Arts & Entertainment
- ❖ Business Retention & Expansion / Entrepreneurial Development

Value-Added Agriculture

Recommendations:

- 1) Use land use tools that encourage retaining farmland for future agricultural use. This could include agricultural zoning, conservation easements, a program allowing transfer of development rights, tax exemptions and deferrals (and amendment to state law requiring land in smaller tracts to generate a specified income in order to be exempt from property taxes).
- 2) Encourage “rural cluster” design when farmland is converted to housing. This approach keeps 50-70% of the land in open space or agricultural use, both of which help maintain the rural character of the county.
- 3) Promote value-added agricultural products and activities which often provides an economical use on smaller tracts of land.
- 4) Support efforts to provide facilities and services needed to support value-added enterprises.
- 5) Encourage the formation of a “community food system”, where growers are linked to community institutions, businesses, and households.
- 6) Protect farmers conducting operations according to best management practices from nuisance complaints by enacting a “right to farm” ordinance and establishing a system to notify prospective purchases of nearby property of agricultural uses.

Wahkiakum County Economic Development Strategy

	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Partners</u>
<u>Sector:</u>	<u>VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE</u>	<u>Goal:</u> Encourage the continuation of farming and agricultural activities as a contributor to the local economy and as an integral part of a rural lifestyle.	
<u>Strategy 1</u>	<u>Encourage alternative approaches to viable, sustainable agriculture that reflect current practices, and which support other sectors of the local economy.</u>	<u>Develop appropriate incentives/eliminate disincentives for local agricultural production. Explore alternative uses/tools to encourage retention or adaptive reuse of ag lands.</u>	<u>County/WA Ag/ DOE/DOR, Granges etc.</u>
		<u>Develop farm-mentor networks & links with youth and organizations.</u>	<u>Schools/Grange/ 4-H/LCEDC/WA Ag</u>
		<u>Facilitate formation of rural business cooperatives that support production, processing, and marketing functions. (marketing/supply/distribution/other)</u>	<u>LCEDC/USDA/ WA Ag</u>
<u>Strategy 2</u>	<u>Promote employment opportunities associated with production of value-added agricultural products that reflect current practices, trends, and markets.</u>	<u>Provide technical assistance regarding specialty crops/livestock oriented towards niche markets such as seed stock, ethnic vegetables, nursery stock, etc., and production/distribution techniques associated with niche markets.</u>	<u>WSU Coop XT/ WA Dept. Ag/ USDA/Granges</u>
		<u>Assist producers in securing technical and financial assistance for processing/manufacturing & storage facilities/equipment, supply & distribution networks, and marketing functions.</u>	<u>LCEDC/USDA/ WSU/Granges</u>
		<u>Determine need for business incubator to assist production cooperatives and other small-scale, value-added enterprises.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Ports/ County</u>
		<u>Identify skills, knowledge, and facilities (asset mapping) within the community that could be made</u>	<u>LCEDC</u>

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		<u>available for cooperative or business efforts, e.g., community kitchens for processing.</u>	
<u>Strategy 3</u>	<u>Develop a comprehensive marketing program offering a unique community “brand” or identity and accompanying technical assistance to businesses involved in value-added production.</u>	<u>Create a “Wahkiakum” brand identity. Create a marketing campaign for the county and its products aligned with the branding concept. Utilize focus groups and other appropriate mechanisms to develop a brand concept. Identify marketing options and approaches; develop collateral materials.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants Assoc./ SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Develop high-impact, low-cost regional (2-hour driving distance) marketing plan for value-added products.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Assist in identification of niche marketing themes, such as “Buy Local”, “Connect with the Land” and “Fresh Foods” for local, regional, and national markets. Provide information and assistance on Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA); Develop linkages with local institutions and residents to identify suitable products for a “Buy Local” campaign. Assist in development of collateral materials for targeted campaigns or with establishing marketing cooperatives.</u>	<u>LCEDC/WSU/ SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Provide organizational, marketing, and other assistance to local businesses/crafters interested in participating in a “Farm/Forest Market” or other retail sales outlets. (via asset mapping).</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants</u>
<u>Strategy 4</u>	<u>Promote agricultural-related tourism opportunities.</u>	<u>Identify persons interested in participating in agri-tourism promotions (asset mapping); develop activities for promotion (product development) and marketing approach.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Link special events and entertainment to a central Farm/Forest Market or other appropriate venue.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Promote development of accommodations for the agri-tourist, such as lodges, cabins, and retreats.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Port County</u>
		<u>Encourage downtown/village revitalization to provide attractive, central venues for sales and events that reflect local heritage.</u>	<u>County/Town/ Villages</u>
		<u>Provide public access for pedestrian/ bicycling trails and wildlife preserves/viewing areas.</u>	<u>County/Town/ Ports/Refuge</u>

Value-Added Forestry

Recommendations:

- 1) Explore potential for a “Community Forestry Initiative” and evaluate feasibility of community ownership of industrial timberlands.
- 2) Use land use tools and policy that encourage retention of resource lands for future generations. This could include ag/forest zoning, conservation easements, a program allowing transfer of development rights, tax exemptions and deferrals.
- 3) Encourage “rural cluster” design when forestland is converted to housing. This approach keeps 50-70% of the land in open space or forest use, both of which help maintain the rural character of the county.
- 4) Promote value-added and alternative forest products and activities which often provides an economical use on smaller tracts of land.
- 5) Support efforts to provide facilities and services needed to support value-added enterprises.
- 6) Explore adopting a Community Forestry Initiative to acquire forestlands for long-term uses in the public interest.
- 7) Protect family tree farms that conduct operations according to best management practices from nuisance complaints by enacting a “right to forestry” ordinance and establishing a system to notify prospective purchases of nearby property of agricultural uses.

Wahkiakum County Economic Development Strategy

	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Partners</u>
<u>Sector:</u>	<u>VALUE-ADDED FORESTRY</u>	<u>Goal: Encourage family-wage, sustainable employment opportunities in forestry and forest products.</u>	
<u>Strategy 1</u>	<u>Encourage production of alternative/value-added forest products and associated employment opportunities.</u>	<u>Provide technical assistance regarding product, markets, production techniques, and financing resources (e.g., certified wood, green marketing, engineered wood products, tone wood)</u>	<u>LCEDC/Col-Pac/ WSU Coop XT/ SFLOs/ County</u>
		<u>Assist landowners in identifying alternative species with high market value and alternative value-added products.</u>	<u>County/LCEDC/ Col-Pac/WSU</u>
		<u>Establish linkages for technology transfer and innovative approaches (e.g., flexible manufacturing networks), through Washington Technology Center, WA-FAST, WSU WMEL, Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP).</u>	<u>WA Tech/ UW & WSU Col-Pac/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Assist producers in securing technical assistance and financing to establish/procure processing, manufacturing & storage facilities/equipment & supply/distribution networks.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Col-Pac USDA/USFS/ SFLOs/County</u>
		<u>Determine need for business incubator to assist production cooperatives and other small-scale, value-added enterprises.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Ports/ County/SFLOs</u>
		<u>Examine need for/applicability of brownfield redevelopment funding for abandoned mill sites.</u>	<u>County/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Identify skills, knowledge and facilities (asset mapping) within the community that could be made</u>	<u>LCEDC</u>

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		<u>available for cooperative or business efforts, e.g., community kitchens for processing wild edibles.</u>	
		<u>Facilitate formation of rural business cooperatives that support production, processing, distribution, and marketing functions.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Col-Pac, USDA/USFS/SFLOs</u>
<u>Strategy 2</u>	<u>Promote alternative management regimes to ensure a consistent source of traditional and specialized timber products and to achieve conservation objectives.</u>	<u>Determine interest by Small Forest Land Owners (SFLOs) in obtaining a programmatic Habitat Conservation Plan that offers more flexibility in forest management.</u>	<u>WSU Coop XT/ Col-Pac/LCEDC/ County</u>
		<u>Explore feasibility of Community Forestry as a means of sustainable production and environmental stewardship.</u>	<u>County/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Explore feasibility/marketing of a carbon credit system.</u>	<u>Col-Pac/UW</u>
<u>Strategy 3</u>	<u>Develop a comprehensive marketing program offering a unique community “brand” or identity and accompanying technical assistance to businesses involved in value-added production</u>	<u>Create a “Wahkiakum” brand identity. Create a marketing campaign for the county and its products aligned with the branding concept. Identify marketing options and approaches; develop collateral materials.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants Assoc.</u>
		<u>Assist in development of high-impact, low-cost regional (within 2-hour drive) marketing plan for value-added products.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Provide organizational, marketing, and other assistance to local businesses/individuals/crafters interested in participating in a “Farm/Forest Market” or other alternative sales outlet (via asset mapping).</u>	<u>LCED/CoC</u>
		<u>Link special events and entertainment to a central Farm/Forest Products Market or other appropriate venue.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC</u>
		<u>Develop a “Buy Local” campaign to promote locally produced goods and marketed within the county. Develop linkages with local buyers to identify suitable products (e.g., furniture to larger employers, wild edibles to restaurants). Assist in development of collateral materials for targeted campaigns or with establishing marketing cooperatives</u>	<u>LCEDC/Col-Pac</u>
<u>Strategy 4</u>	<u>Promote forest-related (nature) tourism opportunities.</u>	<u>Identify potential/existing activities and persons interested in participating in tourism activities (asset mapping); develop promotional activities and marketing.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC</u>
		<u>Promote development of tourist accommodations such as lodges,</u>	<u>LCEDC/Port</u>

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		<u>cabins, and retreats.</u>	
		<u>Provide public access to areas such as pedestrian/ bicycling trails and wildlife preserves/viewing areas.</u>	<u>County/Town, Ports/Refuge</u>
		<u>Encourage downtown/village revitalization to provide attractive, central venues for sales and events that reflect local heritage.</u>	<u>County/Town/ Villages</u>

Riverine Value-Added Opportunities

Recommendations:

- 1) Use land use and public policy tools that encourage shoreline industry in support of commercial fishing, e.g., zoning, shoreline management, tax exemptions and deferrals, direct sales, etc.
- 2) Promote value-added fish and riverine products and activities.
- 3) Support efforts to provide facilities and services needed to support value-added enterprises, such as “Skamokawa Harbor” development.
- 4) Encourage the formation of a “community food system”, and include value-added fish products, linking producers to community institutions, businesses, and households.

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Partners</u>
<u>Sector:</u>	<u>RIVERINE</u>	<u>Goal: Promote an understanding of the county’s river-based economy and heritage, expand opportunities for employment, and support activities for enjoyment of the river by residents and visitors.</u>	
<u>Strategy 1</u>	<u>Promote activities that enhance understanding and enjoyment of the county’s river heritage.</u>	<u>Encourage environmental, geological, and historical education programs and activities for all ages that reflect the county’s river heritage.</u>	<u>Schools/Tourism Cluster/Museum/ County</u>
		<u>Develop programs and linkages that offer educational opportunities for riverine activities, such as pilot/captain training, marine mechanics, and marine biology.</u>	<u>Schools/ LCEDC/ Community Colleges</u>
		<u>Develop historical re-enactments based on the county’s heritage, e.g., fur trading at Birnie’s Retreat. Identify sites of local historical significance, such as Sally’s Well.</u>	<u>County/Museum/ LCEDC</u>
		<u>Create linkages between new activities and existing community assets, such as walking tours that include historic homes as well as the county museum.</u>	<u>County/LCEDC/ Museum</u>
<u>Strategy 2</u>	<u>Capture full travel dollar impact of visitors to the area by offering broad range of activities and accommodations geared towards pass-through, nature based, heritage, adventure, and agri-tourism.</u>	<u>Create a “Wahkiakum” brand identity. Create a marketing campaign for the county and its products aligned with the branding concept. Utilize focus groups and other appropriate mechanisms to develop a brand concept. Identify marketing options and approaches; develop collateral materials.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants</u>

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		<u>Evaluate range of accommodations needed to serve various markets, e.g., campgrounds, lodges, retreats, farm/ranch visits, hotel/motels, conference facilities, etc. that serve water-based recreation activities.</u>	<u>County/Town/LCEDC/Ports</u>
<u>Strategy 3</u>	<u>Expand offerings for water-based activities and employment through riverine-oriented activities.</u>	<u>Promote nature-based tourism activities that offer opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the riverine heritage, e.g., river excursions, paddling, windsurfing, sailing, tour boats, paddlewheelers, etc.</u>	<u>County/Town/Ports, LCEDC</u>
		<u>Explore feasibility of a water-oriented recreational development in the west end of the county (Gray's Bay, Hoikka Road).</u>	<u>Ports/County/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Support efforts to develop Skamokawa Harbor as an active commercial center offering a variety of services to commercial fishing and related activities.</u>	<u>Ports/County/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Encourage river-based business and industry, e.g., sport fishing, wooden boat building, specialty boat manufacturing, marine mechanics, water taxi services, film and entertainment opportunities, natural resource restoration, biologist/marine training.</u>	<u>LCEDC/County/Schools/ Port</u>
		<u>Encourage provision of support/secondary business activities to serve water-based amenities, e.g., laundromat, bike/jet ski/paddle rentals, food services, etc.</u>	<u>LCEDC/County/Town/Ports</u>
		<u>Identify unique aspects of the county's heritage (e.g., firsts ag extension agent, first creamery, city dock, marina, Covered Bridge, JBH Wildlife Refuge, last active ferry, etc.) with tourism activities.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Tourism Cluster/Museum/ County</u>
		<u>Explore opportunities for multiple "Ports of Call" in Wahkiakum County for visiting tour boats. Examine City Dock, Elochoman Marina, Skamokawa as potentials.</u>	<u>Ports/County/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Evaluate potential redevelopment sites for industrial usage where infrastructure exists/is readily available.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Ports/County/Town</u>
		<u>Examine waterfront locations to evaluate potential for public access. (e.g., Brookfield, Hornstra's Beach), with special emphasis on historic sites and buildings (e.g., canneries) and potential for deep water sites.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Ports/County/Town</u>

Technology and Communications

Recommendations:

- 1) Support efforts to provide facilities and services needed to support technology enterprises.
- 2) Work with local providers to extend broadband Internet access to all county residents to expand business opportunities and allow residential growth supported by telecommuting.
- 3) Create a community technology plan to identify needed applications of technology and realistic opportunities for partnerships. Identify potential for aggregated demand among various users to improve economic feasibility.
- 4) Expand local investments in infrastructure and/or reuse of sites to entice high tech companies to locate in Wahkiakum County:
 - a) industrial park/incubator
 - b) reuse of abandoned sort yard site
 - c) adaptive reuse of Rosburg School
- 5) Use technology to recruit companies by marketing the strengths of our area.
- 6) Recruit small firms where the CEO values “quality of life” and rural lifestyles.
- 7) Recruit technology-based companies—such as a call center or back-office operations—to the county.
- 8) Expand capabilities for rural telemedicine applications through upgrades of infrastructure.
- 9) Develop an industrial park with an incubator facility—with high-tech/low-tech components.
- 10) Expand interactive distance-learning and business conferencing opportunities through additional community centers, link with higher education, and improved infrastructure.
- 11) Explore potential for a “Virtual Incubator.”
- 12) Identify local and outside funding sources for technology improvements and business expansions (e.g., seed money, angel investors, USDA Rural Community Empowerment, Economic Development Administration)
- 13) Identify “seed money” opportunities to finance homegrown talent through incubator-housed business. Use community computing centers as a pre-incubator for business.

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Partners</u>
<u>Sector:</u>	<u>TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS</u>	<u>Goal:</u> Expand learning and employment options, enhance competitiveness of existing businesses, and attract new employers and entrepreneurs with technology infrastructure/services.	
<u>Strategy 1</u>	<u>Develop a community-wide Strategic Plan for Communications.</u>	<u>Identify gaps in telecom infrastructure; determine priorities; create opportunities for partnership; build broad-based support for new applications; provide mechanism to coordinate multiple strategies.</u>	<u>County/Town/ Ports/Providers</u>
<u>Strategy 2</u>	<u>Increase capacity and support to existing businesses and “grow” new businesses that utilize technology to support their operations (e.g., entrepreneurs, telecommuters)</u>	<u>Equalize levels of service available throughout the county, allowing for specialized operations (e.g., incubator) as well as telecommuting.</u>	<u>County/LCEDC Providers/LCC/ High Schools</u>
		<u>Determine need/feasibility for industrial park and/or business incubator that will offer facilities and support services. Explore possibilities of a “virtual incubator.”</u>	<u>LCEDC/Col-Pac/ County/Ports/ Town</u>
		<u>Assist local businesses and individuals with technical assistance to effectively utilize the Internet e.g., effective marketing, expanding supplier networks, etc.</u>	<u>LCEDC/LCC/ Schools/SBDC/</u>

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		<u>Expand access to capital, angel investors, seed capital, grants, etc. through technical assistance and referrals.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Wa Tech Ctr./USDA/EDA</u>
<u>Strategy 3</u>	<u>Utilize available resources for business enhancement and development through technology.</u>	<u>Cultivate relationships with entities actively engaged in research, applied technology, technology transfer as well as those offering technical and financial assistance to business in this capacity.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Col-Pac/ Ports /WaTech/UW/WSU/ LCC/WA-FAST/MEP/ Schools/USDA</u>
<u>Strategy 4</u>	<u>Encourage production of technology infrastructure to support distance learning, workforce development and telemedicine.</u>	<u>Promote installation of high-speed, interactive capability for remote learning, business assistance and job training.</u>	<u>LCEDC/LCC/ High Schools/ WSU/SBDC</u>
		<u>Enhance existing community technology centers and expand opportunities for new service locations.</u>	<u>LCEDC/LCC/ Schools/Granges</u>
<u>Strategy 6</u>	<u>Expand employment opportunities at appropriate locations served by technology infrastructure.</u>	<u>Recruit back office & small firms seeking rural quality of life.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Providers</u>
		<u>Reuse existing/abandoned sites with technology retrofit at appropriate locations. Explore acquisition/ redevelopment of sites as an incentive to development.</u>	<u>LCEDC/County/ Town/Providers</u>

Business Retention & Expansion

Recommendations

- 1) Support efforts to provide facilities and services needed to support entrepreneurial enterprises.
- 2) Work with local providers to extend broadband Internet access to all county residents to expand business opportunities and to expand local markets.
- 3) Expand local investments in infrastructure and/or reuse of sites to encourage business formation and expansion:
 - a) industrial park/incubator
 - b) reuse of abandoned sort yard site
 - c) adaptive reuse of downtown and public facilities
- 4) Use technology to recruit “Lone Eagles” and other entrepreneurs by marketing the strengths of our area.
- 5) Expand interactive distance-learning and business conferencing opportunities through additional community centers, link with higher education, and improved infrastructure.
- 6) Identify local and outside funding sources for venture and equity funding for business development and expansions (e.g., seed money, angel investors, formation of a Community Development Corporation, CDFIs, etc.)
- 7) Identify “seed money” opportunities to finance homegrown talent through incubator-housed business. Use community computing centers as a pre-incubator for business.
- 8) Promote the vitality of county business districts.

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Partners</u>
<u>Sector:</u>	<u>BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION, ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT</u>	<u>Goal: Develop a Business Retention/Expansion (BRE) strategy to provide assistance to existing businesses and to assist entrepreneurs.</u>	
<u>Strategy 1</u>	<u>Develop Business</u>	<u>Conduct a BRE survey combined</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/</u>

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	<u>Retention/Expansion programs to assist existing businesses and to identify potential entrepreneurs who may need assistance.</u>	<u>with a visitation program to identify needs and assist in solving problems of individual businesses.</u>	<u>Merchants Assoc.</u>
		<u>Use data generated from BRE efforts to assess and recommend improvements to the overall business climate.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants Assoc.</u>
		<u>Use BRE surveys and other tools to identify trends and needs within a given economic cluster, e.g., tourism-related businesses.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants Assoc./SWW Tourism</u>
<u>Strategy 2</u>	<u>Develop programs and activities that support business retention, expansion, and formation.</u>	<u>Conduct an analysis of “Main Street” businesses and develop a local Main Street program to maintain vitality of core commercial districts.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Town/ County/CoC/ Merchants Assoc.</u>
		<u>Identify niche market opportunities with low start-up costs.</u>	<u>LCEDC/Col-Pac/ WSU/USDA</u>
		<u>Conduct community asset mapping to identify expertise, space, and services available within the county.</u>	<u>LCEDC</u>
<u>Strategy 3</u>	<u>Create a service delivery system for education and technical assistance to local businesses.</u>	<u>Create a local Business Assistance Team (BAT) using SCORE model, business retirees, members of the financial and educational community.</u>	<u>LCEDC/SBDC, Lenders/LCC/ Schools</u>
		<u>Organize/assist cooperative efforts to offer legal, accounting, procurement, marketing, and other business support services.</u>	<u>LCEDC/BAT</u>
		<u>Facilitate “how-to” workshops relating to a variety of targeted business needs.</u>	<u>LCEDC/SBDC, LCC/BAT</u>
		<u>Develop networks for sharing Business-to-Business expertise and services.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants Assoc.</u>
		<u>Provide information, assistance, and referrals for securing government contracts for goods and services.</u>	<u>LCEDC</u>
<u>Strategy 4</u>	<u>Cultivate a community climate that is supportive of entrepreneurial/business activity.</u>	<u>Identify factors (BRE info, surveys) that discourage entrepreneurship and develop approaches to address barriers.</u>	<u>LCEDC</u>
		<u>Develop programs to recognize efforts and successes of local businesses, such as “Shop Local” or “Local Business Appreciation Week” events.</u>	<u>LCEDC, CoC, Merchants Assoc.</u>
		<u>Evaluate permitting and inspection procedures periodically to determine needed changes/approaches.</u>	<u>County, Town</u>
		<u>Explore feasibility of establishing an “ombudsman” role to function as a liaison between businesses and regulatory agencies.</u>	<u>County, Town</u>
<u>Strategy 5</u>	<u>Expand access to capital</u>	<u>Form a full-service “nimble”</u>	<u>LCEDC, Col-Pac,</u>

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	<u>resources.</u>	<u>development organization that can move at the speed of business. Consider formation of a Community Development Corporation with financial capacity to assist business.</u>	<u>County, Town</u>
		<u>Encourage creation of local business investment clubs as a source of equity capital.</u>	<u>LCEDC, CoC, Merchants Assoc.</u>
		<u>Identify available sources of capital, including social capital investment lenders, microenterprise funds, and other alternative sources.</u>	<u>LCEDC</u>

Tourism Strategies & Activities

Recommendations:

- 1) Develop a civic center to provide public venue for performing arts and art displays.
- 2) Develop outdoor venues, such as an amphitheatre, for concerts, plays, etc.
- 3) Support efforts to organize the tourism sector of the county. Efforts may include creating a Destination Marketing Organization, participating in regional marketing efforts, developing a county tourism plan, providing hospitality training, assisting with development of a “Wahkiakum” brand concept, inventorying community assets, developing community guidelines for the film industry, etc.
- 4) Support efforts to develop tourism products, such as driving tours and community celebrations, that will help expand nature-based tourism, adventure tourism, agritourism, and other tourism niches.
- 5) Provide facilities and services needed to support artisans, entrepreneurs in the arts.
- 6) Pursue funding sources that can assist in growing the tourism sector.
- 7) Promote programs that help maintain the architectural heritage of the community.

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Partners</u>
<u>Sector:</u>	<u>TOURISM / ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT</u>	<u>Goal: Provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the amenities of Wahkiakum County, expand available activities and provide opportunities for employment.</u>	
<u>Strategy 1</u>	<u>Develop a comprehensive, cohesive approach to cultivating tourism as a significant contributor to the local economy.</u>	<u>Develop a Tourism Plan to define community identity (authentic “story”), SWOT analysis, inventory assets, develop activities (product) and determine a coordinated approach to marketing the county in concert with state and regional resources. Identify ways to integrate the arts within schools, local business, and the community.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ County/Town/ Ports/WA CTED/ SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Secure on-going support for Development Marketing Organization (DMO) to assist with product development, marketing efforts such as FAM tours, and hospitality training.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ County/Town/ Ports/SWW Tourism</u>
		<u>Develop a set of consistent community guidelines to assist the film and entertainment industries with local procedures that accurately reflect current</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ County/Town/ Ports</u>

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		<u>community expectations. Designate a single point of contact for entertainment industries.</u>	
<u>Strategy 2</u>	<u>Develop a comprehensive marketing program offering a unique community “brand” or identity and accompanying technical assistance to business.</u>	<u>Create a “Wahkiakum” brand identity. Create a marketing campaign for the county and its products aligned with the branding concept. Utilize focus groups and other appropriate mechanisms to develop a brand concept. Identify marketing options and approaches; develop collateral materials.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants Assoc.</u>
<u>Strategy 3</u>	<u>Capture full travel dollar impact of visitors to the area by offering broad range of activities and accommodations geared towards pass-through, nature based, heritage, adventure, and agri-tourism.</u>	<u>Complete study and business plan for hotel/motel/ conference facility associated with Elochoman Marina. Develop plan, approach, and marketing for facility.</u>	<u>Port/County/ Town/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Evaluate range of accommodations needed to serve various tourism markets, e.g., campgrounds, lodges, retreats, farm/ranch visits, hotel/motels, conference facilities, etc.</u>	<u>LCEDC/County/ Ports/Town/</u>
		<u>Develop a series of self-guided walking/cycling/driving loops that cater to various markets (e.g., bird watching, geology, artists, farms/ranches, historic buildings, etc.). Develop collateral materials and marketing strategies.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants/ Others (asset mapping)</u>
		<u>Recruit support businesses needed to support tourism markets, such as outfitters, repair shops, etc.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC</u>
<u>Strategy 4</u>	<u>Support ties with other industry clusters to broaden the available range of tourism markets.</u>	<u>Conduct an inventory of community assets to identify facilities, people (writers/artists/traditional occupations), unique businesses and amenities (cultural/recreational/historical).</u>	<u>LCEDC</u>
		<u>Promote local forest and farm products through creation of a “Farm/Forest Market” and provide organizational and marketing assistance to local businesses/crafters interested in participating. Link special events and entertainment to a central Farm/Forest Market or other appropriate venue.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC</u>
<u>Strategy 5</u>	<u>Improve and market existing facilities and events to maximize use by visitors as well as residents.</u>	<u>Conduct a market study for goods and services suitable for the Elochoman Marina and develop a plan for marketing and delivery of targeted activities. (e.g., laundromat/RVs/bait/ food)</u>	<u>Port/LCEDC/ CoC/Town</u>
		<u>Analyze suitable amenities and</u>	<u>Town/Port/</u>

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		<u>needed improvements for the Wahkiakum Ferry landing area and develop a plan for marketing/service delivery. (e.g., bike rentals/food/signage)</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC</u>
		<u>Identify existing and potential trails/trail networks throughout the county, identifying potential acquisition and development costs (e.g., Covered Bridge, Pillar Rock, Grays River, Skamakowa).</u>	<u>County/Ports/ Town</u>
		<u>Develop a feasibility study of potential uses for the county-owned parcel at the fairgrounds, including development and maintenance costs. (e.g., RV Park/Camp)</u>	<u>County/Port/ Fairgrounds/ LCEDC</u>
		<u>Develop a long-range site plan for the county fairgrounds that examines current and potential uses, development, and maintenance costs. (hostel/equestrian facility/etc.)</u>	<u>County/Port/ Fair/LCEDC</u>
		<u>Analyze potential uses for the city dock and costs of associated improvements.</u>	<u>Town/Port/ LCEDC</u>
		<u>Conduct a market feasibility study for an up-scale retreat facility that examines demand, marketing, location, and development costs.</u>	<u>LCEDC/County</u>
		<u>Encourage village and downtown revitalization efforts that reflect the county's natural, cultural, and historical heritage. Promote historical county assets such as the Covered Bridge, Wahkiakum Ferry, National Wildlife Refuge.</u>	<u>Town/Villages/ County/Ports/ LCEDC</u>
		<u>Expand and develop community celebrations and festivals for residents. Market events of regional interest to visitors. Consider a Bluegrass Festival at the fairgrounds each fall.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/Port</u>
		<u>Examine options for expanding public access to waterfront activities. Boat ramps; other park improvements.</u>	<u>County/Town, Ports</u>
<u>Strategy 6</u>	<u>Evaluate facilities and services needed to meet the needs of residents and visitors alike.</u>	<u>Evaluate feasibility of a central venue for visual arts and folk art.</u>	<u>LCEDC/County, Town/Ports</u>
		<u>Identify potential locations for a performing arts center or amphitheater.</u>	<u>LCEDC/County, Town/Ports</u>
		<u>Examine options for expanding public access to waterfront.</u>	<u>County/Town/ Ports</u>
		<u>Identify suitable locations for small, multiple visitor information outlets.</u>	<u>LCEDC/CoC/ Merchants Assn.</u>
		<u>Evaluate activities suitable for year-round use of existing facilities</u>	<u>LCEDC/ CoC/Ports</u>

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		<u>(wildlife refuge, fairgrounds, paddle center, etc.) and develop a service delivery and marketing plan to support it.</u>	
<u>Strategy 7</u>	<u>Explore options available for highway improvement funds and marketing assistance available as a result of scenic byway designation for S.R. 4.</u>	<u>Establish a Scenic Byways Group to identify what types of features to promote (e.g., Pacific flyway, JBH Refuge, other scenic/nature-based/adventure/heritage tourism) and what types of improvements are needed to support those features.</u>	<u>RTPO/WSDOT/County/Town</u>
		<u>Encourage widening to accommodate cyclists touring S.R. 4 during regularly scheduled state pavement maintenance efforts.</u>	<u>RTPO/WSDOT/County/Town</u>