



## Branding, Development, and Marketing Action Plan

Town of Concrete 2017

Prepared by Concrete Economic Development Commission

**The resulting branding and marketing plan, as outlined in this report, is built upon extensive research and public outreach.**

## THE SEVEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BRANDING

1. Branding is the art of setting yourself apart from everyone else. Being a place that has “something for everyone” can be anywhere and says nothing about you.
2. A brand is a perception—what people think of the town when they hear Concrete, WA mentioned. It’s also a promise that the town will deliver on the perception. In the case of Concrete, we know that part of this effort is “positioning” or “branding” the community so that it has its own identity separate from other communities, and highlights its own special attributes.
3. Logos and slogans are not brands. They are marketing messages and graphic images used to support and reinforce your ownership position. Brands are about owning your niche in the marketplace.
4. A great brand evokes emotion. It’s a feeling someone has about you. This is why you must focus on activities and emotional benefits more than physical attributes such as historic buildings, parks, and other public facilities.
5. All successful brands are built on product, not marketing. You can develop new advertising, graphics, Web sites, mobile apps, signs, and posters, but if the product doesn’t change or improve, what have you accomplished? Any gains in population or economic benefit will not be sustainable.
6. You never “roll out” a brand. It’s earned—good or bad. The good news for Concrete is that the community already has a strong foundation on which it can build its brand, through the family- and business-oriented assets and mindset that makes it an ideal place to live and invest in.
7. A brand is a promise that you will live up to the perception we have of you, that your community will fulfill our expectations. When we get there, what we envisioned must, in fact, be the reality.

## Branding Workshops

Two major events were held in 2017, focusing on developing a brand for the Town of Concrete. At both chamber and community workshops, attendees were asked to discuss two questions:

Who are we and what story do we want to tell about ourselves?

Thoughts and comments from both workshops are contained in this document, along with recommended actions from the Concrete Economic Development Commission.



**You'll want to be part of this!**

**Imagine Concrete Workshop: Branding Concrete**

**brand**

**Saturday, April 15**  
**9 a.m. to noon**  
Concrete High School Commons Room

*Join your fellow Concrete citizens to chart our course!*

- What is Concrete?
- How do we want the world to see us?
- How do we imagine our future?



For more information, contact Jason Miller at 360.853.8213 or [goodwords@frontier.com](mailto:goodwords@frontier.com).

## Strategic Priorities Summarized

Three strategic priorities and 13 specific actions are recommended by the Economic Development Commission to move Concrete toward its branding vision.

<b>TAKE CONTROL &amp; MANAGE CONCRETE'S IMAGE</b>	<b>INVEST IN TOOLS WITH GREATEST IMPACT</b>	<b>MAKE CONCRETE PART OF THE DIALOGUE</b>
<b>Bridge the gap between the town's external reputation and its internal reality</b>	<b>Utilize tools and techniques that resonate most the town's target market</b>	<b>Expand awareness of the town's position and vision by engaging with key partners</b>
<p>Ensure accuracy, consistency, and frequency in all internal and external communication efforts</p> <p>Increase awareness of Concrete's position to develop credibility and trust</p> <p>ED Commission focus on specific branding and market initiatives</p> <p>Apply for and capture awards and accolades</p>	<p>Update current assets and tools to better draw and engage with potential visitors/residents</p> <p>Create and maintain social media presence for economic development</p> <p>Explore targeted mass communication programs</p>	<p>Recruit successful Concrete businesses and citizens; develop them as brand ambassadors</p>

## **THE PRIMARY GOALS OF THIS EFFORT**

### **The Goals of Brand Development for the Town of Concrete:**

1. Targeted economic development.
2. Capitalizing on existing quality of life assets.
3. Creating a unified identity within the community.

### **The primary reasons for the branding effort are:**

1. To put Concrete “on the map” as more than a bedroom community.
2. To differentiate Concrete from the other communities in Skagit County and throughout Washington State.
3. To increase the commercial/industrial tax base so it carries more of the tax load.
4. To encourage families to live AND work in Concrete.
5. To slow the leakage of locally earned money being spent elsewhere.
6. To continue working to make Concrete’s Town Center THE showcase downtown in the state.
7. To attract visitors into the community, tapping into regional tourism spending.

## Key Economic Factors

Eleven vacant buildings with potential retail opportunities exist in the Town Center. Research and discussions with EDASC and Port of Skagit idealistically point to these vacant properties as opportunity versus threat. The following recommendations are made:

- In order to maintain and preserve the historic integrity of Concrete Town Center, forceful Property Maintenance Regulations should be enforced.
- Adopt and encourage “adaptive reuse” of town-owned properties as a way to promote Economic Development. Recommendations are in the process of being drafted by the Concrete Economic Development Commission for Town Council review.



## **Recommendations**

- 1. Enhance Town and Local Area Wayfinding System:** Continue to enhance wayfinding signage system around our community.
- 2. Establish Presence on Social Media:** Use social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) to promote Town of Concrete and Economic Development.
- 3. Marketing Activities:** Market activities (Eagle Festival, Fly-in, Ghost Walk, etc.). Promote the Concrete experience.
- 4. Create a Professional Photography and Video Library:** Nothing sells a place like photography.
- 5. Add Photo Library to Google Earth and Maps:** Post photos of scenery and people enjoying key activities to Google Earth and Google Maps. Create reciprocal links between the tourism Web site and Google Earth.
- 6. Collectible Posters and Bookmarks:** Create frameable posters using professional photography or artwork of Concrete that showcase its heritage, community, and nature.
- 7. Create Niche Guides and Niche Marketing:** Biking, hiking and the environment, swap meet, culture and the arts, birding, fishing, farmers markets and agritourism, arts and culture, geocaching.
- 8. Use Technology-based Apps:** Utilize emerging technologies that can be used for traveling, promoting destinations, and marketing in general.
- 9. Use storytelling:** Use of stories and storytelling is a powerful communications tool. Tell the story of Concrete's unique history to both community and visitors.
- 10. Develop line item funding:** Develop budget line item to fund specific projects tied to the brand and economic development effort.

**11. Town Center Banner Program For Main Street - Incorporate kids' flag artwork into banner designs along Main Street.**



**12. Branding Statement:** A branding statement serves as a catch line that informs others of who we are. Concrete's branding statement focuses around our Heritage, Nature, and Community:

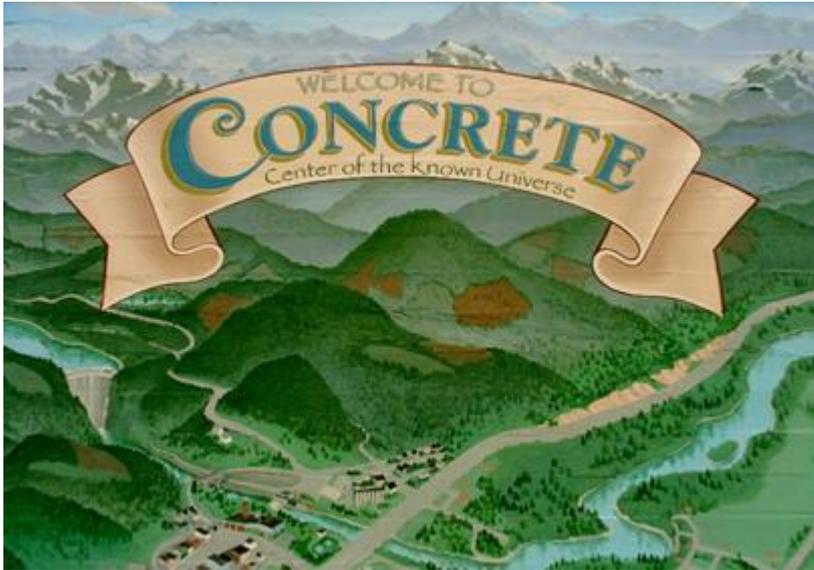
Concrete is a beautiful place. Resting at the confluence of the Baker and Skagit rivers, our foothills town values its sense of place and the ties that bind us to the land and community.

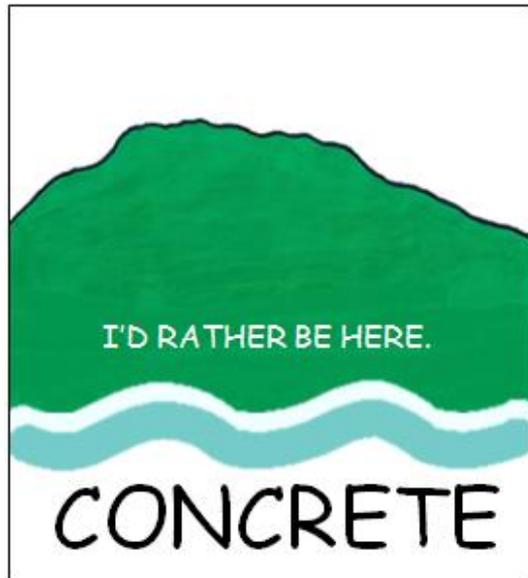
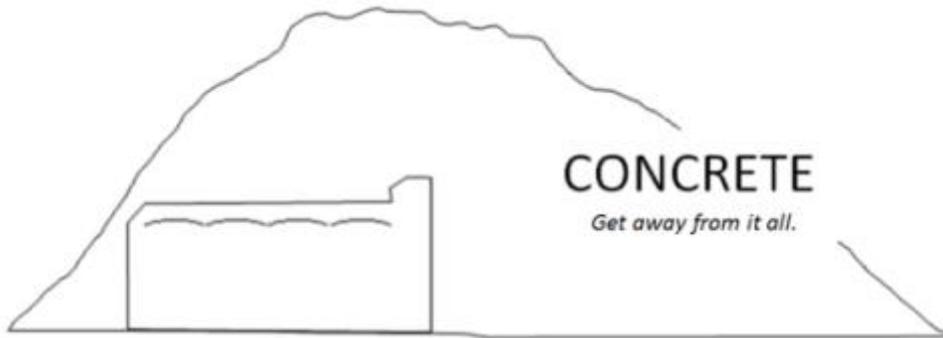
While looking to the future, Concrete honors its historical role as a builder—a provider of the raw materials that helped create the infrastructure of the Pacific Northwest. The minerals from the area built the great dams that brought electricity to Washington, and the timber from this region built thousands of homes as the state was settled by early pioneers.

We know that the era of continuous resource extraction is over. Concrete aims to prepare for the future by rebuilding itself into a resource attraction for those looking to explore the Upper Skagit Valley and North Cascades as casual tourists or serious outdoor adventurers. The town is determined to become the go-to destination for those looking to venture either farther down the highway or deeper into the wilds by providing the amenities, supplies, and expertise that make those forays possible.

We undertake this task as a community because building is in our heritage and because we seek to create an economic environment that can support and grow the community. Our goal is a prosperous Concrete, able to offer opportunity to our children and attract all those who will dedicate themselves to the goal of a beautiful, prosperous, and nurturing community.

**13. Adopt a Slogan and Key Marketing Message:** Create a memorable message that communicates the Concrete brand—the essence of who we are and what we are known for.





**CONCRETE**  
*Jewel of the Skagit*

**Other slogans and messages:**

It's all here.

We're fascinating.

We're unique. Not typical.

Close enough to get here. Far enough to get away.

We Built the West.