

Town of Concrete Economic Development Commission
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Town of Concrete
Economic Development Commission

Meeting Agenda

June 12, 2024 - 6 p.m.

**Economic
Development
Commission Members**

Rodleen Getsic

Dinah Kinney-Chair
Pro-tem

Anne Bussiere - Chair

Wiley Moore

Guy Borgford

Town Council Liaison

Stephanie Semro

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Minutes – April 10, 2024 (pages 1-3) May 8-No Quorum
5. Old Business
 - Bike Park Grant Update
 - Review/Adjust/Discuss 2024 Goal Edits (pages 4-11)
 - Workforce Training Update
 - Code Enforcement-Business District Codes Discussion
 - PSE Car Charger Program
6. New Business
 - Council Joint Workshop – July 29, 2024
7. Other Business
8. Announcements
 - Next Meeting July 10, 2024 6pm
9. Adjournment

**Town of Concrete
Economic Development Commission Workshop
April 10, 2024**

Call Meeting to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Economic Commission Members: Rodleen Getsic, Dinah Kinney, Anne Bussiere, Wiley Moore (via Zoom), and Guy Borgord.

Liaison: Stephanie Semro.

Audience Members Signed In: None.

Staff Present: Deputy Clerk Heather Parker.

Minutes: March 13, 2024: Dinah made a motion to approve the minutes. Rodleen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business: Review/Adjust/Discuss 2024 Goals, Edits: Ann stated that she took everything that had been discussed and put them into 4 headings and updated the format. She stated some of the items are from the old plan. She stated the headings are infrastructure, marketing, business, and community.

Mayor Reed stated that she heard there is someone looking into buying the Lonestar and keeping the bar but using the restaurant portion to live in. Stephanie stated that she had heard the bartender was trying to buy it or may have partially bought it.

Mayor Reed stated there are some town codes that need to be updated and Kevin is researching that. Discussion ensued on some of the buildings on Main Street and their current use as well as the enforcement of codes. It was suggested to put some type of document together for new owners or potential buyers that makes them aware of requirements on a particular property.

Stephanie suggested that limiting the number of vehicles that can be on one property could be something that could be changed. Discussion ensued on junk vehicles and overall code enforcement. Guy asked if there is a job description and budget for code enforcement. Rodleen asked if the grant could possibly pay for something like this, since it would be a way to improve the town.

Anne stated the grant funding is for a business or facility that would assist in increasing the family wage. Rodleen asked what that meant exactly. Mayor Reed stated an example would be building a facility in the parks to rent certain equipment that would require an employee to run it.

Guy discussed a conversation he had with Michael Dahl regarding the plans for his different properties in town. He stated he discussed ideas for affordable housing at the Eagles Nest property and possibly constructing tiny homes on that property as well. He stated they also discussed plans for the old restaurant building that he owns on Main Street.

Discussion ensued on vacant buildings and how that has become an issue nationwide as people buy these as tax write offs and do not do anything with the building. Discussion ensued on the Eagles Nest property and what all that has been used for in the past. Discussion also ensued on tiny home villages and affordable housing that has been constructed in other jurisdictions.

Anne stated that in July there is a meeting scheduled between town commissions and the council. She stated they will need to have a presentation of some kind put together with recommendations for things like code enforcement and it should include budget numbers.

Discussion ensued on landscaping around the silos and if the town were to do that, who would be responsible for maintaining it. Discussion also ensued on the plan for the pavilion and where that is at.

Town Birthday Party: Anne stated the event will take place on Saturday, May 11 from Noon to 2pm. She stated there will be hotdogs, water, cupcakes, and music. She stated some of the music will be done by a DJ that will do music throughout the decades but there may be some live music as well. She stated they are also planning to redo the group town photo up on Main Street.

New Business: Mountain Bike Trail Presentation: Guy introduced Stacy to the commission. Stacey handed out information that she has put together on this proposal. Mayor Reed stated this has already been brought to the Parks Committee. Stacey stated that she wanted to discuss the proposal. She stated this would be for multiuse trails in Silo Park and possibly include portions of property owned by Glacier NW east of Silo Park. She stated this would be another way of bringing people into town. She stated that she is also talking with CYSA about different programs they could assist with.

She stated these would be multiuse trails which would include biking, walking, and running. She also discussed ideas for a skills park, pump track and other items. Stacey stated there could be different rollers and tracks and discussed different jurisdictions that have already constructed these. She stated it would be good to have a club that could assist in maintenance and upkeep. She stated that she already has a list of volunteers that are ready to help.

Stacey discussed the different proposed features such as log bridges, wooden rollers, and rocks and buried logs that could be ridden over. She stated there are also teetertotters and other different options.

Mayor Reed suggested that the project be planned and completed in 2-3 phases. Discussion ensued on the county grant and how those funds may be used to pay someone to maintain or rent out bikes and helmets. She stated the school has bikes that are not being used right now. Mayor Reed stated a building could also be constructed that could possibly be used for store items for handing or renting out. Discussion ensued on the grant being for facilities and that trails could be considered a facility.

Discussion ensued on the skate park and adding to this facility as well. Dinah stated that liability issues also need to be investigated and make sure those are in place. Discussion ensued on proper

signage.

Discussion ensued on the plan and how other jurisdictions have designed theirs and what the costs are to construct these types of facilities. Discussion ensued on the grant application and who is going to write it. Guy volunteered to draft the application.

Dinah made a motion to seek funding for Silo Park. Rodleen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Reed asked that the application gets run by her so that she can review to make sure certain items are included. She also stated that this needs to be brought to council on April 22 for their approval as well. Further discussion ensued on the project.

Bylaws Update: Anne stated the town updated the code and bylaws so that all meetings are meetings and no more workshops, which was confusing.

Other Business: Dinah stated that she has been doing research on car charges and does not believe it is a good idea for the town to invest in any right now or the near future. Mayor Reed stated that she spoke to someone at PSE and that they might be able to assist. Discussion ensued on car charges and the time it takes for these to charge a vehicle. It was stated that Toyota is no longer making electric vehicles and that Switzerland is starting to limit their use there. Dinah stated that she was excited when this was first discussed but since doing more research, realizes there may be some hinderances. It was stated to watch for changes in hydro power as well and that the town may not want to invest now but could move forward if PSE or another business wants to assist.

Announcements: Next meeting May 8, 2024 at 6pm.

Adjournment: Dinah Kinney made a motion for adjournment at 7:33 p.m. Rodleen Getsic seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Anne Bussiere, Chair

Attest: Dinah Kinney, Chair pro-tem

Town of Concrete

Economic Development Plan

History of Strategic Plan Task Force

The Economic Development Plan for the Town of Concrete process was guided by a task force of representatives from private sector businesses, education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and government entities. The Economic Development Task Force (EDTF) provided the bulk of the information as well as leadership and insight. The following individuals participated on the Economic Development Task Force.

Jason Miller – Mayor, Town of Concrete
Eric Archuletta – Facilitator, Imagine Concrete Foundation, Vice President
Em and Walt Beals – Owners, 5b's Bakery
Lynette Gentry – Columbia Bank Branch Manager in Concrete
Athena Hornsby – Artist and Owner, Northwest Garden Bling
Doug Ide – Real Estate Agent, Valleys West Realty
Claus Joens – Teacher, Concrete School District
Ginger Kyritsis – Councilmember, Town of Concrete
Phillip Moran – Columbia Bank Branch Manager in Concrete (retired)
Brooke Pederson – Director, Upper Skagit Library
Cheryl Werda – Chamber of Commerce

The goals, strategies, and actions recommended by the EDTF within this plan reflect consensus achieved through discussions and deliberations, as well as information drawn from visits to communities engaged in economic revitalization; the results of two Community Visioning Workshops (2009 and 2011), and an Economic Development workshop (2013) held by Imagine Concrete Foundation. The Town values the participation of its many volunteers and the results of two years of work put into the creation of this plan.

Economic Development Strategy

- Strengthen existing connections between town government and the greater Concrete community.
- Workforce education and training: Establish education and training opportunities with EDASC, Skagit Valley College, Whatcom Community College, and Western Washington University.
- Infrastructure development, such as high-speed fiber, water, sewer, zoning, etc.
- Diversification of economy, such as small business development, cottage industry, e-commerce, entrepreneur development opportunities.

Intended Outcomes of Economic Development

- Job creation
- Job retention
- Tax base creation
- Increase in property values
- Retention of wealth
- Reduction of poverty
- Reduction of homelessness
- Economic stability and resiliency
- Economic self-sufficiency

Identifiable Strengths and Weaknesses

Marketable strengths that can be capitalized upon.

- Location
- Recreation opportunities
- Spring water source
- Local history
- Size and population

Development opportunities:

- Urban Growth Area - Annexation.
- Airport zoning/development for light industry.

Issues having a negative impact on the community's or area's economic development future.

- Distance to I-5 corridor (strength and weakness).
- Workforce education/skills.
- Addiction issues.
- Mental health issues.
- Health care issues.
- Cost to upgrade aging buildings in Town Center.
- Lack of affordable housing

Measuring Success

The Economic Development Task Force recommends Successes should be publicized under the umbrella of economic development via various information media, Town Council, and Chamber of Commerce meetings. The EDTF also recommends tracking income, population, visitor traffic, new business start-ups, events, and other factors that reflect the goals within the economic development plan. Statistics do not change overnight, and Town efforts are only one piece of the puzzle. However, measuring results and key benchmarks is important to future planning efforts.

Key Acronyms

CID	Community Improvement District
DAHP	Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
EDASC	Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County
EDTF	Economic Development Task Force
WTA	Washington Tourism Alliance

Working Goals

Goals should not be an ending target but an ongoing process of constant or periodic review as situations are always changing. These goals are listed under the headings of Infrastructure, Business, Marketing and Community and have been reformatted from the original EDC goals presented to the Concrete Town Council in 2016.

Infrastructure

Develop broadband to encourage business growth and expansion (previously Goal 9)

- Continue to ensure that adequate technologies are available throughout the town as well as Growth Management Area.

Maintain Proactive Town Government (previously Goal 10)

- Continue to actively promote responsible growth.
- Continue to seek, support, and fund infrastructure needs for economic growth.
- Periodically review the Comprehensive Plan and make changes that support economic development growth strategies. Develop a review timetable.
- Inform development community of regulatory changes that affect business development; e.g., building codes, sign ordinances, etc. Make sure codes are enforced.

Evaluate current Economic Development Toolkit (previously Goal 12)

- Establish Economic Development Office for Town of Concrete with an Economic Development Coordinator position.
- Create a Community Improvement District (CID)
- Develop and adopt guidelines for awarding incentives to existing and new businesses, landlords and property owners
- Conduct economic and fiscal impact analysis on land use and zoning changes

Create a Regulatory Environment that Embraces Collaboration and Cooperation (previously Goal 13)

- Identify and revise regulations that inhibit business growth. Conduct interviews with local business owners, asking them to identify any such regulations.
- Explore business-friendly land development policies that encourage business attraction, retention. Conduct interviews with land developers, asking them to identify any such policies.
- Explore land development policies that incentivize more efficient development, including infill and mixed-use concepts.
- Formalize and promote the Town's streamlined development process.

Business

Identify Education and Training Needs (previously Goal 6)

- The institutions of higher education and training in the Concrete area will meet the skill-level needs of the businesses and industries in the community. Outreach to EDASC, educational institutions and determine the needs of businesses and industries.
- The local workforce will have the basic education, life skills and technical skills to meet the demands of the Concrete workforce. Outreach to institutions for training and to determine needs of workforce.
- Work with Concrete Chamber of Commerce to grow and train workforces and support entrepreneur development.

Identify Key Parcels/Buildings that can be Converted for Business or Industrial Use (previously Goal 7 and 8)

- Compile and update inventory of land and ownership of properties that are appropriately zoned and ready for detailed master site planning.
- Meet with landowners/developers of parcels to determine action needed to develop sites.

- Create land development regulations that incentivize increased density/mixed-use development on remaining vacant land, while leaving open options for open space uses such as parks.
- Compile and update database of buildings for commercial use and economic development opportunities.
- Strengthen codes to ensure properties are utilized to best use. Research what has worked in other towns.

Create Innovative Partnerships to support New and Existing Businesses (previously Goal 1.1)

- Work with Economic Development Association of Skagit County (EDASC) to establish a partnership to support existing and new businesses in the town.
- Work with businesses to create, attract, and retain target businesses.
- Develop a comprehensive database to include surveys or existing businesses, visitations, quarterly meetings, etc.
- Explore options for public/private partnerships such as school district, Upper Skagit Library, Community Action, state, federal, etc.
- Increase the awareness of local, state, regional and federal resources to assist with retention, attraction, and growth of value-added businesses.
- Schedule meetings with commercial real estate brokers and conduct area tours.
- Work with local, regional, state and federal partners to promote workforce readiness, education and training.
- Create partnerships with healthcare providers to assist with development of growth needs in the community.

Marketing

Maintain Website that is Updated, Accessible, Consistent and Useful (previously Goal 1)

- An attractive and informative Town Website must be useful for residents, businesses and visitors as well as potential new residents, businesses and industries. It should have updates as needed, and links should always be maintained.
- Promote the website address, www.townofconcrete.com

Create and maintain consistent brand for Town of Concrete (previously Goal 2)

- Use of a consistent brand logo across all platforms for the Town including signage, stationery, website, Town vehicles, etc.
- Review the Town's brand to ensure the Town's vision is clearly presented.
- Recruit successful Concrete businesses and develop them as brand ambassadors. Publish testimonials on Town website. Identify activities that can be promoted.
- Educate regional leaders and industry partners on Concrete's cultural stance and messaging. Keep consistency.
- Facilitate collaboration among partners to pool external expertise and resources. Host workshops, roundtables, mixers and other events with developers, businesses and neighboring communities.
- Evaluate ongoing targeted mass communication programs. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Monitor social media platforms.

Use area strengths in marketing (previously Goal 3)

- Effectively market the economic development strengths of Concrete by promoting the quality of life in the greater Concrete area. Include and collaborate with local communities.
- Use general and targeted promotion methods in collaboration with other potential economic development partners.

Promote the Business Identity of the Town (previously Goal 4)

- Promote the Town as a place for business and industry in addition to residential and education facilities.
- Educate regional economic development partners such as EDASC to determine how Concrete's planning fits with the regional plan.
- Collaborate with regional partners through a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding to market the Town for economic development.
- Develop a marketing plan to promote the Town, including print, radio, video clips, social media, etc.

Community

Use Historic Area, Landmarks, Parks and Recreation as Economic Drivers (previously Goal 5)

- Examine alternative uses for existing venues
- Explore opportunities for arts and crafts, music and other cultural events and venues.
- Promote the Town Center District as a regional performing arts venue and cultural asset.
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine the types of performing arts, civic uses, and/or mixed uses that are most likely to succeed in Concrete.
- Invest in, support and promote cultural and heritage events and "social infrastructure" such as Cascade Days, Ghost Walk and Fly-In.

Historic Preservation (previously Goal 14)

- Maintain and preserve historic integrity of historic areas within Town Limits, such as Town Center.
- Review and revise town codes regarding historic buildings.
- Develop guidelines for preservation of historic structures.

- Develop incentives for property owners who engage in historic preservation
- Celebrate our unique history in collaboration with Historic Preservations and Landmarks Commission.

Foster Sister City Relationships (previously Goal 16)

- Strengthen existing relationships with other cities and town undergoing similar processes.
- Form regional, national and international Sister City relationships with cities and towns in similar situations

Environment and Climate (new goal)

- Be aware of current and future needs for the environment and climate changes.
- Take active steps to preserve environment, which is also an asset to the Town's livability and attraction to visitors.