"A ship is safe in the Harbor, but that's not what ships are for"-*Alan Henry*

2019 Strategic Plan

Whatcom County
Regional **E**conomic **P**artnership
REP

Vision

We strive to be highly programmatic and opportunistic in nature to retain and attract livable wage jobs and to assist businesses, entrepreneurs, and local organizations to thrive for the entire Whatcom region.

What We Do

- Promote Whatcom County as a great place to live, work, and do business.
- Connect businesses with economic development services and skilled workforce resources.
- Work with our partners in Canada to help enhance and grow cross border trade opportunities.
- Create and facilitate living wage jobs.
- Organize and implement a county wide real estate vision.

Economy & Trade Sectors

We work collaborative with our local and regional partners to create a vibrant community

- Higher education
- Agriculture
- High tech businesses
- Marine trade
- Manufacturing
- Recreation
- Energy
- Real estate
- Retail
- Health care
- Local food processing
- Emerging new markets

Foundational Steps



Team

- Building a highly motivated responsive team.



Learning

- Creating Strong Partnerships
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of the regions.

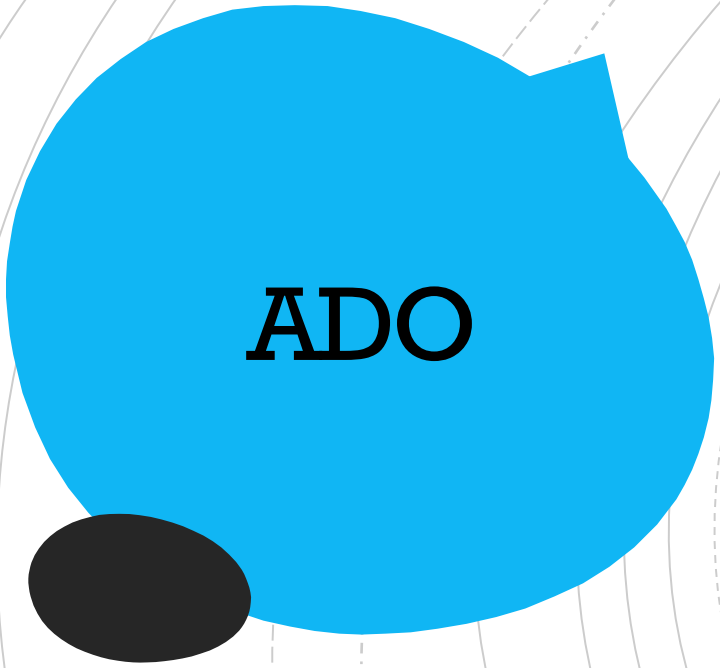


Funding

- Obtaining long-term sustainable funding.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

- Economic development is more than businesses retention, expansion, and attraction.
- Our vision is also driven by the vision conceptualized by the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County.
  - Whatcom County Comprehensive Development Strategy (2016)
  - Whatcom County Comprehensive Study (Land Use 2018)
  - Bellingham Comprehensive Plan (2016)
- Our goal is to bring together public and private sectors in the creation of an “economic roadmap” to diversify and strengthen the regional economy.



Associate Development Organization

The Port of Bellingham is the designated ADO, the economic development agency for the region.

As the ADO we are one of 37 ADOs that report directly to the Washington State Department of Commerce.

- We provide Business Assistance
  - Follow up on State Commerce leads
  - Responsible for reporting on a quarterly basis
- We receive partial funding from the state as the designated ADO

RER

Retention

- Retain or keep existing businesses.
- Assist businesses with site location and permitting.
- Connect them with the needed workforce

Expansion

- Provide assistance for businesses to expand (Farm to Table model).
- Revolving Loan Fund is a tool that enabled many of our local businesses to expand and add jobs.

Recruitment

- Reach out to targeted markets.
- Market the benefits of locating to Whatcom County.
- Facilitate New Markets and opportunities

Marketing

1

Messaging

Whatcom County is a great place to live, work and do business.

2

Brochure

- Countywide digital and print brochure.
- Highlight each city and County economic benefits.

3

Sponsorship

- Sponsor partner events
- Work with partners coordinating events
- Participate in various panel discussions

4

Websites

- Port of Bellingham Economic Development Pages
- Choose Whatcom

5

Media

- KCPQ Video
- Featured in business and economic development publications.

Partners

- Higher Education
- Government Agencies
- Chambers
- Non-Profits
- Business organizations
- Local Community Groups
- Tribal Nations
- New Partnerships

Growing our Economy

- Infrastructure
  - Industrial
  - Housing
- Broadband
- Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ)
- Opportunity Zones
- Cherry Point Business Park
- Cross Border Business

Next Steps

- I-5 corridor infrastructure analysis
- Rural Broadband Rollout
- Emphasize Rural Whatcom County Economic Development
- Work closely with Lower British Columbia for cross-boarder business opportunities.
- Cherry Point masterplan design
  - International study
- Engage newly formed County Commerce and Business Committee
- Cyber Security Recruitment
- Support Downtown Bellingham and the waterfront development
- Continue to Expand Strategic Partnering

Questions ?



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