

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

Meeting Agenda

July 10, 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 – June 12, 2024
5. Old Business
 - Review/Adjust/Discuss 2024 Goal Edits
6. New Business
7. Other Business
8. Announcements
 - Council Joint Workshop – July 29, 2024
9.
 - Next Meeting August 14, 2024 6pm
10. Adjournment

**Town of Concrete
Economic Development Commission Workshop
June 12, 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, and Guy Borgford.

Liaison: Stephanie Semro.

Audience Members Signed In: None.

Staff Present: Deputy Clerk Heather Parker.

Minutes: April 10, 2024 and May 8, 2024 (no quorum): Dinah made a motion to approve the minutes. Rodleen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business: Bike Park Grant Update: Guy reported on the press coverage the project has received and the volunteers that have stepped up to assist. He also reported on items that have been donated. He stated this project has received great community support so far. Guy stated the grant application has been submitted and they will do a presentation to the County at the end of the month. He discussed the grant amount requested and that it would assist in paying for the pump track, covered area, and bike rentals. He stated that if the funding is awarded, they plan to hold a grand opening next summer with live music and food.

Rodleen stated this is great and would also like to see the skate park upgraded or redone. She stated that she believes there is a local that said he wanted to assist with plans and funds for improving the skate park as well.

Discussion ensued on ideas for promoting more outdoor activities and the availability of activities at Lake Shannon. Discussion also ensued on Lake Shannon being day use only with no overnight camping. Rodleen updated on discussions from the last Planning Commission meeting regarding a trail from town to Shannon and Baker Lakes. Ideas for different partnerships were also discussed.

Review/Adjust/Discuss 2024 Goals and Edits: Anne stated they need to review these and discuss. She stated they need to determine what they want to bring to Council in July.

Anne stated the document starts with a history of how the EDC was formed. She stated that she revamped the old document into sections for Business, Infrastructure, Marketing and Community. She stated the format is the overall goal with action items listed for each.

Wiley asked if it would be easier to assign people to certain goals to go through and edit. Anne stated they need to determine what needs to be presented to Council. She stated that a committee may work. She stated they need to present ideas to the Council on items such as surplusings the

flag and using the town logo instead. Dinah stated she would like to see more consistency and that maybe this should be added as an action item. Rodleen suggested adding the issues with internet in the area. Dinah stated it should also address what is responsible growth and how does that get promoted and advertised as well as what is already here. Wiley stated he believes the airport items he had presented should be added as well. Anne stated that workforce training should also be an action item and that this committee could coordinate with EDASC for assistance and use the resources they have available.

Code Enforcement-Business District Codes Discussion: It was stated there is a need for more enforcement. Anne stated the Mayor had expressed frustration with the fact that the Code Enforcement Officer only works one day a week and is also the office assistant. Anne stated the town needs another paid code enforcement person. Guy stated the town could have a liaison that works with private industries in town which could be a combined role with code enforcement. He stated this person could also research and apply for grants. Dinah asked, so one combined position as liaison, code enforcement and grant writer. It was stated there may be grant funding available to pay for an added position.

Discussion ensued on housing options and affordable housing. Stephanie updated on programs that she is aware of and the research she still needs to do regarding benefits to property owners. Discussion also ensued on the old Sherman Mill property and what that property could potentially be used for. It was stated it could be used to construct affordable housing, regenerative farming, or a wellness center.

PSE Car Charger Program: Anne discussed a possible program through PSE for car charging stations. She stated they can install, or the town can install. Guy stated if PSE builds it, manages it, and maintains it, then it sounds perfect and should be pursued. Anne stated this needs to be taken to Council for approval. Discussion ensued on where these should be installed. Wiley suggested getting rid of the current town shop and use that area.

Wiley also stated that the town owns property, that happens to be waterfront, and an action item that he would like to see added is an inventory of all the property the town owns and then rationalize it for proper uses. He stated if the property has value and there is not a plan for the town to use it, then the town should make a plan to use it or sell it. He stated this one that he is aware of, is a choice by the town to not utilize it and he is not sure why.

Discussion ensued on the old fire hall building and the possibilities of its use or the option of selling it.

New Business: Council Joint Workshop – July 29, 2024: Anne reminded everyone of the joint workshop with council in July.

Other Business: Wiley reported there was grant funding to install fiber throughout town. He explained his understanding of how the process has and is working. He stated that Andrea says there is no agreement or contract in place with Ziplly for this. He stated that people are getting the fiber installed in town, but they are not able to get it at the airport. He stated he connected with Ziplly and they may be able to at least get it to people along Airport Way. He discussed the

process that should occur over the next 4-6 weeks. He stated now they have to discuss getting it to all the other lots on the airport. He stated there are easements in place that should be able to be used.

He stated that he believes he heard at a meeting that Ziply had come to the town and requested permission to do the install in town streets, but he did a public records request and he stated that Andrea swears there is no agreement or contract in place. He stated after talking with Ziply that they already have copper installed so they have the right to access it. Heather stated there is not an agreement or contract in place but Ziply does have to get permits when working in the right-of-way in town. Dinah stated that makes sense. Wiley stated that he does not doubt that but the issue is certain people know certain things and are not communicating that to others.

Wiley updated on the number of connections the install along Airport Way will allow. He stated when the Binding Site Plan was being updated, he suggested to council to make sure a utility easement was established. He stated he will take credit for making sure that was included and now the easements are there and should be able to be used. He stated that he heard today that Ziply cannot use the easement because there is electrical there as well. He stated that Andrea is working on another path as well for getting fiber installed at the airport.

He also reported that when Astound came to the airport to install internet at the Pilots Lounge, that Jon was out of town, Andrea was not available, and Heather did not answer the phone when he called so he was assigned to assist with the installation. He stated that he provided Heather with what needs to be done now.

Discussion ensued on making sure that fiber is going to be available in the Secondary Access Road project area as well.

Rodleen asked about Wi-Fi in town and the town offering it throughout town.

Wiley stated he cannot even use the Wi-Fi at town hall because it is not accessible. Stephanie stated the Wi-Fi at town hall is not for public use. Wiley stated a guest password could be made.

It was stated to add the fiber installation as an action item.

Anne asked that they get her their suggestions and edits back to her by the first week in July.

Announcements: Next meeting July 10, 2024 at 6pm.

Adjournment: Dinah Kinney made a motion for adjournment at 7:23 p.m. Guy Borgford 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 11)

- 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 of 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.