



County Council Update: Economic Development at the Port of Bellingham 2019-2021



Port of
Bellingham
Economic
Development





About the ADO

**Funded by Port of Bellingham,
Whatcom County, City of Bellingham
& WA State Dept of Commerce**

**4 dynamic staff members employed by
the Port of Bellingham with
overlapping yet unique skillsets:**

- Don Goldberg, Director
- John Michener, Project Manager
- Jennifer Noveck, Research & Comm Manager
- Gina Stark, Project Manager



What is economic development?

Many types of community and business development exist.

- Economic, social, community, and business development all take place in Whatcom County
- Economic development, by definition subsumes social, community, and business development
 - When undertaken by the public sector, economic development is a goal-oriented process that results in wealth creation and improved economic well-being and a high quality of life of a region, city, county, state, or country.
 - *The Regional Economic Partnership at the Port of Bellingham*
- Business development is primarily concerned with *business growth, productivity, and other business-specific outcomes and processes*
 - Technical business assistance: SBDC
 - Marketing & advocacy for business: Chambers, WBA, DBP, Tourism, business & industry associations
- Community development is primarily concerned with *empowering individuals and groups with skills and resources they need to effect change in their communities*
 - Many city development & planning departments, Opportunity Council, Chuckanut Health Foundation

CEDS Goals - to be carried out by the ADO

- Build upon and strengthen Whatcom County's base economy for traded sectors.
- Develop and enhance critical infrastructure that promotes economic development and resiliency.
- Develop a skilled workforce, expand educational attainment, and align employer needs with education programs and curriculum.
- Create a dynamic relationship between Whatcom County and Lower British Columbia, Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties.
- Cultivate an economy that values diversity, equity, and inclusion for all.
- Support countywide economic resiliency and recovery efforts.

» The Hub and Spoke Model

Our strategy revolves around public and private sector partnerships.

As the ADO for Whatcom County, the Port is in a unique position to work with partners throughout the county to achieve economic development goals.



We work
with more
than the
private
sector.



Public sector

City, county, port, tribal jurisdictions
Federal & state departments
Public infrastructure and
transportation organizations
Post-secondary education

Private sector

Companies
Business groups
Industry associations

Nonprofits

Community development service
providers
Health and social service
providers

Deliverables Categories



1

BR&E: ADO deliverables

Recruitment, business retention & expansion activities, export assistance, startups, and foreign investment assistance.

2

Long-Term Infrastructure

Work related to improving physical, economic, and social infrastructure that is currently inadequate to support the growth of existing businesses (and recruitment).

3

COVID Response

County-wide grant programs, Cross Border Taskforce, Think Local First gift cards, Point Roberts ferry, Safer.Stronger.Together.

4

Economic Resiliency

Work related to strengthening the economy and protecting it from future disasters and downturns.

BR&E ADO Deliverables 2019-2021 (to date)

Reported quarterly to WA Dept of Commerce

RECRUITMENT

Provided assistance to **135** entities considering relocation or expansion to Whatcom County.

RETENTION & EXPANSION

Provided assistance to over **262** entities already operating within Whatcom County.

TWO QUARTERS REMAIN IN '21

Recruitment and retention numbers will increase for each category.

READINESS & CAPACITY BUILDING

Participated in, facilitated, or financially contributed to over **186** community engagements or activities, such as:

Community Engagement & Facilitation:

- Monthly WC Business and Commerce Advisory Committee, Small Cities, and Team Whatcom meetings
- Participate as Board members for Tourism, Downtown Bellingham Partnership, Whatcom Housing Alliance, Habitat for Humanity, Racial Equity Commission

Supported community events & programs

Companies That Wouldn't Be Here Without Us



Marcon Metalfab

- Purchased the Greenberry Building, made many upgrades to the building and property
- Build transportation infrastructure

Tidal Vision

- RLF client that started w/5 employees & is currently employing 18 people with family wage jobs
- \$2 million in capital investments since June 2020
- Contracted with Coastline Equipment to build new product line

360 Modular Building Systems

- Connected with County and the Lummi Nation to address local housing issues
- Working with local governments & partners throughout the state

Family Care Network

- Expansion into Blaine, WA
- Improved healthcare access and reduced travel times to Blaine, Birch Bay, Point Roberts residents

And many more in process!

Strategic Reserve Fund (SRF)

Resulted in over \$22 million in investments in Whatcom County in the 2019-2021 biennium

Silfab Solar

\$250,000 for permanent building & equipment upgrades, allowing for more family wage jobs

360 Modular Building Systems

\$100,000 for building & equipment upgrades, allowing for hiring of more floor staff

Vicinity Motor Corps

\$200,000 towards building upgrades, allowing for groundbreaking

Point Roberts International Marketplace

\$100,000 to maintain operations at the primary grocery outlet for the pene-exclave



Long-term infrastructure



Physical infrastructure

- Port-PUD work on broadband
- I-5 Infrastructure GIS database, soon to be expanded to the entire county
- EDI Board proposed changes to mitigate infrastructure costs
- CEDS Project List
- Collaborate with PUD on Cherry Point infrastructure



Social infrastructure

- Affordable, available housing, with focus on worker housing
- Affordable, available childcare
- Diversity, equity, & inclusion
- Maintaining high quality of life
- Addressing houselessness



Economic infrastructure

- Recruiting developers with products not in Whatcom
- Creating a robust wetland mitigation bank
- Support shovel ready sites & business park development
- EDI worker housing program

COVID Response



Unified Command

- Led the Economic Impact Taskforce March 2020 - May 2020
- Cross Border Taskforce

Partner to Health Dept & School Districts

- Biweekly check-ins with Health Director
- Safer. Stronger. Together. campaign.
- Supported acquisition of laptops, tablets, WiFi hotspots, etc., for e-learning

\$6 million in Small Business Relief

- Working Washington Rounds 1-4
- Whatcom ReStart Small Business grants
- Whatcom ReStart Childcare grants
- Border Relief grants

Supported partners & nonprofits

- Think Local First gift card program (over \$200,000 in sales to local businesses)
- Port's temporary ferry to Point Roberts

Economic Resiliency



Port, City, County Projects

- Port, City, County Climate Action Strategies
- POB Tsunami Mitigation Playbook (FEMA)
- PNWERR Regional Economic Resiliency
- US Canada Border Reopening



REP Projects

- Many projects and programs listed in the CEDS Strategic Action Plan
 - Value-added innovation in marine trades, agriculture, advanced manufacturing
 - Diversifying Whatcom's employment base
- EDA grant w/Skagit, Island, San Juan Counties
 - Tourism & hospitality recovery
 - Small business recovery
 - Small business data collection

What's Next?

Check our
CEDS 2022-
2026 for
details

- Implement the CEDS 2022-2026 Strategic Action Plan
- Identify broadband funding, route priorities
- Expand Infrastructure database & coordinate with Buildable Lands program
- Support reopening of Intalco facility & existing businesses and landowners in Cherry Point
- Continue to work on issues of infrastructure, affordable housing and childcare with partners
- Continue to recruit & assist Canadian interests
- Continue to assist existing businesses in expansion efforts
- Work with all jurisdictions & partners on increasing availability of shovel ready sites
- Continue to build partnerships with the Lummi Nation & Nooksack Indian Tribe
- Continue to support & promote family wage jobs



Thank you!

Website for more info -

www.portofbellingham.com/154/Economic-Development

**Contact us with leads, questions,
comments to -**

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Department of Commerce