

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Annual reporting to the
Whatcom County Council
by the Port of Bellingham's
Economic Development
Division



Agenda

The Port of Bellingham works for all of
Whatcom County!

<https://portofbellingham.com/154/Economic-Development>

PORT OF BELLINGHAM EC DEV UPDATE PRESENTATION

- **ABOUT THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AT THE PORT OF BELLINGHAM**
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- **OUR TEAM**
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- **WHATCOM COUNTY CEDS GOALS**
-

- **OUR SERVICES & DELIVERABLES**
-

- **CONTACT**
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About the Regional Economic Partnership

REP is the EcDev Division at the Port and is generously funded by Port of Bellingham, Whatcom County, City of Bellingham & WA State Dept of Commerce.

<https://portofbellingham.com/154/Economic-Development>

4 dynamic staff members employed by the Port of Bellingham and 1 dedicated consultant with overlapping yet unique skillsets:

- Don Goldberg, Director
- John Michener, Project Manager
- Jennifer Noveck, Research & Data Analytics Consultant
- Kori Olsen, Communications & EcDev Associate
- Gina Stark, Project Manager

Economic Development

What is ec dev?

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.

Economic development is the umbrella for business, community + other forms of development.

Business + Community Development

Business development is primarily concerned with business growth, productivity, and other business-specific outcomes and processes.

Community development is primarily concerned with empowering individuals and groups with skills and resources they need to effect change in their communities.

OUR INTENTIONS



OUR CEDS VISION

To have a resilient regional economy that has: a dynamic and inclusive business community, a commitment to living wage jobs and equity, and the physical, social, and economic infrastructure to support it.

Whatcom County CEDS 2022-2026

1

Build upon and strengthen Whatcom County's base economy.

2

Develop and enhance critical infrastructure that promotes economic development + resiliency.

3

Develop a skilled workforce, expand educational attainment, + align employer needs with education programs + curriculum.

4

Create a dynamic relationship between Whatcom County + Lower British Columbia, Skagit, Island, + San Juan Counties.

5

Cultivate an economy that values diversity, equity, + inclusion for all.

6

Support countywide economic resiliency + recovery efforts.

Deliverables



- **BR+E**

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

CEDS GOAL #1

- **INFRASTRUCTURE**

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

CEDS GOAL #2

- **WORKFORCE + EDU**

Work related to aligning workforce programs with employer needs.

CEDS GOAL #3

Deliverables



- **CANADA**

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

CEDS GOAL #4

- **DEI**

Work related to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in our work with businesses and partners.

CEDS GOAL #5

- **RESILIENCY**

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

CEDS GOAL #6

BR+E in 2022

EXAMPLES OF RECRUITMENT

Corvus Energy
Canature Kitchen
Vicinity Motor Corp

Over 100 jobs will be brought to the region from these 3 companies alone

RETENTION

Over 120 businesses contacted + assisted

Working on issues related to site selection, permitting, infrastructure, worker housing, childcare, expansion, exports

RESOURCES

Restarted quarterly newsletter

Grant assistance for disaster and COVID-19 impacted businesses

Revolving Loan Fund

CEDS Goals 1, 2, 6: Cherry Point

ALCOA CLOSURE

Announced March 2023

Several rounds of negotiations + opportunities examined in 2021-2022

MANY OPPORTUNITIES

Ongoing infrastructure needs

Solar + Hydrogen opportunities

Major investments by BP



Agriculture

CEDS GOALS 1, 5, + 6

Research lab progress with WSU + Berry Commission as partners

Disaster grant support

20 small farms in Whatcom directly aided by the NW Disaster Grant

Addressing ongoing climate impacts, mitigation + resiliency

Addressing ongoing market impacts



WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE

- Fisherman's Pavilion
- Dockside Market
- Shipping Terminal
Reactivation
- New pending marine trades
apprenticeship
- Maritime Blue, cluster
industry + innovation events,
resources for entrepreneurs
- Corvus Energy



Marine Trades

CEDS Goals 1-6

Resiliency

CEDS Goal #6



**DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS**



**DISASTER
RESPONSE**



**ECONOMIC
DIVERSITY**



**SUSTAINABLE,
INNOVATIVE
BUSINESSES**

Partners are critical to this work:

Health Dept, Emergency Management, WWU SBDC, WCF, Sustainable Connections, Bellingham Regional Chamber, County, Cities, Tribes

Small Business Grants

In partnership with the WA State Dept of Commerce, WWU SBDC, Sustainable Connections, the Community Foundation, Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism, Sherriff's Dept, Emergency Management



• **WORKING WA 5**

Additional relief to small business experiencing ongoing losses due to COVID-19 + related closures.

• **DISASTER GRANTS**

70 businesses in Whatcom County will receive over \$5 million in direct aid as a result of the Nooksack River Flood of 2021

• **HOSPITALITY GRANTS**

Retail, restaurants, lodging, and other hospitality industry businesses are eligible for additional money. \$100 million in ARPA dollars set aside by the Legislature. Deadline April 6.

Infrastructure

CEDS Goal #1 + 2

• BROADBAND

Partnering with County and PUD#1

Three fully funded projects to provide service to: E. Nooksack/Mosquito Lake (currently under construction), N. Lynden, and N. Ferndale to 2000 homes

In partnership with PUD#1 and WSU, developing a Digital Equity Plan to inform and secure future funding

• EDI

Changed rules to support county-wide impacts, infrastructure that supports affordable housing

• HOUSING

WEDA Workforce Housing Workgroup

WCBCC Housing Solutions Memo to Council

City of Anacortes presentation to Small Cities

Supporting inclusive zoning changes

• GIS DATABASE

Whatcom County Infrastructure, Utilities + Resiliency Database (previously called the I-5 Corridor Infrastructure Database)

In 2022-2023 we added: Everson, Nooksack, Sumas and the Columbia Valley

Database is currently in use for a Brownfields-Affordable Housing study funded by Ecology

Open House for all users coming in June/July 2023

• CHILDCARE

Supporting partners, businesses, and WCBCC on their work related to creating more quality childcare slots.

Border Reopened!

CEDS Goal #1 + 2



- **CANADIAN BUSINESS**
- **MANY INTERESTED IN WAREHOUSE OR US HQ**

- **RETAIL + TOURISM SEEING REBOUNDS**

- **LONGER BORDER WAITS**
- **1 MILLION NEXUS APPLICATIONS BACKLOG**

2023-2024

**What's
next?**

• Continue to focus on CEDS Goals

- Cherry Point
- Broadband
- Housing
- On site BR+E visits
- Building resiliency for potential downturns
 - Innovation focused efforts for ag, marine trades
- Workforce
 - Whatcom Skill Center, promoting partner programs that provide alternatives to 4 year degrees
 - Supporting 4 colleges on skills alignment, degree + program coordination
- Labor shortage

**WHATCOM
COUNTY COUNCIL
UPDATE**



The Port of Bellingham's Economic Development Division serves all of Whatcom County! Contact us with questions or help related to business assistance, site selection, infrastructure, export assistance, and much more!

If we cannot be of assistance, we will refer you to a Team Whatcom partner.

Connect With Us!



360-676-2500



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