

Town of Concrete

Economic Development Plan

Strategic Plan Task Force/Participants

The Economic Development Plan for the Town of Concrete process is guided by a task force of representatives from private sector businesses, education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and government entities. The Economic Development Task Force (EDTF) was assembled at the beginning of the process and provided not only the bulk of the information that follows, but leadership and insight that has been invaluable to this project. 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 publicizing all successes 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

Goal 1: New Web site for Town of Concrete (www.townofconcrete.com)			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Replace obsolete Town of Concrete Web site. Create informative Web site with complete usability, including bill-paying, links to related sites (e.g. Chamber of Commerce), all information about Concrete and its government, events, amenities, etc.	Town	1-3 yrs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify an example of what we want our Web site to look like. Reach out to that municipality and find out who they worked with. 2. Find entity to build or create Web site. 3. Identify costs and how to pay for it. 4. Create site in stages; add functionality after primary functions are up and running.

Goal 2: Create brand for Town of Concrete			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Establish brand for Town of Concrete. (Who we are/what we have to offer. Promotes opportunities.)	Town and Chamber	2 yrs.	1. Hold branding workshop.
Perform a brand and marketing audit.	Town and Chamber	2-3 yrs.	1. Understand the existing conditions (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).
Recruit successful Concrete businesses and develop them as brand ambassadors.	Town, Chamber, local businesses	2-3 yrs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate them on Town's position and vision. 2. Target businesses across multiple industries and develop testimonials to publish on Concrete's Web site. 3. Identify joint activities that can be promoted via the media.
Educate regional leaders and industry partners on Concrete's cultural stance and messaging.	Town and Chamber	2-4 yrs.	1. Keep stance and messaging statements consistent.
Facilitate collaboration among partners to pool external expertise and resources.	Town/Chamber /EDASC	3-5 yrs.	1. Host workshops, roundtables, and mixers with developers, businesses, and neighboring communities.
Evaluate ongoing targeted mass communication programs.	Town and Chamber	5-7 yrs.	1. Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Goal 3: Use area strengths in marketing			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Effectively market the economic development strengths of Concrete by promoting the quality of life of the greater Concrete area.	Town/Chamber/ EDASC/ Healthcare professionals	2-5 yrs.	1. Reach out to, and collaborate with, local communities.
Use general and targeted promotional methods in collaboration with other potential economic development partners.	Town/Chamber/ EDASC	2-5 yrs.	

Goal 4: Promote the business identity of the town			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Promote the Town as a place for business and industry (Town is more than residential and education).	Town/Chamber	2-5 yrs.	
Educate regional ED partners (EDASC) to determine how Town of Concrete's plan fits with the regional plan.	Town/Chamber	2-5 yrs.	
Collaborate with regional partners (EDASC) through a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding to market the Town for economic development.	Town/EDASC	2-5 yrs.	
Develop a marketing plan to promote the Town, including print, radio, video clips, social media, etc.	Town/Chamber	2-5 yrs.	

Goal 5: Use historic area, landmarks, parks, and recreation facilities as economic development drivers			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Examine alternative uses for existing venues; e.g., theaters, parks, Bear Square, and other locations for activities.	Town/Chamber/ artist community	2-5 yrs.	
Explore opportunities for arts and crafts, and other cultural events and venues.	Town/Chamber/ artist community	3-10 yrs.	
Promote the Town Center District as a regional performing arts venue and cultural asset.	Town/Chamber/ artist community	3-10 yrs.	
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.	Town/Chamber/ artist community	3-10 yrs.	
Invest in, support, and promote cultural and heritage events and “social infrastructure” such as Cascade Days, Ghost Walk, Fly-In.	Town/Chamber/ artist community	3-10 yrs.	

Goal 6: Identify education and training needs			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
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.	Town/EDASC/ Educational Institutions	2-10+ yrs.	1. Outreach to EDASC, educational institutions, and businesses and industries.
The local workforce will have the basic education, life skills, and technical skills to meet the future demands of the Concrete workforce.	Town/EDASC/ Educational Institutions	2-10+ yrs.	1. Outreach to EDASC, educational institutions, and businesses and industries.
Concrete Chamber of Commerce will work with members and small businesses to grow and train workforces, and support entrepreneur development.	Town/Chamber/ EDASC	2-5 yrs.	

Goal 7: Identify key parcels that can readily be converted to shovel-ready sites			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Compile inventory of land and ownership of properties that are zoned and ready for detailed master site planning.	Town	2-10 yrs.	1. Identify site uses; e.g., industrial, agricultural, etc.
Meet with landowners/developers of parcels to determine action needed to develop shovel-ready sites.	Town	2-10 yrs.	
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 pocket parks, edible forests, etc.	Town	2-10 yrs.	

Goal 8: Promote available buildings			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Develop a database of key buildings for economic development opportunities.	Town/ Real Estate Agents	2-10 yrs.	1. Develop a portfolio to include list of what each building needs to function within code.
Develop plan to market building assets.	Town/ Real Estate Agents	2-10 yrs.	

Goal 9: Develop broadband to key development sites to encourage business growth and expansion			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Inventory current broadband capacity.	Town	1-2 yrs.	1. Send inquiries to or call all current high-speed Internet providers who are doing business in Town of Concrete.
Meet with providers to discuss expansion and explore methods of increasing speeds and redundancy.	Town	3-5 yrs.	
Demand that the Town has competitive broadband speeds and redundancies.	Town	3-7 yrs.	

Goal 10: Maintain proactive town government			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Continue to actively promote responsible growth.	Town	Ongoing	
Continue to seek, support, and fund infrastructure needs for economic growth.	Town	Ongoing	
Periodically review the Comprehensive Plan and make changes that support economic development growth strategies.	Town	5-10 yrs. or as needed	1. Develop a review timetable.
Inform development community of regulatory changes that affect business development; e.g., building codes, sign ordinances, etc.	Town	Ongoing	

Goal 11: Create innovative partnerships to support existing businesses and new businesses			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Work with EDASC to establish a partnership to support existing and new businesses in the town.	Town	1-2 yrs.	
Work with businesses to create, attract, and retain target businesses.	Town/ Chamber	1-5 yrs.	
Develop a comprehensive database to include surveys of existing businesses, visitations, quarterly meetings, etc.	Town/ Chamber	1-5 yrs.	
Explore options for public/private partnerships.	Town/Chamber/ EDASC/ Port of Skagit	3-10 yrs.	1. Further identify potential partners; e.g., school district, Imagine Concrete, Upper Skagit Library, state, federal, etc.
Increase the awareness of local, state, regional, and federal resources to assist with retention, attraction, and growth of value-added businesses.	Town/ Skagit County/ EDASC/WTA	3-10 yrs.	
Schedule meetings with commercial real estate brokers and conduct area tours.	Town/real estate brokers	1-5 yrs.	
Work with local, regional, state, and federal partners to promote workforce readiness, education, and training.	Town/EDASC/ Educational Institutions	2-10 yrs.	
Create partnerships with healthcare providers to assist with identifying growth needs.	Town/healthcare providers	1-10 yrs.	

Goal 12: Evaluate current town economic development toolkit			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Establish Economic Development Office for Town of Concrete, with an Economic Dev. Coordinator position.	Town	2-10 yrs.	1. Seek funding for creating the office and the position.
Create a Concrete Economic Development Commission (a.k.a., Economic Development Task Force).	Town	2-10 yrs.	1. Establish commission.
Create a Community Improvement District (CID).	Town	2-5 yrs.	1. Identify CID, agenda/action items, and committee or commission.
Develop and adopt guidelines for awarding incentives to existing and new businesses, landlords/ladies, and property owners.	Town/ Chamber	2-5 yrs.	<i>Note: Incentives do not necessarily have to be monetary.</i>
Conduct economic and fiscal impact analysis on land use and zoning changes.	Town/ EDASC/ Skagit County	3-10 yrs.	

Goal 13: Create a regulatory environment that embraces collaboration and cooperation			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Identify and revise regulations that inhibit business growth.	Town	2-5 yrs.	1. Conduct interviews with local business owners, asking them to identify any such regulations.
Explore business-friendly land development policies that encourage business attraction and retention.	Town	2-5 yrs.	1. 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.	Town/ Town Planner	2-10 yrs.	
Formalize and promote the Town's streamlined development process.	Town	3-10 yrs.	

Goal 14: Historic preservation			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Maintain and preserve historic integrity of historic areas within town limits, such as Concrete Town Center.	Town/ Property Owners/ DAHP/Federal	1-5 yrs.	
Review and revise town codes regarding historic buildings.	Town/DAHP	1-5 yrs.	
Develop guidelines for preservation of historic structures.	Town/DAHP/ Federal	1-5 yrs.	
Develop incentives for property owners who engage in historic preservation.	Town/ Property Owners DAHP/Federal	3-5 yrs.	

Goal 15: Growth and annexation actions			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Develop a strategic annexation plan to guide the future growth of Concrete.	Town	2-10 yrs.	
Determine the most appropriate areas for growth and development based on existing infrastructure, economic development, and natural systems.	Town/ Skagit County	2-10 yrs.	
Work cooperatively with Skagit County to control new growth and development in areas near town limits.	Town/ Skagit County	2-15 yrs.	
Develop a map to visually identify areas and direction for growth and development to the year 2030.	Town/ Skagit County	2-10 yrs.	
Annexation feasibility study.	Town/ Skagit County	3-5 yrs.	1. Conduct survey of property owners in Urban Growth Area to determine how receptive they are to the idea of annexation.

Goal 16: Foster Sister City relationships			
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIPS	TIMEFRAME	INITIAL STEPS
Strengthen existing relationships with cities and towns undergoing similar processes.	Town	2-10 yrs.	
Form regional, national, and international Sister City relationships with cities and towns undergoing similar processes.	Town	2-10 yrs.	