

City of Chelan

Sustainability Steering Committee

“Economy” briefing paper

May 19th, 2010

Like transportation, the economy is a facet of sustainability that all communities must address. Economic Development is one of the elements that local jurisdictions (cities and counties) are required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) to address in their comprehensive plans. Economic development is specifically addressed in Goal 5 of the GMA:

“Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.”

Goal 8, addressing natural resource industries, also pertains to the local economy:

“Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.”

The City’s Comprehensive Plan includes both an economic development element and an action plan for economic development. The action plan is organized into four strategy areas: Basics, Infrastructure, Agriculture, and Tourism. Many of the actions are pertinent to developing a sustainable economy. In addition, in 2009 the City drafted an action plan for its Warehousing and Industrial (W-I) district. The W-I action plan is intended to guide the City in positioning itself to attract businesses that will support a strong, balanced local economy.

Approaches to addressing economic sustainability

Some ideas to consider in establishing an overall approach to economic include:

- Local self reliance
- Balancing economic, environmental, and social factors
- Long term and short term benefits; for instance, balancing short-term economic gains in tax revenues and job creation with long-term quality of life of the community
- Place *vs.* natural resources as the driver of the new economy
- Alternative measures of progress (see Resources, below)

Local government’s role in economic development is limited. At the local level, economic sustainability may be addressed by:

- Adopting a vision that balances economic, environmental, and social concerns and supporting that vision with policies that foster sustainability—for instance, supporting

innovation, cooperation, sustainable business practices, community vitality and self reliance

- Using land use authority (for instance, through zoning regulations) to ensure an adequate supply of land for businesses that meet the City’s economic development goals and objectives, including sustainable businesses—businesses that balance economic, environmental, and social factors
- Streamlining permitting processes to encourage business development, and making sure the processes are fair, transparent, and predictable
- Collaborating with organizations that have more direct roles in economic development (such as the Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce, the North Central Washington RC&D, and the Port of Chelan County) to sustainably improve the community’s economic well-being
- Developing and maintaining the community infrastructure needed for healthy businesses and neighborhoods. Community infrastructure includes:
 - Traditional infrastructure, such as roads and water, sewer, storm water, and solid waste management systems
 - Non-traditional infrastructure—features that enhance livability, such as parks and attractive urban form. Providing a high quality of life may be Chelan’s most effective tool for attracting green business and high quality job opportunities
 - Natural infrastructure—the systemic health that makes life possible, such as air and water quality

Resources

- City of Chelan Comprehensive Plan: <http://cityofchelan.us/planbuild/planning.aspx>; select “Long Range Planning” under Planning Topics, then click on “2009 Comprehensive Plan.” The Economic Development Element begins on p. 53, and the ED Action Plan begins on p. 246.
- Local economic development organizations
 - The Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce: <http://www.lakechelan.com/>
 - The North Central Washington Resource Conservation & Development Council: <http://www.ncwrcd.org/>.
 - The Port of Chelan County Economic Development Clusters page: <http://portofchelancounty.com/PortProjects/EconomicDevelopmentClusters/tabid/383/Default.aspx>. Describes the five clusters on which the Port is focusing: Clean Technology, Outdoor Recreation, Ag Tourism, Info Technology, and Wineries
- Sustainable Economy Element of the City of Olympia’s comprehensive plan: <http://olympiawa.gov/~media/Files/CPD/Planning/LongRange/Forms/CPChapter3.ashx>
- Benton County Sustainable Development: http://www.co.benton.wa.us/UltimateEditorInclude/UserFiles/Common/Document/2007/Overall_Economic_Development_Plan_08-03-2009_061123.pdf
- Environment Element of the City of Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan: http://www.seattle.gov/DPD/static/environment%20element_LatestReleased_DPDP016163.pdf. Economy is addressed on p. 11.4.

- Alternative indicators
 - The Genuine Progress Indicator: http://www.rprogress.org/sustainability_indicators/genuine_progress_indicator.htm
 - Ecological Footprint: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_footprint
 - Happy Planet Index: <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>