

Whatcom County

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



March 2015

(Amended, April 2017)



whatcom council of governments



Whatcom County

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Jack Louws, Whatcom County Executive

Prepared for Whatcom County, Washington
by the Whatcom Council of Governments



Robert B. Bromley, Chairman

Robert H. Wilson, AICP, Executive Director

Adopted by the Whatcom County Council, March 31, 2015

Accepted by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, April 2015

Project List Amended by the Whatcom County Council, April 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page	
i	Whatcom County Council Resolution No. 2015-012
iii	U.S. Economic Development Administration Approval Letter
iv	Whatcom County Council Resolution No. 2017-017
vi	Acknowledgements
1	Introduction
7	Section 1: Regional Background
18	Section 2: Population and Labor Force
23	Section 3: The Whatcom Economy
35	Section 4: The Economic Development System
64	Section 5: Existing Plans
67	Section 6: Whatcom County's Preferred Economic Future and Action Plan
78	Section 7: Metrics
	2017 CEDS Project List (following Page 78)

LIST OF FIGURES

16	Figure 1: Map of Whatcom County
17	Figure 2: Whatcom County in the Cascade Region
23	Figure 3: Job Sectors 2012
23	Figure 4: Nonfarm Job Growth
24	Figure 5: Industry and Wage Transition
25	Figure 6: Wage Growth by Sector
26	Figure 7: Agriculture Operations
26	Figure 8: Agriculture Acreage
30	Figure 9: Taxable Retail Sales
31	Figure 10: Quarterly Sales Tax
32	Figure 11: Firm Size and Employment
34	Figure 12: Inflation-Adjusted Per Capita Income

LIST OF TABLES

18	Table 1: Population of Whatcom County and its Incorporated Cities
19	Table 2: Racial and Ethnic Composition of Whatcom County by Percentage of Population
20	Table 3: Whatcom County Population Forecast
21	Table 4: Labor Force Statistics
23	Table 5: Whatcom County Employment, 2012
24	Table 6: Employment Shares in 2012
28	Table 7: Manufacturing Rated by Growth
33	Table 8: Largest Employers, 2013
33	Table 9: Per Capita Personal Income
49	Table 10: Whatcom County Higher Education Participation Rates, Fall 2008
65	Table 11: Whatcom County Growth Management Plans
69	Table 12: Vision Statements and Action Items

PROPOSED BY: _____

SPONSORED BY: Executive Louws

INTRODUCED: 3/31/2015

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-012

ACCEPTING THE 2015 WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) AND AMENDED APPENDIX AND APPROVING SUBMITTAL OF THE DRAFT TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

WHEREAS, the Economic Development Reform Act of 1998 identifies a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as a requirement to apply for assistance under the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) economic adjustment and public works programs; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 105-393, implemented in 1999, amends the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 and re-authorizes Economic Development Administration Programs for five years; and

WHEREAS certain areas of Whatcom County suffer from lack of infrastructure which continues to impede business retention and expansion and requires EDA assistance; and

WHEREAS, the Economic Development Administration requires that Whatcom County approve a resolution accepting the draft 2015 Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and approving submittal of the draft to the United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, and

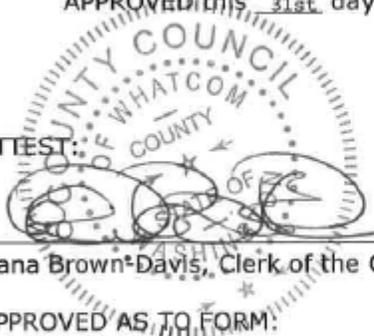
WHEREAS, RCW 82.14.370 requires that projects utilizing rural sales tax revenue must be contained in the County's overall economic development plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council hereby accepts the 2015 Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for submission to the United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Whatcom County Council officially adopts the 2015 Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as the County's interim overall economic development plan.

APPROVED this 31st day of March, 2015.

ATTEST:




Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Dan Gibson, Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Carl Weimer, Council Chair



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Economic Development Administration

915 Second Avenue, Room 1890

Seattle, WA 98174

Fax: 206.220.7669

Voice: 206.220.7660

APR 28 2015

Mr. Robert H. Wilson, AICP
Executive Director
Whatcom Council of Governments
314 East Champion Street
Bellingham, WA 98225



Dear Mr. Wilson:

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has received the submittal of the 2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Whatcom County, Washington. We have reviewed the strategy and determined that it satisfies our requirements and is acceptable to EDA.

A review of your CEDS indicates a substantial accomplishment regarding the depth of analysis, strategic planning and the comprehensive project list.

EDA has recently revised its CEDS guidelines. In January 2015 EDA published its final revised guidelines for the development of a CEDS. The new guidelines provide criteria that we will utilize to determine what constitutes an acceptable CEDS. This will ensure that submitted CEDS conform to our guidelines and will streamline our approval process.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at 206-220-7666.

Sincerely,

Jacob Macias
Economic Development Representative

PROPOSED BY: Executive

INTRODUCTION DATE: April 4, 2017

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-017

**A RESOLUTION OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATING THE
APPENDIX OF THE 2015 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY (CEDS)**

WHEREAS, the Economic Development Reform Act of 1998 identifies a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as a requirement to apply for assistance under the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) economic adjustment and public works program; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 105-393, implemented in 1999, amends the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 and re-authorizes Economic Development Administration Programs for five years; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the Whatcom Council of Governments, through an interlocal agreement with the county, completed the work to update the document; and

WHEREAS, on March 31, 2015 the County Council officially adopted the 2015 Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as the County's interim overall economic development plan; and

WHEREAS, on annual basis the Whatcom Council of Governments will update the appendix to add, remove or revise projects on the list to reflect new county priorities and updated community plans or priorities; and

WHEREAS, RCW 82.14.370 requires that projects utilizing rural sales tax revenue must be contained in the County's overall economic development plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council hereby accepts the updated appendix as submitted by the Whatcom Council of Governments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council officially adopts the 2017 update to the 2015 Whatcom County Economic Development Strategy Appendix.

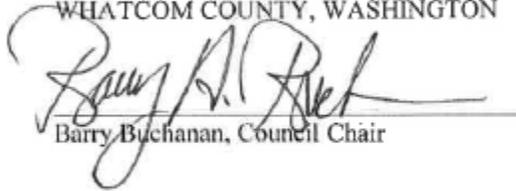
APPROVED this 4th day of April, 2017.

ATTEST:

The seal of the Whatcom County Council is circular. It features the text "WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL" around the top edge and "WHATCOM COUNTY WASHINGTON" around the bottom edge. In the center, there is a smaller circle containing the text "STATE OF WASHINGTON". The seal is partially obscured by the signature of Dana Brown-Davis.


Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Buchanan", is written over a horizontal line.

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED as to form:

A handwritten signature in black ink is written over a horizontal line.

Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Acknowledgements

The Whatcom Council of Governments wishes to recognize and thank the following persons and organizations for their contributions in the development of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

- The members of the CEDS Steering Committee for their guidance and encouragement: Jeff Callender, Gay Dubigk, Rob Fix, Bill Gorman, Kathy Hiyane-Brown, Hart Hodges, Joe Hudspeth, Gary Jones, Tom Kenney, Jeff Kochman and Pinky Vargas.
- The Northwest Economic Council, for convening the CEDS Steering Committee.
- Whatcom County Executive Jack Louws and Mayors Kelli Linville (Bellingham), Harry Robinson (Blaine), John Perry (Everson), Gary Jensen (Ferndale), Scott Korthuis (Lynden), Jim Ackerman (Nooksack) and Bob Bromley (Sumas).
- All the economic development service providers in Whatcom County that provided guidance on the regional economic development system and information on their organizations.
- Sylvia Goodwin, Dodd Snodgrass and John Michener of the Port of Bellingham.
- Matt Aamot of the Whatcom County Department of Planning and Development Services.
- James McCafferty of Western Washington University's Center for Economic and Business Research and student interns Kaylee Guetle, Anna Magidson, Karley Thurston and Jonathan Van Dyken.

This document was prepared by staff of the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) at the request of, and under contract to, Whatcom County Government. The statements, conclusions and recommendations contained herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Board of WCOG, the individual members thereof or the jurisdictions and agencies constituting WCOG's membership. The final draft of this document that was transmitted to the County Executive in February 2015 was intended to serve as a starting point for Whatcom County Government in its internal process of adopting a comprehensive economic development strategy and was subject to revision. In fact, it was accepted without revision by the Whatcom County Council on March 31, 2015.

Questions regarding the preparation of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy may be directed to:

Whatcom Council of Governments
Attn: Robert H. Wilson, Executive Director
314 East Champion Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225
(360) 685-8389
Bob@wcog.org

INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

As financial resources for economic development from all levels of government have become scarcer, the need for inter-local collaboration, coordination among the various economic development agencies, and careful prioritization of proposed projects has become essential. Recognizing the efficiencies that result from such a coordinated approach, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the State of Washington encourage local jurisdictions to work together to create *regional* economic development programs.

This *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS) is a plan for Whatcom County (also referred to as “the Region”), including its seven incorporated cities, to strengthen and sustain the regional economy. Its intent is to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an “economic roadmap” to diversify and strengthen the regional economy by integrating the Region’s human resources and its capital-improvements planning in the service of economic development. When economic development planning is integrated in this way it facilitates full utilization of the Region’s unique resources to maximize opportunity for its residents and businesses by attracting private investment that creates wealth, and with it, jobs. By implementing this CEDS, Whatcom County will build a strong foundation upon which sustainable economic growth can occur that will provide opportunities for businesses and workers while protecting the Region’s cherished natural resources, thereby enhancing the quality of life for the County’s 207,000 residents.

While this CEDS technically *replaces* the *Greater Whatcom Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (“the 2002 CEDS”) that was adopted by the Whatcom County Council in August 2002, it is based largely on that document, and – for all intents and purposes – is a continuation of it.

B. Purpose

The principal purpose of this CEDS is to facilitate the retention and creation of living-wage jobs and to foster a stable and diversified regional economy, all for the intended outcome of maintaining and, ultimately, improving the quality of life in the Region. It is also a continuing program of communication and outreach that encourages local goal setting, public engagement and a commitment to cooperation among the different levels of government, the business community and the not-for-profit sector.

Another important function of this CEDS is to inform Whatcom County’s Economic Development Investment (EDI) Program. In 1997, the Washington State Legislature authorized rural counties such as Whatcom to retain a portion of the sales tax collected in those counties to finance public facilities, with the goal of stimulating and supporting private-sector investment that will result in business growth and job creation. Local governments and other public-sector entities in Whatcom County can apply to the EDI Program for loans, grants or a combination of both to fund projects. Those requests are considered using a three-part process that begins with an application review by the Northwest Economic Council, then a review by and recommendation from the EDI Board, and then a final decision from the Whatcom County Council. Projects for which EDI funding is sought are more likely to be approved when they are included on the CEDS Project List, which is contained in the appendix

to this document. That list will be updated annually through 2018 by the Whatcom Council of Governments and presented to the County Council for its review and adoption.

This CEDS was prepared recognizing the economic development efforts of the communities that make up Whatcom County and the organizations that contribute to those efforts:

- Whatcom County Government and the Region’s unincorporated communities
- The cities of Bellingham, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack and Sumas
- The Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe
- Local partner agencies directly involved in or supporting economic development, including
 - The Northwest Economic Council
 - The Region’s chambers of commerce
 - Trade associations that support local industries
 - The Port of Bellingham
 - Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County
 - The Center for Economic and Business Research, Western Washington University
 - The Small Business Development Center, Western Washington University
 - Workforce Development Council
 - Bellingham Technical College
 - Northwest Indian College
 - Whatcom Community College
 - Others included and described in Section 4.

Many Whatcom communities have developed local economic development plans. This CEDS is not intended to either replace or supersede those plans; rather, it is drawn *from* them and attempts to “knit together” the disparate elements contained in each of them. The result is a CEDS that respects local needs and aspirations and incorporates them into an overarching *regional* approach to economic development.

C. The Whatcom Council of Governments

Under a contract with Whatcom County Government, the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is providing management, coordination and development of this CEDS. Established in 1966 by an act of the Washington State Legislature and operating pursuant to Chapter 36.64.080 of the Revised Code of Washington, WCOG provides a forum through which mutual cooperation is facilitated among its members, which include Whatcom County Government, the County’s seven cities, the Port of Bellingham and other regional entities.

In January 2013, WCOG assumed administrative responsibility for the Northwest Economic Council (NVEC), a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1984 to bring together Whatcom County’s private, public and not-for-profit sectors to establish and foster a strategic approach to growing the County’s economy. Aligning itself with WCOG enabled NVEC to focus entirely on providing strategic direction and oversight to economic development and related activities throughout the County. The Steering Committee that oversaw the development of this CEDS was drawn principally from NVEC.

The Steering Committee ensured that the following principles were applied in the development of this CEDS:

- The process should be inclusive, linking the various community, political and social sectors of the Region.
- Whatcom County is a regional economic unit where inter-local cooperation is emphasized while respecting the autonomy of the Region's seven incorporated cities.
- The conditions that are conducive to business recruitment, retention and expansion are generally the same as those that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of community and environmental vitality, which is an important regional value.

D. Federal Requirements

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), a division of the United States Department of Commerce, is the federal agency that oversees the CEDS process. Whatcom County is in EDA Region X, based in Seattle. It is important to note that neither Whatcom County nor WCOG received funding from EDA for the preparation of this CEDS. However, the 2002 CEDS on which this CEDS is based was prepared using EDA *Planning Assistance* funds, and it satisfied all of the EDA requirements attached to that funding source.

The preparation of a CEDS by a county or group of counties is purely voluntary. However, only those with an approved CEDS are eligible to compete for EDA "investment assistance" (funding) under the *Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (PWEDA)*, as amended. Official approval of this CEDS by EDA is one of the prerequisites for designation as a "redevelopment area," the step necessary to make Whatcom County eligible to compete for funding for public works and business development projects, which Congress has authorized to support economic development projects expected to create jobs and support diversification of the regional economy.

Once a CEDS has received EDA approval, the completion and subsequent approval of an annual report continues the area's eligibility for funding consideration under PWEDA.

E. The Process

The EDA provides guidelines for preparing a CEDS. Counties or districts formed for the purpose of regional planning must follow those guidelines in preparing their document. However, EDA also allows the flexibility for a CEDS to emphasize strategies or issues important to a region as long as the process and outcomes do not conflict with the guidelines.

As stated earlier, the development of this CEDS was guided by the CEDS Steering Committee of the Northwest Economic Council. NVEC provides a mechanism for ongoing coordination between individuals, not-for-profit organizations, local governments, private industry and other parties concerned with economic development.

While a report must be prepared annually to remain eligible to compete for EDA funding, a county is not mandated to do so if it does not plan to seek funds in any given year, or if it does not wish to have an overall economic development strategy. However, many states – including Washington – require counties to have an approved CEDS to make it eligible for certain state funding programs that support local economic development.

F. Historical Perspective

The predecessor to Whatcom County's 2002 CEDS – known as the *Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP)* – was under the direction of WCOG since the creation of the program in 1966. Yearly updates to the OEDP were made until 1988, when they were terminated because of shifting priorities and limited resources within WCOG. No OEDP plans were prepared in 1989 or 1990.

In 1991, the Fourth Corner Economic Development Group, in conjunction with WCOG, prepared an OEDP at the request of the City of Bellingham. That document was updated through 1993, after which updates ceased. In 1998, with the reauthorization of EDA by Congress, the OEDP was renamed the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

In 2000, the Port of Bellingham led the effort to expand economic development leadership to all of Whatcom County and to initiate a collaborative approach with other county agencies working on economic development and quality of life issues. The result of this initiative was the establishment of the "Partnership for a Sustainable Economy," whose mission was to identify a vision for the County's economic future and facilitate the collaboration among the Region's various economic development entities to attain that vision.

In 2001, Whatcom County and several local jurisdictions recognized the need to revisit the OEDP to consider present community and economic needs and bring the Region into compliance with current EDA standards. As a result, the Partnership was engaged by the County to oversee and manage the development of the 2002 CEDS.

Although projects were continuously added to the 2002 CEDS in the decade following its adoption, in 2013 Whatcom County determined that the time had come to update the document, and in June of that year it engaged with WCOG to perform that service. The draft CEDS was subsequently transmitted to the County for its review and adoption in February 2015 and was unanimously accepted by the Whatcom County Council on March 31, 2015. The list of projects in this CEDS will be updated annually by WCOG through June 2019.

G. Steering Committee Role

Overseeing the preparation of the draft CEDS document was the responsibility of the Steering Committee. The members of the Steering Committee and their affiliations follow:

- Jeff Callender, Phillips 66
- Robert Fix, Port of Bellingham
- Bill Gorman, Gorman Publicity
- Kathi Hiyane-Brown, Whatcom Community College
- Hart Hodges, Waycross Investments
- Joe Hudspeth, All-American Marine
- Gary Jones, Socco Forest Products
- Tom Kenney, Washington Federal Bank
- Jeff Kochman, Barkley Village
- Pinky Vargas, Puget Sound Energy

The Steering Committee and WCOG staff was assisted by a Technical Advisory Committee of Matt Aamot from Whatcom County, and Sylvia Goodwin, John Michener and Dodd Snodgrass of the Port of Bellingham.

H. Adoption of the CEDS

Upon completion of the draft CEDS by WCOG in February 2015, the following sequence of activities took (or will take) place:

1. Review of the draft CEDS by the Steering Committee with a subsequent recommendation to transmit it to Whatcom County.
2. Review by the Whatcom County Executive and his staff.
3. Transmittal of the draft CEDS by the Executive to the Whatcom County Council.
4. Review and acceptance by the Whatcom County Council.
5. Transmittal of the CEDS by Whatcom County to the EDA.
6. Other copies will be provided to various state and federal agencies involved in economic development, in particular the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Region's Congressional members.
7. The EDA Regional Office in Seattle reviewed the CEDS in the spring of 2015 and determined that it satisfied EDA's requirements as a guide to local decision-making.
8. The approved CEDS will be provided to cities, economic development partner organizations, the general public and other interested organizations and individuals.
9. An annual "call for projects" will be made by WCOG to the County, the seven cities, the Port of Bellingham and other eligible public agencies for the purpose of updating the CEDS project list.

I. Expected Outcomes

Strategic economic development is a process, and one for which a long-term commitment is necessary for it to be successful. The anticipated near-term benefits of this CEDS include the following:

- It will provide a resource of information for communities, economic development service providers and businesses about the Whatcom County's economy and development issues.
- It will guide and justify funding decisions made under the Whatcom County Economic Development Investment Program.
- Because EDA has approved this CEDS, the County and its incorporated cities are eligible to apply for investment assistance under EDA's Public Works or Economic Adjustment Assistance programs if EDA determines that the Region is "distressed," which is based on its unemployment rate and per capita income relative to the national averages for those indices. As of 2014, neither Whatcom County nor any of its cities were classified as distressed and they are unlikely to attain such designation in the foreseeable future.
- The document can assist the County and its cities as they develop or update the economic development elements of their comprehensive plans.

The following long-term benefits are expected through implementation of the vision, goals and strategies presented in this CEDS:

- Better paying jobs will be created and retained.
- A more stable, balanced and diversified regional economy will develop.
- Natural resources will be used in a sustainable manner and protected for generations to come.
- The Region's highly valued quality of life will be maintained and living conditions will improve for residents.
- An ongoing tool for economic development coordination, communication and information will be available.

Through a continuing program of communication and outreach that encourages partnership-building, public engagement and participation, most if not all of the goals identified in this CEDS can be achieved.

SECTION 1: REGIONAL BACKGROUND

A. Economic History of Whatcom County

The earliest inhabitants of present day Whatcom County were Native Americans, including the descendants of the Lummi, Nooksack, Samish and Semiahmoo tribes. These groups provided for themselves using the region's abundance of fish, game, berries and root vegetables. A Spanish expedition in 1592, led by Juan de Fuca, is believed to have been the first time Europeans reached present-day Washington. Because of the region's extreme isolation from the settled portions of the continent along the Atlantic seaboard, settlement on a significant scale did not occur until the mid-nineteenth century. Until then, the few Europeans in the region were mainly fur trappers, traders and missionaries.

The discovery of gold and coal in the 1850s brought waves of fortune hunters to the Region. While few of these new arrivals found success in the gold fields, many more saw the great potential offered by the area's vast natural resources, including its fertile soil, fisheries and vast stands of timber. In 1852, Henry Roeder and Russell Peabody, assisted by members of the Lummi tribe, built the first sawmill in the region, and the settlement that it spawned on Bellingham Bay was called "Whatcom." Following the establishment of Whatcom, the towns of Bellingham and Sehome were established in 1853, and then in 1854, Fairhaven. This growth prompted the Washington Territorial Legislature to create Whatcom County out of the northern portion of Island County in 1854. When it was established the County comprised present-day San Juan and Skagit counties until the former was established by the Territorial Legislature in 1873, and the latter in 1883.

Settlement expanded beyond the immediate vicinity of Bellingham Bay throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, although it was largely contained to the coastal plain and foothills of western Whatcom County. In 1890, the County's first city – Blaine – was incorporated, followed the next year by the incorporation of the cities of Lynden and Sumas. Bellingham was incorporated in 1903 through the merger of the towns of Bellingham, Fairhaven and New Whatcom, the latter of which having been formed itself through the merger of the towns of Sehome and Whatcom. Four years later the City of Ferndale was incorporated, followed by Nooksack in 1912 and, finally, Everson in 1929.

The County's timber industry – aided by steam-powered logging trains – continued to expand well into the twentieth century and included more than 70 sawmills, 100 shingle mills and numerous logging camps. In fact, by 1907 the Bellingham Bay Lumber Company was one of the world's largest sawmills.

Despite the unsuccessful efforts of local leaders to make one of the towns on Bellingham Bay the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad and Fairhaven the western headquarters of the Great Northern Railway, by the 1880s Whatcom County was being served by the Bellingham Bay & British Columbia Railroad, and a few years later, the Fairhaven & Southern Railroad.

Around the same time, fish processing became a major industry in the County. The first cannery was built in 1886 on Lummi Island, and by the turn of the twentieth century there were 12 canneries operating, employing more than 5,500 people. By 1905 – with the invention of the fish-canning machine – employment in the industry began a significant decline, which accelerated in the 1930s

when certain highly-effective fish traps were banned. Still, during the 1940s, Fairhaven-based Pacific American Fisheries was the largest salmon canning company in the world.

In the 1890s Whatcom County emerged as the center of education in northwest Washington. The first high school in the region was built in the town of Sehome in 1890, and three years later Governor John McGraw signed legislation creating the New Whatcom Normal School – known today as Western Washington University – which admitted its first official class in 1899. Bellingham Technical College was founded in 1957, followed by Whatcom Community College in 1970 and Northwest Indian College in 1973.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the manufacture of paper, chemicals, refined oil, aluminum and processed food helped diversify a manufacturing base that before was dominated almost entirely by wood products. During the 1980s and 1990s, more customized and technology-based industries such as instrument production, industrial machinery and equipment, plastics and electronics established themselves in the County. While Whatcom County still has a significant manufacturing sector, manufacturing employment decreased by 23 percent from 2000 to 2012, and manufacturing wages as a share of total wages in the County fell by 20 percent over that same period, although these declines are consistent with trends in Washington and the U.S. as a whole.

The largest employment gain since 2000 has come from the “service” sector of the regional economy. Forty-two (42) percent of employment and 36 percent of wages came from this sector in 2012, compared to 26 and 21 percent, respectively, in 2000. The “government” sector also increased its relative share of both employment and wages over this same period, although with more modest gains. Conversely, the remaining six sectors (manufacturing, retail trade, construction and mining, wholesale trade, transportation, and finance) declined from 2000 to 2012.

B. Geography

Whatcom County is located in the extreme northwest corner of Washington and, by extension, the continental United States. The total area of the County is 2,503 square miles, with 2,107 square miles of land area (3.2 percent of the State’s land mass). Among Washington’s 39 counties, Whatcom ranks twelfth in area.

Skagit and Okanogan counties border the County to the south and east, respectively. Its northern boundary is the international border with Canada in the province of British Columbia. To the west the County is bounded by both the Strait of Georgia and Rosario Strait. The former lays off the County’s northern shoreline, separating it from several islands in B.C., most notably Vancouver Island. Rosario Strait separates the County’s southern shoreline from parts of Island and San Juan counties. Both of these straits are part of the Salish Sea.

Three islands in the Strait of Georgia – Lummi, Portage and Eliza – are part of Whatcom County, and there is regular ferry service between Lummi and the mainland. Point Roberts, the southern tip of the Tsawwassen peninsula, is a highly unusual geographic feature of Whatcom County known as a *pene-exclave*: land area of one nation that is accessible only by traveling through that of another. Point Roberts can only be reached from the rest of the County, and vice versa, via two border crossings and a 23-mile drive through the Lower Mainland of B.C.

The topography of the county is varied. Once covered with virgin timber, the terrain in the western third of the County is now lush rolling hills, interspersed with areas of level terrain. The elevation of the terrain increases as it extends east toward the foothills of the Cascades. The terrain in the County's eastern two-thirds is among the most rugged in the continental United States. Most of this area is under federal jurisdiction and includes the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, North Cascades National Park and the Mount Baker and Ross Lake National Recreation Areas. The highest elevations in the County are in the eastern portion, including Mount Baker (10,781 feet above sea level), Mount Shuksan (9,127 feet) Mount Redoubt (8,956 feet), Jack Mountain (8,928 feet) Mount Challenger (8,236 feet), and American Border Peak (8,026 feet).

The Nooksack is the principal river in Whatcom County. Originating high in the Cascades, the North Fork of the Nooksack flows westerly through the County before emptying into Bellingham Bay. During its course, waters from the Middle and South Forks join the river. There are also several large lakes in Whatcom County including Ross Lake, Baker Lake, Lake Whatcom and Lake Samish.

C. Environment

The mountains of Whatcom County, as well as its streams, lakes, valleys and hills, are the result of millions of years of geologic events. More than 2.5-million years ago during the Ice Age, glacial ice invaded the Puget Sound lowlands from the north at least four times, retreating most recently only about 11,000 years ago. One of the principal glacial advances that occurred in the area – the Vashon Glaciation – dammed up the Puget lowlands to form a huge lake.

Out of these long physical processes, a complex natural ecology has emerged that supports a diversity of wildlife. Many of the lakes, rivers and streams support fish. Every year salmon return to spawn in the streams and rivers of Whatcom County. Bufflehead and Golden-Eye ducks winter here. Additionally, canvasbacks, cormorants, grebes, loons and other migrating waterfowl pass through every spring and fall as they travel between their breeding grounds in Alaska and Canada and their wintering grounds in California and Mexico. Mallards, Canadian geese, great blue herons and numerous songbirds live in the County year-round. Maintaining these unique resources will present a challenge for both present and future County residents.

Development in the last 100 years has had a significant impact on the natural environment in Whatcom County. At the turn of the century the areas surrounding Lynden, Sumas and Ferndale were logged, drained and converted to agricultural land. In the intervening years, many of the remaining forests were logged, many streams re-routed and channelized, and much of the native vegetation removed and replaced with a wide variety of introduced vegetative types. Roads now traverse most areas, with homes, farms, businesses and industry scattered throughout the County.

1. Natural Hazards

The geology, geographic position, climate and certain economic activities combine to create various natural hazards in Whatcom County, including the following:

Landslides: The geologically-recent retreat of glaciers from the Whatcom County landscape has left many hillsides over-steepened and susceptible to naturally occurring landslides and earth

movements. As a result of the disastrous Oso landslide in northern Snohomish County in March 2014, it is anticipated that greater monitoring of potential landslide hazards will occur in the future.

Alluvial Fans: Alluvial fan hazards are areas where steep mountain streams flow onto floodplains or into lakes and deposit debris and sediment. Because these streams are steep and flow in confined canyons, they can carry more sediment and debris than a similar-sized stream flowing over flat land.

Volcanic Activity: Mount Baker is an active, glaciated, andesitic stratovolcano in the Cascade Volcanic Arc, with its peak 10,781 feet above sea level. It has the second-most thermally active crater in the Cascade Range after Mount Saint Helens and is the second-most glaciated after Mount Rainier. Research indicates that Mount Baker has not experienced highly explosive eruptions like that of Mount Saint Helens over the last 14,000 years.

Earthquakes: Whatcom County lies within the influence of a major earthquake fault area off the coast of western North America (Cascadia subduction zone). This zone has the potential for generating magnitude 8.0 or greater earthquakes every 500-600 years.

Mining: Coal mining was a major industry into the twentieth century in many parts of Whatcom County. Abandoned underground shafts, adits and mine tailings are potentially hazardous to human safety and the environment.

Flooding: Heavy winter rains, combined with the steep and sometimes unstable slopes of Whatcom County's foothills, create conditions ideal for flooding and debris flows along many rivers and streams. The Nooksack River floodplain alone covers 38,000 acres in Whatcom County.

Following severe floods in 1989 and 1990, Whatcom County created a countywide Flood Control Zone District, encompassing all jurisdictions within its boundaries. The primary purpose of the District is flood hazard management. In November 1999 the Lower Nooksack River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan was adopted and is the guiding document for future programs along the river and template for hazard programs around the County.

Whatcom County participates in the Federal Emergency Management Administration National Flood Insurance Program. In addition, it coordinates with the U.S. Coast Guard, Port of Bellingham, U.S. Border Patrol and other agencies on emergency response and security issues that affect the county.

2. Water Resources

Whatcom County has 16 major freshwater lakes, 3,012 miles of rivers and streams, over 37,000 acres of wetlands, 134 miles of marine shoreline, and aquifers containing an undetermined amount of groundwater. They provide natural beauty, recreation, habitats for fish and wildlife, water for drinking, agriculture and industry, and other benefits essential to the quality of life and economic health of the community. Surface water sources such as Lake Whatcom and the Nooksack River provide water to about half the county residents with the remainder relying on groundwater either from individual wells or from about 415 public water systems. Agriculture relies on both ground and surface water for irrigation, livestock, and facility wash down. Businesses and industries may also require water, sometimes in substantial quantities, for non-potable as well as potable supplies. Water is also essential to meet many of what are referred to as "in-stream" uses such as for recreation, shellfish growth and harvest, habitats for fish and wildlife, aesthetics and other benefits.

The 1998 Washington State Watershed Management Act established a process and funding for participating local governments to address water quantity, water quality, instream flows, and fish habitat issues within the State's 62 Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs). Most of Whatcom County falls within WRIA 1, based in Nooksack. The WRIA 1 [Watershed Management Plan](#), Phase I (2005) and the *Detailed Implementation Plan* (2007) were developed through the cooperation of local stakeholders and governments and provide a roadmap for addressing the aforementioned water-related issues within the region.

3. Natural Systems

Whatcom County provides a wide variety of natural habitats, which support and shelter a diverse array of fish and wildlife species as well as diverse vegetation. The County's wildlife is particularly varied and abundant when compared to many other areas of Washington. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this: abundant water resources, rich soils, the mild climate and the existence of significant tracts of open space among the most important. Among the habitats of importance to fish and wildlife are the following:

- Wetlands, lakes and streams
- Estuaries and marine habitats including kelp and eelgrass beds
- Riparian areas and other travel corridors
- Snags and downed logs
- Forested habitats in a variety of successional stages
- Caves, cliffs, and talus slopes
- Grasslands and cultivated fields
- Thickets and fence rows

Aquatic habitats include rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and their riparian borders. Together, these habitats are essential to Whatcom County's fish and wildlife. Twenty-six species of fish, including twelve economically important stocks of salmon and trout, inhabit fresh water in Whatcom County for all or part of their life cycles. Healthy flowing streams and rivers, as well as off-channel wetland habitats, are essential to the survival of the majority of these fish. Wetland ponds, especially beaver ponds, provide optimal habitats for rearing and over-wintering of young fish, particularly Coho salmon and Cutthroat trout juveniles.

Most regional wildlife species regularly use aquatic and riparian habitats for breeding, feeding, shelter and migratory activities. Of this large grouping, over half are dependent upon wetland habitats at some point in their life cycles, and would decline or disappear in their absence. Wetlands also contain unique vegetative communities that harbor many species of rare and unusual plants.

Marine habitats include all saltwater bodies and their shorelines, kelp beds, eelgrass meadows, salt marshes, beaches, and mudflats. These habitats play a vital role in the health of the local environment as well as of the broader Puget Sound region. They provide spawning, rearing, and feeding grounds for a wide variety of marine life as well as refuge for juvenile and adult fish, birds, and shellfish. The vegetation on backshore marshes and within estuaries buffers adjacent upland areas by absorbing wave energy and slowing erosion.

Threatened and endangered species: In 1999, the National Marine Fisheries Service listed Puget Sound Chinook salmon as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act. The same year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed coastal Puget Sound bull trout as threatened. Subsequently, both have been redesignated to the more serious “endangered” listing. These fish are present in the waters of Whatcom County, primarily the Nooksack River and its tributaries. The strategy for recovering salmon in the Nooksack River Basin is outlined in the June 2005 WRIA 1 *Salmonid Recovery Plan* and is built on scientific data collected over several decades. It explains the factors inhibiting salmon populations and describes strategies and actions needed to facilitate their recovery. Although the strategy applies to all indigenous species of salmonids, a particular emphasis is placed on Chinook salmon recovery.

D. Natural Resources

The growth and harvest of farm products, regeneration and harvesting of timber, and excavation of minerals all shape Whatcom County's landscape and strongly influence the economy. Resource lands, which include agriculture, forestry, and mineral resource lands, also largely represent Whatcom County's cultural heritage. These natural resource activities have been major industries since settlement began in the area.

The Growth Management Act requires that counties “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” (RCW 36.70A.020). This is relevant to economic development because it ensures that natural resources be managed for future economic use through sustainable practices.

1. Agricultural Lands

Productive agricultural lands are an important resource to the people of Whatcom County and the State, yet these parcels are often targeted for conversion to other, more intensive uses, including residential and commercial development. The conversion process often begins to accelerate when non-agricultural uses start to encroach on agricultural land, creating smaller parcels, more buildings, and activities that, in some cases, are incompatible with agriculture. This can result in a blurring of the lines that distinguish agricultural from other uses, setting the stage for further conversion of the diminishing agricultural land base in Whatcom County.

Even “agricultural” parcels that are not well-suited to the actual production of crops often of value in support of the more productive parcels – such as for building sites, windbreaks, specialty crops, etc. – or for uses unrelated to raising crops, including livestock wintering or foresting. Retaining land for these ancillary but essential functions should also be considered when determining the amount of land that must be protected to ensure the long-term stability of Whatcom County's agricultural resource.

In 1949, roughly 200,000 acres of land were reported to be in farm production in Whatcom County. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, land in farm production had declined to approximately 115,831 acres. Nevertheless, Whatcom is one of the most important agricultural counties in the U.S., ranking among the top three percent of the country's 3,075 farm counties, with a market value of

nearly \$360-million market for its agricultural production. The County is also the number one producer of red raspberries in the country, producing more than 65 percent of the *entire* U.S. crop.

2. Forest Resource Lands

Forest resource lands are lands used primarily for growing trees for commercial purposes. To be designated as forest resource lands, they must have the potential for long-term commercial investment for the management of forest products.

The forestlands of Whatcom County have historically been one of the most important natural resources in the region. Lands in the lower foothills that were harvested in the early 20th century now support commercially-mature stands of timber. In addition, a few areas of primeval forest still remain.

The majority of the county's non-federal forest resource lands are located in the Mount Baker foothills of Whatcom County. Most of this land is zoned for forest production uses. The majority of the land currently zoned for forest production is owned and managed by a few large institutions, including natural resource-based corporations, insurance companies, the State of Washington, and small private forest management companies. These landowners manage their lands primarily for the production of timber resources, while the State manages its timberland in Whatcom County for a variety of public trusts. Forest Board Lands provide revenue from timber sales to the State general fund, Whatcom County government, and other junior taxing districts in Whatcom County.

A smaller portion of the land zoned for forest production is owned and managed by individual woodlot owners and farmer/foresters, some of whom reside on their properties. There are also forested areas of lowland Whatcom County that are neither zoned for forest production nor purposefully managed for the production of forest products; the majority of these lowland areas are zoned either Rural or Agriculture. Individual woodlot owners and farm/foresters constitute the majority of landowners of forestlands outside the forestry zone. The goals of individual forest landowners, whether in the forestry zone or not, encompass a broader range of objectives than just timber production and may include management for wildlife, conservation, specialty forest products, firewood, privacy, aesthetics, and low-density residential or other uses compatible with forestry.

3. Mineral Resources

Mining activities in Whatcom County have occurred since the 1850s, though the nature, scope and extent of such activities has changed considerably through time. These changes have reflected the economics and geologic character of Whatcom County. Historically, the more important mineral commodities of Whatcom County have been coal, gold (placer and lode), sandstone, clay, peat, limestone, olivine, and sand and gravel aggregate.

Primary mineral resources include sand, gravel and limestone. Additionally, Whatcom County is home to one of the largest known deposits of olivine (a type of gemstone) in the United States.

State and Federal Requirements for the Environment

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Whatcom County to identify and manage critical areas in a manner to prevent destruction of the resource base and reduce potential losses to property and human life. The GMA requires critical areas to include the following areas and ecosystems:

- Wetlands
- Areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water
- Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas
- Frequently flooded areas
- Geologically hazardous areas.

The presence of critical areas will influence economic development activities, such as siting, permitting, mitigation and securing public funds to undertake projects. All projects identified, funded and subsequently developed through the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy process will comply with state and local planning requirements. Growth management compliance can increase the cost of economic development projects.

The State and National Environmental Policy Acts (SEPA and NEPA) govern and are intended to mitigate adverse development practices on the environment. Given the increasing requirements on local land use and economic development efforts, particularly assessment and permitting processes, an evaluation of the impact of these environmental requirements on economic development would help policy makers in decision making. Perceived or otherwise, environmental compliance, including the complexity of dealing with state agencies, can be as significant a factor in choosing to develop property and having adequate water supply, sewer capacity, or transportation linkages. For example, wetland regulations impact a jurisdiction's commercial and industrial zoned land. Because of the difficulty and expense of mitigating any impact on wetlands, the presence of wetlands may be a constraint to economically viable development of the property.

E. Land Characteristics

Ownership and Use

Land ownership in Whatcom County is divided between public, tribal and private parties. Approximately 875,000 acres of the total land area – roughly the eastern two-thirds of the County – is under federal jurisdiction, including National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service lands. Tribal lands account for approximately 13,000 acres and include the Lummi reservation as well as its and the Nooksack Tribe's trust lands.

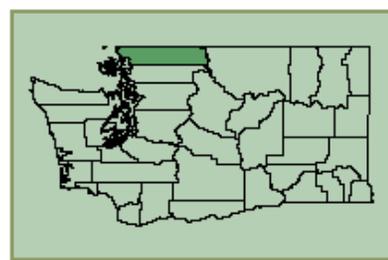
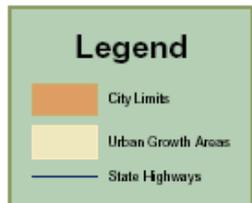
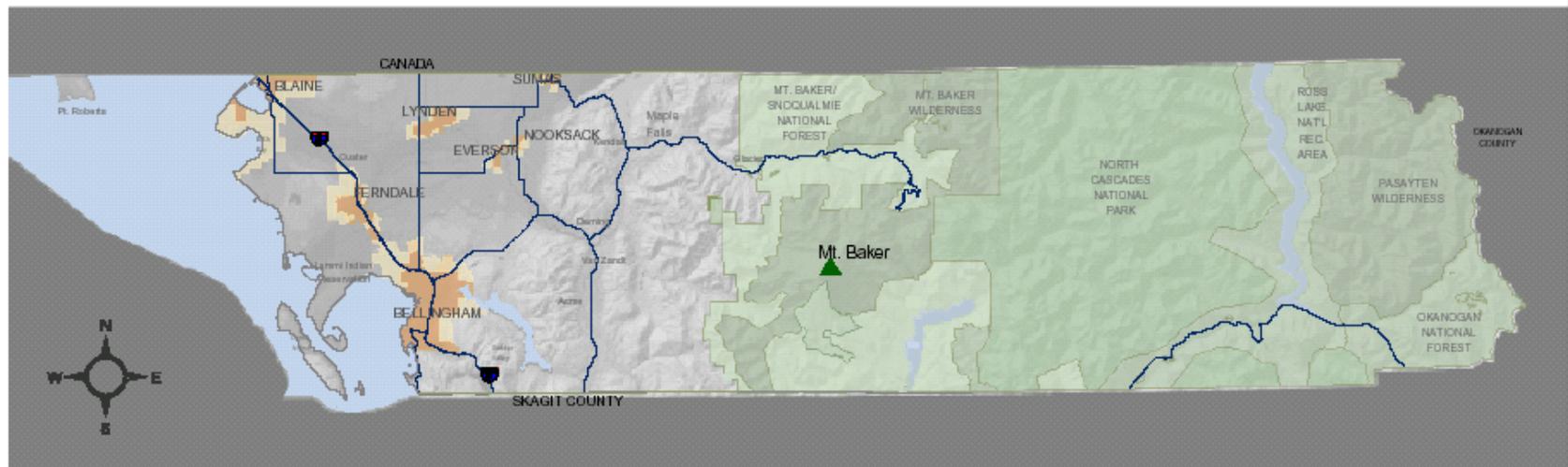
The remaining land is in private ownership, almost all of which being situated in the western third of the County. The two greatest uses of privately-owned land are for agricultural and residential purposes (approx. 108,400 and 60,800 acres, respectively), with the remainder divided among various other uses, including commercial and industrial parcels, utilities and vacant land.

Industrial and Commercial Areas

The vast majority of industrial and commercial property in the County is located in its westernmost quarter and can be found in both urban and rural areas. The greatest concentration of commercial activity is in and around Bellingham, including its downtown core, the Bellis Fair Mall, Fairhaven, the Guide Meridian Road corridor and Sunset Drive. Commercial centers of varying size are also located in Birch Bay, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Glacier, Lynden, Maple Falls, Nooksack, Nugent's Corner and Sumas.

The County has a diverse set of industrial properties, accommodating light manufacturing through heavy industry. The Cherry Point industrial area, located on the shore of the Strait of Georgia northwest of Ferndale, is the home of both the BP and Phillips 66 refineries as well as Alcoa's Intalco Works aluminum smelter. About 2,000 people are employed at Cherry Point. The cities of Bellingham, Blaine, Ferndale, Lynden and Sumas have substantial industrially-zoned properties, some of which being operated by the Port of Bellingham. There are also numerous small manufacturing and other industrial properties scattered throughout the County.

Whatcom County



WOOD
2001

Figure 1

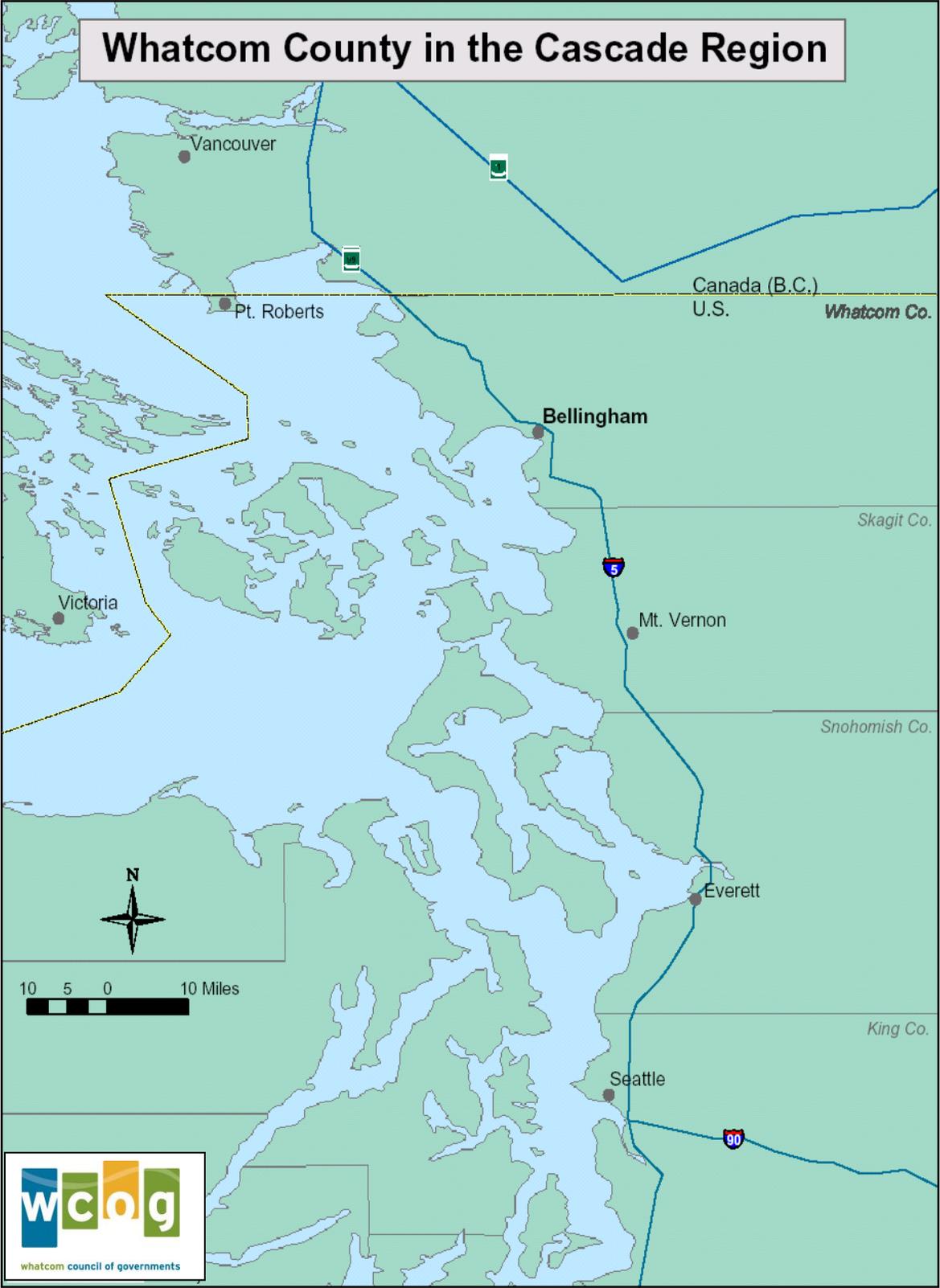


Figure 2

SECTION 2: POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE

A. Population and Demographic Characteristics

Whatcom County is the ninth most populous county in Washington, with an estimated population of 205,800 in 2013 (Office of Financial Management). This represents growth of 23.4 percent since 2000, when the County’s population was 166,826 (2000 Census). By comparison, growth in nearby Skagit and Snohomish counties was 15.2 and 20.5 percent, respectively, over that same period.

Despite the significant growth in population, Whatcom is classified as a rural county based on its population density of 97.7 persons per square mile. This is due in large part to the fact that the vast majority of the County’s land area is national forest and park lands, including the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, North Cascades National Park and the Mount Baker and Ross Lake National Recreation Areas, all of which being very sparsely populated. The County’s seven incorporated cities are all in the western quarter of the County, which is characterized by small to medium-sized urban centers interspersed with residential developments outside city limits, large tracts of farmland, and woodlands and other open space. The core of this portion of the County is the Bellingham Urbanized Area, which includes the cities of Bellingham and Ferndale as well as unincorporated land along the Interstate 5 corridor between the two cities. The population of the Bellingham Urbanized Area was 114,473 in 2010 (2010 Census).

Table 1 compares the populations of the County’s incorporated cities.

				Decennial Growth		2010 Share of County Pop.
	1990	2000	2010	1990-2000	2000-2010	
Whatcom County	127,780	166,814	201,140	30.5%	20.6%	
Bellingham	52,179	67,171	80,885	28.7%	20.4%	40.2%
Lynden	5,709	9,020	11,951	58.0%	32.5%	5.9%
Ferndale	5,398	8,758	11,415	62.2%	30.3%	5.7%
Everson	1,490	2,035	2,483	36.6%	22.0%	1.2%
Blaine	2,489	3,770	4,684	51.5%	24.2%	2.3%
Sumas	744	978	1,319	31.5%	34.9%	0.7%
Nooksack	584	851	1,338	45.7%	57.2%	0.7%
Unincorporated	59,187	74,231	87,065	25.4%	17.3%	43.3%

Source: Census 1990, 2000 and 2010

Among the County’s unincorporated communities, Birch Bay is the largest, with a 2010 population of 8,413, followed by Sudden Valley, which had 6,441 residents that year (2010 Census). These communities – both of which being classified as *census-designated places* – have experienced dramatic growth since 2000: Birch Bay grew by 69.6 percent from 2000 to 2010, and Sudden Valley’s population increased by 54.6 percent over that same period.

Other relatively large unincorporated communities are Marietta-Alderwood (2010 Census population of 3,906), Peaceful Valley (3,324), Geneva (2,321) and Point Roberts (1,314). Among the smaller unincorporated communities – including Custer, Deming, Maple Falls, Acme, Glacier and Kendall – none had 2010 populations exceeding Custer’s 366 (2010 Census).

In 2012 Whatcom County’s population was slightly older than Washington’s as a whole. Those 18 years of age and older accounted for 79.7 percent of the population, compared to 77.0 percent for the entire State. The percentage of those 65 and older was 14.4 percent for the County and 13.2 percent for the State. As in most communities in the United States, Whatcom’s senior population is growing, which is attributable not merely to the general increase in life expectancy in the U.S. but also in large part to in-migration by seniors who have chosen the County as their home for retirement. It is anticipated that interest in Whatcom as a retirement community will grow, which – along with existing Baby Boomers who are likely to “age in place” – will continue to increase the 65-plus sector of the County’s population.

The County’s population is generally less racially and ethnically diverse than Washington as a whole, as indicated in Table 2. This is not surprising, since the State’s racial and ethnic composition is significantly impacted by the diversity found in the Seattle metropolitan area. Indeed, only Whatcom’s percentage of American Indians exceeds that of the State, due to the presence of the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe. However, as is the case in both the State and the U.S. as a whole, the County is becoming more diverse, with the percentages of all of the non-White cohorts growing significantly from 2000 to 2012, except for the American Indian/Alaska Native cohort, which remained unchanged at 3.1 percent of the population. Racial and ethnic diversification is expected to continue into the foreseeable future.

Table 2: Racial and Ethnic Composition of Whatcom County by Percentage of Population

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>Washington (2012)</u>
White	93.3%	87.9%	81.6%
Two or more races	1.2%	3.5%	4.3%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1.8%	4.3%	8.4%
Amer. Indian/Alaska Native	3.1%	3.1%	1.8%
Black or African American	0.5%	1.2%	3.9%
<i>Hispanic or Latino*</i>	2.9%	8.4%	11.7%

*People who identify their origin as “Spanish,” “Hispanic” or “Latino” may be of any race. Thus, the percentage of those identifying themselves as such should not be added to percentages for racial categories.

Source: Census Bureau

1. Population Forecast

The Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) updates county and state long-range population forecasts every five years to support local compliance with the State’s *Growth Management Act*. Low, medium and high population forecasts out to 2040 were issued by OFM in May 2012, although OFM considers the medium projection the most likely (RCW 43.62.035) because it is based on assumptions that have been validated with past and current information.

Table 3: Whatcom County Population Forecast

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change from 2010</u>
2010 actual	201,140	
2020 forecast	225,307	12.0%
2030 forecast	256,643	27.6%
2040 forecast	284,901	41.6%

Sources: Census Bureau; Washington State OFM (May 2012 medium forecasts)

2. Housing

Data from the 2010 *Whatcom County Real Estate Research Report* indicated that real estate activity in Whatcom County slowed in 2009, with the number of single-family homes sold falling 4.7 percent below the 2008 level, and the dollar volume of single-family sales falling 11.2 percent below the 2008 level. The number of condominiums sold in the County was down 29.3 percent in 2009. For single-family homes, the median price fell by 6.7 percent in 2009 after declining by 4.2 percent in 2008. In 2009, the median price of all homes sold in Whatcom County was \$259,900, while the median price of homes sold in the Bellingham area was \$274,000. Declining prices and a reduction in mortgage interest rates improved housing affordability in 2009.

Permit activity in the County was also down in 2009, and in Bellingham it fell to its lowest level since at least 1977. The number of multi-family units permitted in Bellingham fell from 102 in 2008 to 63, and single-family permits fell from 86 to 49. Outside of Bellingham, permit activity fell 23 percent in Blaine, 29 percent in Lynden and 31 percent in unincorporated Whatcom County.

B. Labor Force

1. Overview

The civilian labor force includes all people over 16 who are working or actively seeking work. According to the Washington State Employment Security Department, Whatcom County's 2012 labor force averaged 108,520, of which 100,550 county residents were counted among the employed and 7,970 were counted among the unemployed (constituting an unemployment rate of 7.3 percent). The County had approximately 81,500 nonfarm jobs in 2012, up from the 2011 approximation of 80,100. From 2011 to 2012, total employment increased by 1.7 percent in the County, while Washington as a whole saw an increase of 1.5 percent.

Goods-producers supplied an average of 15,000 jobs in 2012, up 6.0 percent from 2011. Manufacturing employment expanded by 500 jobs over the year, bringing average annual employment to the same level it was in 2008. Data for the first several months of 2013 indicated continued growth in this sector. The manufacturing base is diverse: the three largest manufacturing industries in terms of employment are food manufacturing, transportation equipment manufacturing and wood product manufacturing. Petroleum and coal products manufacturing is also a large industry in the County.

Construction employment declined from 2007 to 2010. As of 2012, the industry was beginning to recover, having added approximately 400 jobs, an expansion of 6.8 percent from 2011 to 2012. An uptick in construction activity through June 2013 further increased employment, with 600 construction jobs added between June 2012 and June 2013.

Private service-providing employment averaged 50,500 in 2012. From 2011 to 2012, service-providers added 700 jobs, an increase of 1.5 percent. From 2011 to 2012, most private-sector service providers expanded payrolls. Finance, professional and business services each grew by 4 percent.

Government employment in Whatcom County is principally concentrated in local government, including public K-12 education. From 2011 to 2012, employment in this sector dropped by 1.1 percent.

2. Employment Growth

In the lead up to the recession (2003 to 2007), Whatcom County’s annual employment growth rate averaged 3.4 percent. From peak to trough, 6,200 jobs (about 7 percent) were lost. Whatcom County’s employment situation reached its low point in 2010, on track with much of Washington. However, from 2010 to 2012 Whatcom County recovered 2,700 of the jobs lost.

The size of the resident labor force in Whatcom County climbed steadily in the lead up to the 2007 recession but then dipped from 2009 to early 2012, suggesting that the County’s labor market was recovering. However, data from the first half of 2013 revealed that the labor market had not yet recovered from the recession, and in fact, it dipped again.

Whatcom County has some favorable factors that have aided job growth in the past and which should be beneficial for the near future. The County’s adjacency to the heavily-populated Lower Mainland of British Columbia, combined with the appreciated Canadian dollar, generally lower commodity prices in the U.S. and mobility improvements at the ports-of-entry on the Whatcom–B.C. border continue to draw thousands of Canadian shoppers to the County, and particularly Bellingham. Low cost flights from Bellingham International Airport to U.S. destinations have also drawn Canadian travelers, and in fact, about 52 percent of the travelers using the airport are Canadian.

Whatcom generally has lower wage rates for many occupations compared to counties to the south along the I-5 corridor. This makes the County attractive to manufacturing and service-providing firms planning to relocate or expand. While the regional economy remains fragile, the outlook points to a steady, albeit slow, recovery.

Table 4: Labor Force Statistics

	Whatcom County			Unemployment Rates		
	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Unemployed</u>	<u>Whatcom</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>National</u>
1970	33,810	30,920	2,890	8.5%	9.2%	5.0%
1980	49,000	44,000	5,000	10.2%	7.9%	7.2%
1990	67,500	64,100	3,400	5.0%	4.9%	5.6%
2000	81,600	76,900	4,700	5.7%	5.2%	4.0%
2012	108,520	100,550	7,970	7.3%	8.2%	8.1%

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

3. Unemployment

Whatcom County's 2012 unemployment rate was 7.3 percent. During the recent period of recession and recovery, the peak unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 10.5 percent, which occurred in February 2010. The average unemployment rate for entire year of 2010 was 9.0 percent. Throughout 2012 and 2013 the unemployment rate declined, dropping as low as 6.0 percent in November 2013, ticking up to 6.2 percent in December. In the first quarter of 2014, the unemployment rates for January, February and March were 6.7, 7.5 and 7.1 percent, respectively.

SECTION 3: THE WHATCOM ECONOMY

Figure 3

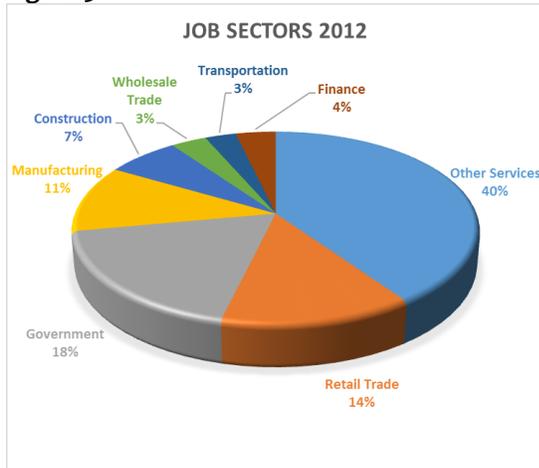


Table 5

Whatcom County Employment, 2012

Services	31,011
Retail Trade	8,703
Government	14,101
Manufacturing	10,373
Construction & Mining	5,212
Wholesale Trade	2,535
Transportation	2,197
Finance	2,841
TOTAL	76,973
Excluding forestry, fishing and farming	

A. Overall Trends in Employment

In Whatcom County the number of non-agricultural jobs has consistently grown since 1990, with the only significant decline occurring in the “Great Recession” years 2009 and 2010. From 1990 through 2012, the number of non-agricultural jobs grew an average of 1.93 percent annually, with peak annual growth of 5.83 percent from 1999 to 2000. Whatcom County’s average annual employment growth rate exceeded that of Washington as a whole, which grew at 1.44 percent annually over the same period.

Job growth slowed considerably in the decade 2003-2012 compared to the previous decade (1993-2002). The average annual rate of growth for total non-agricultural employment in Whatcom County from 2003 through 2012 was 1.34 percent, compared to 1.89 percent in the preceding ten-year period. However, the loss of 4,600 jobs between 2008 and 2009 – representing a 5.49 percent decrease – significantly skews the average annual rate over that period. Still, there was a net increase of 9,900 jobs from 2003 through 2012, although that number is significantly lower than the 13,300 jobs added from 1993 through 2002.



Figure 4

1. Washington State and Whatcom County Job Comparison

Excluding agriculture, in 2012 Whatcom County represented 2.75 percent of the State’s economy in terms of employment but just 2.12 percent in wages paid. Table 6 indicates that the County’s breakdown among the eight sectors is relatively close to that of the State.

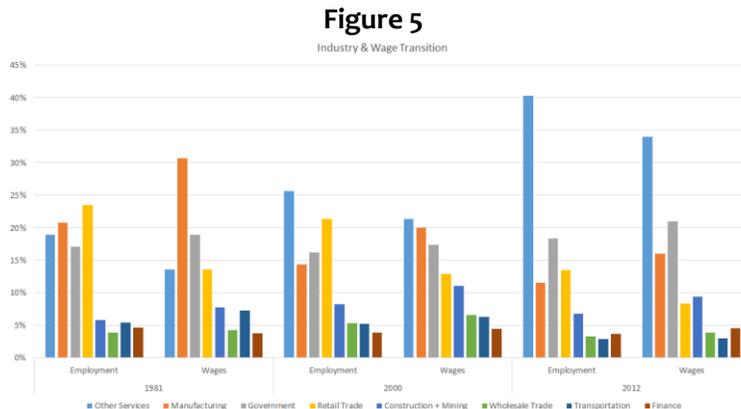
	Washington State	Whatcom County
SERVICES	43.5%	40.3%
RETAIL TRADE	11.2%	11.3%
GOVERNMENT	18.4%	18.3%
MANUFACTURING	10.0%	13.5%
CONSTRUCTION & MINING	4.7%	6.8%
WHOLESALE TRADE	4.4%	3.3%
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES	3.1%	2.9%
FINANCE, INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE	4.7%	3.7%
Job Total	2,798,952	76,973

*Washington State Employment Security Department, Covered Employment
Excludes Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector*

2. Highlights of Employment Sectors

Since 2000, only the service sector of the County’s economy has grown significantly, from 26.5 percent of non-agricultural employment to 40.3 percent in 2012. Six of the other seven sectors declined in that period of time, with only “government” increasing slightly (16.2 to 18.3 percent). With regard to wages, the service sector accounted for 34.0 percent in 2012 (compared to 21.3 percent in 2000), with the government sector next highest at 21.0 percent and manufacturing in third place with 16.0 percent. In 2000 those sectors accounted for 17.4 and 20.0 percent of wages, respectively.

The bar graph below compares employment and wage distribution for the County’s eight principal employment sectors for 1981, 2000 and 2012.



Despite the net increase of more than 11,000 jobs between 2000 and 2012, four of the eight sectors declined over that period. The retail trade, wholesale trade, construction/mining, and transportation sectors collectively lost 7,639 jobs, with 5,294 lost in retail trade alone.

Among the four sectors that expanded from 2000 to 2012:

- Service employment expanded from 16,822 to 31,011, an increase of 84.3 percent. Employment in this sector alone is nearly equal to the next three largest sectors combined. However, while it accounted for 40.3 percent of non-agricultural jobs in 2012, it only contributed 34.0 percent of wages paid.
- Although it shrank as a *percentage* of regional employment, the manufacturing sector grew by 960 jobs between 2000 and 2012, or slightly more than 10 percent. Manufacturing remains an important element of Whatcom County’s economy.
- Employment in the government sector increased by 32.5 percent (3,460 jobs) from 2000 to 2012. “Government” is a somewhat deceptive name for this sector, since it includes not just employees of local, state and federal agencies but also those working in public schools or for tribally-owned, *for-profit* businesses, including the casinos operated by the Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe.
- The finance sector – which includes industries such as banking, investment brokerages, insurance, etc. – grew by 11.9 percent, adding 302 jobs.
- Combined, the manufacturing, government and finance sectors provided 33.5 percent of the Region’s jobs in 2012, but 41.5 percent of wages paid.

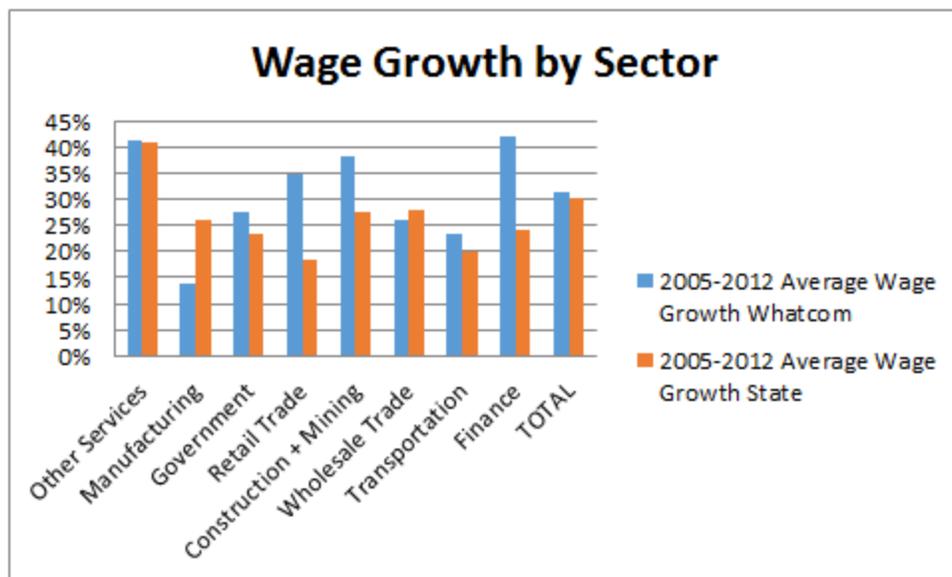


Figure 6

B. The Natural Resource Economy

1. Agriculture

Agriculture is an important economic activity in the county. Farming is prevalent in the northwestern lowlands of the County in and around Lynden, Ferndale, Everson, Nooksack and Sumas, as well as in

unincorporated areas. In 2012, the total market value of Whatcom County agricultural products sold was \$357.3-million, ranking eighth among all 39 counties in the State and first in western Washington. That amount also represented 3.92 percent of the market value of all agricultural products sold in the State. The Washington Agricultural Statistics Service estimates the overall economic impact of sales of agricultural products multiplies three to seven times in the regional economy.

Figure 7

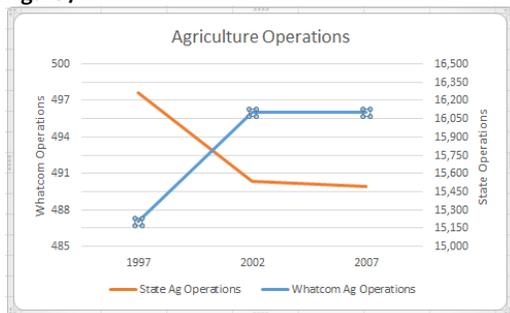
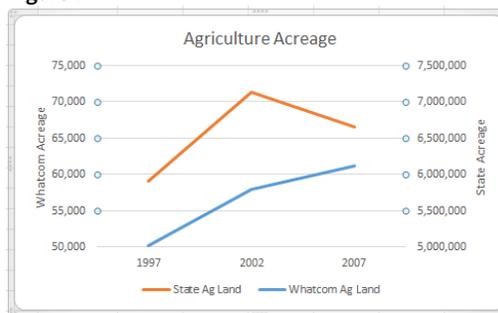


Figure 8



There were 1,702 farms in the County in 2012, totaling 115,831 acres. Livestock, poultry and associated products, including dairy, accounted for 66.5 percent of the County’s total market value and crop sales represented 33.5 percent. By comparison, in 2002 livestock and related products accounted for 73.5 percent of the County’s total market value, with crops accounting for the remaining 26.5 percent that year.

The Washington Employment Security Department reports that “agricultural, forestry, fishing and hunting” employment in Whatcom County accounted for 3,439 jobs in 2012, representing 4.3 percent of the total County workforce in 2012. In 2000 there were 2,912 jobs in this sector, which was 4.2 percent. This indicates that agriculture-related employment is holding its own. In addition to full-time employment, thousands of seasonal jobs are created, including approximately 6,000 during the annual six-week red raspberry harvest alone.

Dairying and berry farming are the dominant agricultural activities in the County. Whatcom is the biggest producer of red raspberries in the United States, and by itself its production surpasses that of every other state in the country except Washington. The County is also a major producer of blueberries and strawberries. In 2012 there were 120 dairy farms with a combined 45,562 milk cows (17.1 percent of the State total), making Whatcom the second biggest milk producer in Washington after Yakima County.

Other important Whatcom County agricultural products or activities include corn and grass silage, seed potatoes, cattle and poultry, and greenhouse and nursery plants.

Interestingly, in 1997 Whatcom had a total of 1,228 farms, the fifth-highest among the State’s 39 counties. By 2012 the number of farms in the County had grown to 1,702, a 38.6 increase, with an average size of 68 acres. Whatcom also retained its fifth-place ranking over that 15-year period.

2. Commercial and Recreational Fishing

Washington State’s commercial fishing industry is structured around a multi-species fishery. Groundfish, halibut, albacore, salmon and shellfish are all major species groups important to the industry. In 2006, non-tribal commercial fish landings from Washington fisheries totaled nearly 109.4

million pounds, generating \$65.1-million in ex-vessel value (i.e., the price received by commercial fishers for fish). Whatcom County was the State's second-largest commercial port area that year (after Grays Harbor County), with an ex-vessel value of commercial fish landings of more than \$13.5-million, accounting for nearly 21 percent of the total value of landings from Washington fisheries. Bellingham and Blaine are the County's two principal commercial fishing ports.

The North Puget Sound Region – which the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife defines as including San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties – is also the most popular location for recreational shellfishing in the State. In 2006, the combined recreational shellfish catch in those four counties included more than 3.3-million pounds of Dungeness crab, 23,520 pounds of shrimp, 93,038 pounds of clams and more than 19,000 individual oysters.

3. Forestry

In 2013, the total volume of the timber harvest in Whatcom County was 72,098,000 board feet (Scribner Rule measurement), 40.3 percent of which was Douglas fir, 33.8 percent western hemlock and the remainder a combination of other conifers, cedars and hardwood species, especially red alder. However, Whatcom County has seen a steady decline in its forestry sector over the past several decades. Compared to the timber harvest in 2000 – which was 90,167,000 board feet – the 2013 harvest was 20 percent less. This decline in the timber harvest was significantly more pronounced on privately-owned forestland than in publicly-owned forests (in 2000, the entire harvest from public forestland in Whatcom County was from Washington State-owned land, and in 2013, nearly 98 percent came from State-owned forestland). The timber harvest on privately-owned lands in 2013 was 34 percent less than it was in 2000, compared to a decrease of just 4.8 percent in the harvest from publicly-owned forestland.

C. Major Sectors of the Nonfarm Economy

1. Manufacturing

Until the 1990s, growth in manufacturing in Whatcom County was relatively steady, responding to business cycle declines during recessions, recovering, and then expanding. Manufacturing saw a significant slump in the late 1990s/early 2000s, primarily in the food processing and paper production industries, the most notable example among the latter being the closure of the Georgia-Pacific pulp mill in Bellingham in 2001. By 2007, Georgia-Pacific had also closed its tissue mill, bringing to an end pulp and paper milling in the County.

Despite the historical decline of the County's manufacturing sector – which mirrors trends in Washington and the U.S. as a whole – it remains an important dimension of the regional economy, thanks to the higher wages it pays relative to its share of regional employment. In 2012, the average annual wage in the manufacturing sector was \$58,406, compared to countywide average of \$40,407. While manufacturing is 11 percent of payroll employment in the County it represents 15.5 percent of all wages. Manufacturing jobs facilitate the ability to “grow wealth locally” as a result of the multiplier effect of additional spending by manufacturing job holders, and by other businesses that support the various manufacturers.

According to the Census of Employment and Wages, there were 321 manufacturing operations in Whatcom County in 2012 that employed approximately 8,700 people. Of the 20 specific

manufacturing subcategories listed, the two with the most firms (46 each) were food processing and fabricated metal products. These were followed by transportation equipment (29), wood products (27), furniture and related products (19), textile products (18) and machinery, also with 18 employers. The manufacture of electrical equipment, machinery and electronic products has seen the fastest growth in recent years.

Since the end of the Great Recession in June 2009 the manufacturing sector has been the growth leader in Whatcom County, with employment rising almost 17 percent from then through June 2014. Many manufacturing jobs were lost during the recession, nationally and locally, but then rebounded, aided by a weak U.S. dollar, increased exports and companies “re-shoring” their operations back to American factories.

The Cherry Point Industrial Urban Growth Area (UGA) is located in western Whatcom County, west of the City of Ferndale and south of Birch Bay. It is approximately 11 square-miles in size. Cherry Point is zoned for heavy-impact industrial land use and is home to two oil refineries (BP and Phillips 66) and Alcoa’s Intalco Works aluminum smelter.

Table 7

Manufacturing Rated by Growth

Rank (2000)	Sector	Overall annual Growth 1.50%			Overall annual Growth -0.6%		
		Annual Growth 81-00	2000 jobs	2000 firms	Annual Growth 00-13	2013 jobs	2013 firms
11	Furniture and Fixtures	3.2%	11	4	83.3%	121	19
18	Misc. Manufacturing Industries	-5.3%	62	9	72.0%	598	33
5	Textile Mill Products	5.5%	227	7	5.4%	375	18
1	Instruments and Related Products	11.7%	204	9	5.1%	328	7
17	Stone, Clay, and Glass Products	-3.9%	147	13	3.5%	208	13
12	Food and Kindred Products	0.7%	1438	41	1.5%	1701	14
7	Transportation Equipment	3.8%	883	33	1.4%	1036	29
13	Chemicals and Allied Products	0.6%	97	4	0.9%	108	10
10	Fabricated Metal Products	3.5%	392	25	0.7%	426	46
14	Petroleum and Coal Products	0.3%	820	4	0.4%	862	5
2	Industrial Machinery and Equipment	10.0%	458	34	0.3%	472	18
4	Rubber and Misc. Plastics	5.6%	403	16	-1.6%	326	13
9	Lumber and Wood Products	3.5%	1409	64	-2.2%	1034	27
6	Electronic and Other Elec. Equip.	4.9%	354	14	-3.4%	208	12
3	Apparel and Other Textile Products	7.1%	226	17	-8.3%	0	0
8	Printing and Publishing	3.6%	502	35	-8.3%	0	0
15	Primary Metal Industries	-1.3%	963	5	-8.3%	0	0
16	Paper and Allied Products	-1.4%	817	2	-8.3%	0	0
	Other					903	227
			9413	336		8703	321

2. Services

The “other services” and “finance, insurance and real estate” (FIRE) sectors combined constituted 44 percent of Whatcom County’s non-agricultural economy in 2012 (other-services alone was 40.3 percent), more than double the next-highest sector, “government.” As the largest single employment job sector in the regional economy, other-services also has the greatest range of job types (from domestic service workers to physicians), skill levels (unskilled to highly-skilled) and educational attainment (from no high school to graduate and professional degrees). Accordingly, the average annual salary for this sector in 2012 – \$34,888 – can be greatly deceptive.

Indeed, of the eight major sectors of Whatcom County’s economy in 2012, other-services ranked seventh in average annual income, ahead of only retail trade. And while the other-services sector

accounted for 40.3 percent of the non-agricultural jobs in the County in 2012, it provided only 34 percent of the total wages earned that year. Nevertheless, “other services” not only kept its ranking as the regional economy’s largest sector in both employment and wages, it grew significantly from 2000, when it accounted for 25.6 percent of employment and 21.3 percent of wages. That represents growth of 57.4 percent in employment and 59.6 percent in wages in that sector from 2000.

“Health care and social assistance” services are the largest single industry in the “other services” sector, accounting for 39 percent of covered employment (i.e., jobs covered by unemployment insurance). By comparison, the 2002 CEDS reported that at that time this industry was also the largest but with only 29 percent of employment. This growth in the regional health care industry is consistent with the national trend. In 2013, PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center (including the Madrona Medical Group) was by far the largest single employer in Whatcom County, with more than 2,700 employees. Continued growth is expected in the health care industry as demand for services intensifies with the aging of the County’s population.

When combined, three other sub-sectors provide approximately 38 percent of all service jobs.

“[Other services \(except public administration\)](#)” constitute 14 percent of the sector’s employment. This includes services like automotive repair, beauty salons, funeral homes, pet care, etc.

“[Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services](#)” represent 12 percent of the sector’s jobs and includes employment-placement agencies, janitorial services, locksmiths and landscaping contractors. “[Professional, scientific and technical services](#)” also account for 12 percent of the “other services” sector’s employment and includes lawyers, certified public accountants, engineers and graphic designers, among others.

The FIRE sector had the second-highest average annual wage among the eight principal sectors of the County’s economy: \$50,647. [Finance and insurance](#) jobs include commercial banking, securities brokerages, life and medical insurance sales, claims adjusting, etc. [Real estate](#) includes not just residential and commercial brokers but also property managers, appraisers, and even machinery and equipment rental.

3. Retail Trade

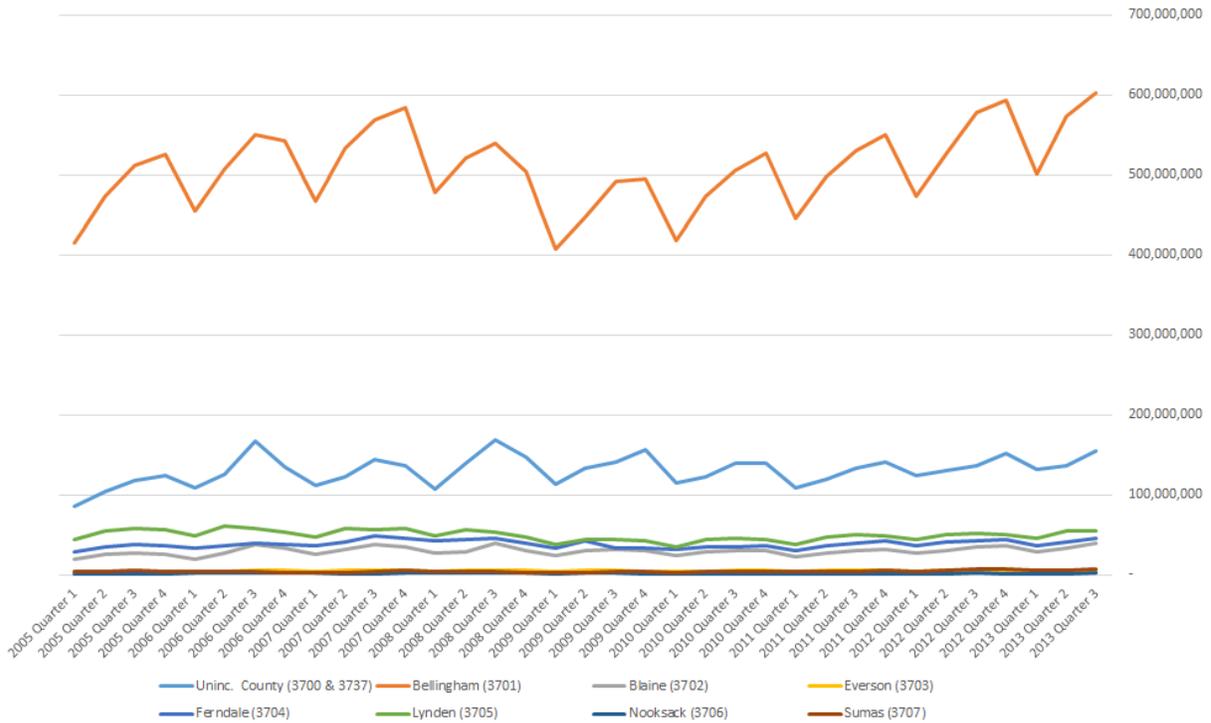
As indicated in the graph below, taxable retail sales declined by approximately 16.4 percent in the middle of the nine-year period beginning in the first quarter of 2004 through the first quarter of 2013, beginning in the fourth quarter of 2007 when there were seasonally-adjusted retail sales of more than \$412.3-million, to its trough in the fourth quarter of 2009, with sales of \$354-million. Since then, retail sales have climbed steadily, increasing all but one quarter (1Q of 2011) through 1Q of 2013, when sales were \$421.3-million.

Figure 9



Retail trade, as a percentage of the regional economy’s jobs, remained steady at about 13 percent from 2002 to 2012. Retail employment is heavily concentrated in Bellingham, thanks largely to the presence of the Bellis Fair Mall, big-box stores along Guide Meridian Road and Sunset Drive, and numerous neighborhood shopping centers throughout the City. While Lynden and Ferndale have active downtowns and significant retail businesses, Bellingham is indisputably the Region’s retail hub, accounting for 66.6 percent of taxable retail sales in the County during 2012, but down from 69.3 percent in 2002. Unincorporated Whatcom County was second, with 16.7 percent in 2012, increasing by 2.6 percentage points from 2002.

Figure 10
Quarterly Sales Tax



Average annual wages in retail trade were the lowest of all employment sectors in 2012, at \$30,347. Wholesale trade wages were much higher (\$48,127), ranking fourth among the eight sectors.

4. Tourism

Tourism is a significant contributor to job growth in the local economy. Tourism industries are included primarily within the service and retail sectors, represented by amusement and recreation services, hotels and lodging, as well as portions of other industries, such as business services, dining, apparel and general/miscellaneous retail trade. Outdoor recreation is a significant and growing element of the Region’s tourism economy. The Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism reports the following facts about the regional tourism industry:

- In 2013, direct county-wide traveler spending reached \$573.9-million, ranking Whatcom County fifth in visitor spending revenues among the State’s 39 counties.
- Whatcom County’s tourism industry supported 6,110 jobs in 2013, generating revenue in excess of \$128-million.
- Visitors to Whatcom County contributed \$8.2-million in local (city and county) taxes in 2013 and \$24.8-million in State tax receipts during the year.
- Persons staying in commercial lodging (hotels, motels, inns, etc.) account for slightly more than 60 percent of all visitor spending, with an average of \$343 per day.
- Approximately 40 percent of travelers’ overnight stays are spent with family or friends, but these visitors still spend an average of \$84 per day in Whatcom County.

5. Government

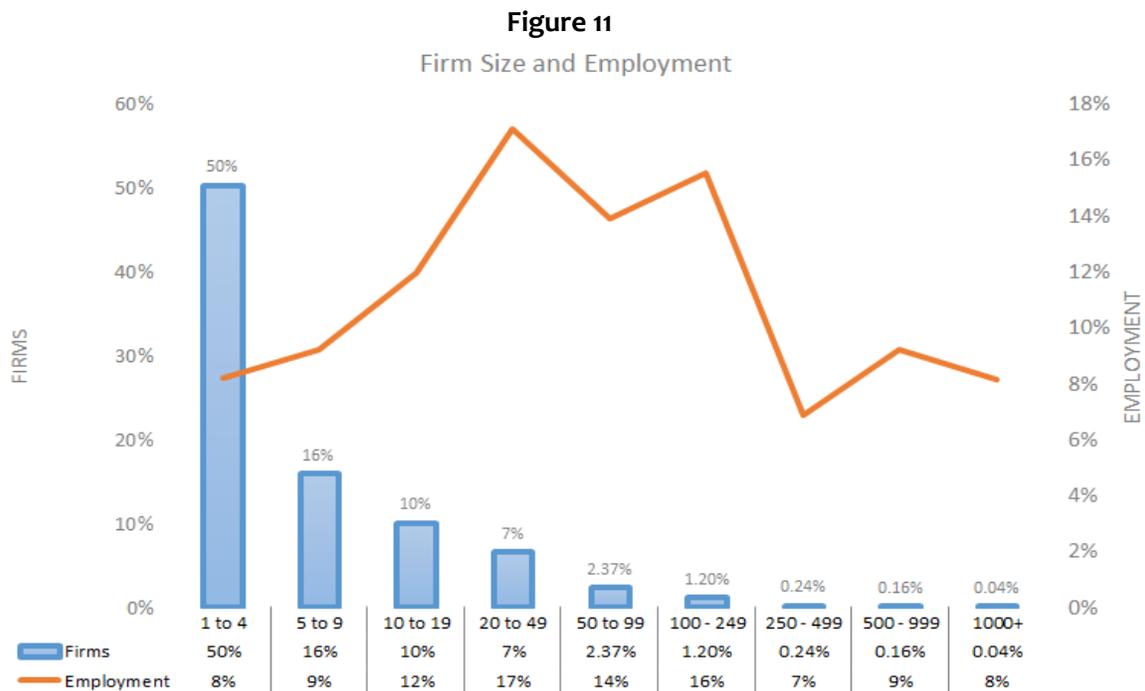
Among the eight principal sectors of Whatcom County’s economy, government accounts for the second-most non-farm jobs, at 18.3 percent. This sector has grown since 2000, when it provided 16.2 percent of jobs. Including the Silver Reef Casino – which, because it is owned and operated by the Lummi Nation is classified as “government” – eight of the County’s 20 largest employers are in the public sector. Local government employment (County and city government and school districts) accounts for about 74 percent of public jobs among the largest 35 employers in the County.

Washington State government also has a significant presence in the County due to the presence of Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College and Bellingham Technical College. Western is the second-largest employer in the County, WCC is seventeenth and BTC is twenty-sixth.

Despite the fact that there are no large military installations in the County, the federal government still maintains a significant presence, attributable primarily to U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel responsible for operating the five ports-of-entry and to patrol the County’s 90-mile land border with Canada. Various other federal agencies – including the Coast Guard, National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service – operate within the County.

6. Business Size Distribution

Whatcom County’s economy is dominated by small businesses, which on average employ slightly more than 11 people. The graph below illustrates the breakdown of businesses by the number of employees. Among 7,075 firms operating in the County, about 85 percent of them employ less than 100 people, and 50 percent have just four employees or less. Sixty (60) percent of the County’s 80,850 workers are employed by firms with 100 employees or less, and 47 percent work for mid-sized firms of between 20 and 249 employees.



7. Major Employers

Table 8: Largest Employers, 2013

rank	Employer	Employed	rank	Employer	Employed
1	St. Joseph Hospital/ Madrona Medical Group	2,753	11	Alcoa Intalco Works	625
2	Western Washington Univ.	1,575	12	Aramark	620
3	Bellingham School District	1,200	13	Ferndale School District	600
4	BP Cherry Point Refinery	1,100	14	Silver Reef Casino	578
5	Heath Tecna, Inc.	850	15	The Markets, LLC	522
6	City of Bellingham	807	16	Matrix Service, Inc.	475
7	Whatcom County	805	17	Whatcom Community College	440
8	Haggen, Inc.	787	18	Costco	400
9	Lummi Tribal Office	700	19	Alpha Group	400
10	Fred Meyer	660	20	Sterling Health	362

D. Income Measures

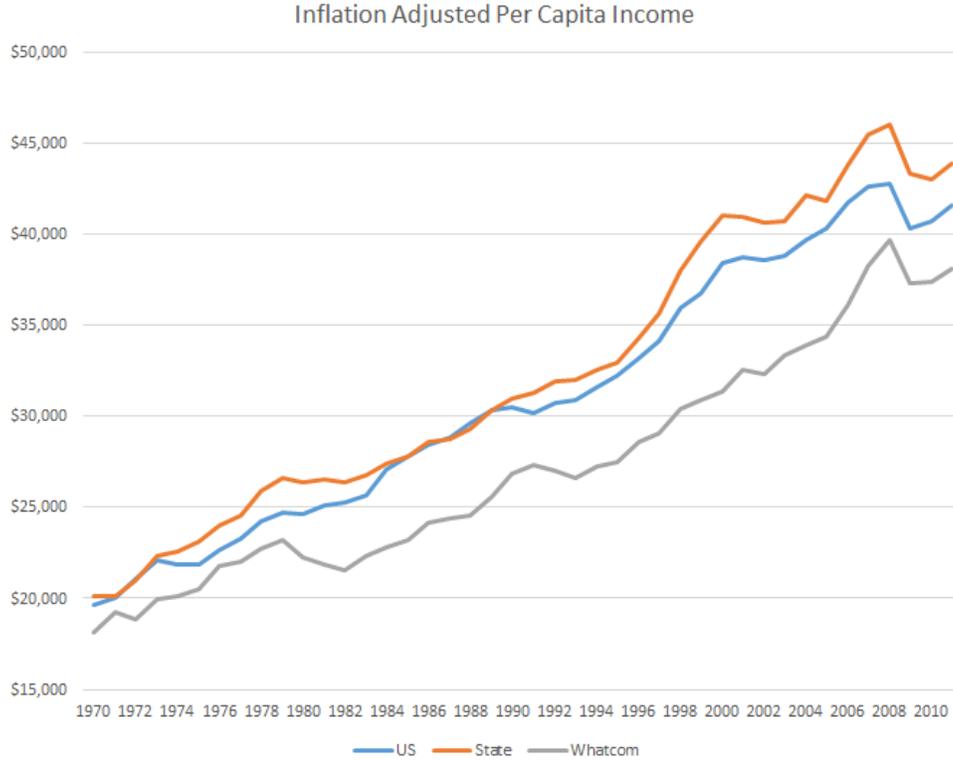
1. Personal Income

Per capita personal income (PCI) is a common measure of the overall economic well-being of the residents of a specific area, as it captures all sources of earned and unearned income. Table 9 and Figure 12 compare the changes in PCI for the County, the State and the nation. Whatcom County's PCI in 2010 – \$36,511 – was just 92 percent of the U.S. average, and 87 percent of the average for Washington. However, Whatcom's PCI relative to that of the State and the U.S. improved significantly since 2000, when it was 76 percent and 82 percent, respectively.

Table 9 -- Per Capita Personal Income (PCI)

	Whatcom <u>County</u>	Washington <u>State</u>	<u>Nation</u>	Whatcom County PCI compared to State and U.S.	
				<u>vs. State</u>	<u>vs. U.S.</u>
1970	\$3,777	\$4,189	\$4,084	90%	92%
1980	\$9,133	\$10,810	\$10,091	84%	91%
1990	\$17,016	\$19,367	\$19,354	88%	88%
2000	\$24,764	\$32,407	\$30,318	76%	82%
2010	\$36,511	\$42,024	\$39,791	87%	92%

Figure 12



2. Poverty Levels and Rates

The poverty rate is measured by the percent of the population living at or below the federal poverty level, known as the poverty line. In 2014, the poverty line as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services was \$23,850 for a family of four. From 2008 through 2012, the percentage of Whatcom County’s population living at or below the poverty line was 15.8 percent, while that of the State was 12.9 percent. That five-year average of 15.8 percent for the County represents a significant increase in the number of people living at or below the poverty line since 1998, when the percentage was 11.1 percent. With about one out of every six County residents living in poverty, reliance on various types of public assistance – including food and housing vouchers – will continue to have an impact on the regional economy.

SECTION 4: THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

I. Service Providers

A. Business Support and Economic Development Services

Whatcom County is fortunate to have a highly-professional and experienced group of economic development resource providers.

1. Small Business Development Center of Western Washington University

Washington's network of Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) is a cooperative effort of Washington State University, other educational institutions such as Western, economic development organizations and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBDC program is designed to provide high quality business and economic development assistance to small businesses and nascent entrepreneurs (pre-venture) in order to promote growth, expansion, innovation, increased productivity and management improvement.

SBDCs must work collaboratively with assistance from SBA's district offices to coordinate their efforts to expand services and avoid duplication, particularly with other SBA-funded programs such as Women Business Centers (WBCs), Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), Veteran Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs) and U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEACs). SBDCs are encouraged to fully utilize the resources of other federal, state and local government programs as well as academic and private-sector programs concerned with aiding small businesses in order to provide seamless, non-duplicative business development assistance at every stage of their growth.

The Small Business Development Center in Bellingham has three certified business advisors with extensive experience as well as a statewide network of more than 30 other advisors who can assist them in meeting the needs of Whatcom County businesses. Available advisory services include:

- Developing a business plan
- Financing options, including conventional business and SBA loans
- Managing cash flow
- Addressing human resource concerns
- Buying or selling a business
- No-cost, confidential business advising

Information on the full range of SBDC services available to existing or prospective business owners in Whatcom County is available at <http://www.wvu.edu/sbdc/> or by calling (360) 778-1762.

2. Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce and Industry is organized to bring together an association of people interested in the economic enhancement and general well-being of Whatcom County and its constituent communities. The Chamber frequently acts as the "front door" for those considering business opportunities in the County, and as such it plays an important role in providing

guidance to potential entrepreneurs and directing them to regional organizations that can assist them.

Among the business resources that the Chamber offers are:

- *Leadership Whatcom*: The goal of Leadership Whatcom is to develop the next generation of active leaders for Whatcom County. Decision-makers of local businesses, government agencies, non-profit organizations, schools and universities participate in a nine-month program designed to teach leadership skills by addressing key regional issues affecting Whatcom County. Graduates of Leadership Whatcom go on to contribute to the region's economic and cultural vitality.
- *Business Health Trust*: This group benefits program provides highly competitive rates through contracts with the largest and most respected insurance carriers in Washington.
- *Whatcom Young Professionals (WYPs)*: WYPs provides its members with opportunities for networking, learning and having fun in order to facilitate lasting and productive relationships among the next generation of business and community leaders for Whatcom County.
- Other services include *The Whatcom Report*, a weekly update on business; *The Member Directory*, and; the use of the Chamber's membership mailing list for business development.

Information on the Chamber's services is available at <http://bellingham.com/> or by calling (360) 734-1330.

3. Port of Bellingham, Economic Development Division

The Port's Economic Development Division works to attract and retain jobs and private investment in Whatcom County. As the County-appointed *Associate Development Organization*, the Port is recognized by the State as the primary economic development partner for Whatcom County.

Included among the Port's responsibilities and resources are:

- *Primary Point of Contact and Lead Management*: The Port takes the lead in business expansion and attraction efforts for the County, focusing on the "traded sectors," i.e., goods and services primarily consumed outside the region of production.
- *Marketing Efforts*: Through trade shows and direct outreach to prospective companies, the Port promotes Whatcom County as a place to do business, with attracting Canadian businesses a priority.
- *Community Information*: The Port publishes the *Whatcom County Profile* for businesses interested in doing business in the County, stays current on business-services providers, and maintains a GIS-based site inventory and contacts with the development community.
- *Technical Assistance*: Port staff assists in the development of public programs to support industry location and growth, such as loan and grant programs to fund infrastructure, available incentives and special designations.
- *Coordination*: To facilitate a streamlined business development process, the Port provides coordination of the activities of numerous stakeholders in the County, including the Small Cities Partnership, the Whatcom County Economic Development Practitioners Group, state agencies, workforce development and higher education, and all planning jurisdictions.
- *Community Information*: The Port publishes the *Whatcom County Profile*, which provides a wealth of information for people and businesses interested in doing business in the County,

and *Gateway to the U.S.A.*, a guide to assist Canadians and other foreign nationals interested in establishing operations in the County.

- *Foreign Trade Zone No. 129*: The Port's Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) enables companies doing business internationally to reduce costs on foreign merchandise. Companies in Whatcom County can secure FTZ status for warehousing, distribution and manufacturing operations through a new streamlined process.
- *Industrial Revenue Bonds*: Tax-exempt financing issued through the Port's Industrial Development Corporation is available to qualifying companies. The Port can issue up to \$10-million in tax-exempt bonds for manufacturing activities.
- *Technology Development Center*: In 2007, the Port of Bellingham was designated as one of the State's first "Innovation Partnership Zones." These zones were created to promote and develop Washington's regional economies by serving as globally-recognized hubs of expertise, innovation and commercialization. The Port's Waterfront Innovation Zone in Bellingham is shared by Western Washington University and Bellingham Technical College to carry on research and development projects and to support workforce development.

More information on the Port's economic development programs is available at <http://www.portofbellingham.com/> or by calling (360) 676-2500.

4. Northwest Economic Council

The Northwest Economic Council (NWECC) is a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1984 to bring together Whatcom County's private, public and not-for-profit sectors to establish and foster a strategic approach to growing the County's economy. In 2013, NWECC aligned itself with the [Whatcom Council of Governments](#) in order to create a structure that allows the NWECC Board of Directors to provide strategic direction and oversight to economic development efforts and activities throughout the County, with WCOG staff serving as its administrative and fiscal agent.

In addition to convening the Steering Committee that oversaw the preparation of this CEDS, in 2014 NWECC also finalized *Whatcom Futures: Toward a Sustainable Economy*, which constitutes Whatcom County's "Preferred Economic Future" as outlined in Section 6 of this CEDS. An ongoing function of NWECC is reviewing applications submitted by local governments and other eligible entities in Whatcom County for funding from the County's Economic Development Investment (EDI) Program. NWECC's EDI Technical Advisory Committee – made up entirely of members from the private sector – reviews applications and makes recommendations on them to the EDI Board.

More information on the Northwest Economic Council is available by calling (360) 676-6974.

5. Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism

Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism (BWCT) is the County's official tourism bureau. It is a non-profit organization with more than 300 members representing a variety of tourism and community-related businesses. BWCT promotes the region by providing information to those considering visiting the County, relocating to it or hosting a convention or event in the region.

Services offered by BWCT include:

- Staffed Visitor Information Center at Exit 253 on Interstate 5 in Bellingham
- Assistance for tour operators

- Marketing the region as a destination
- Business education workshops
- Regional tourism research and statistics.

Information on Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism is available at <http://www.bellingham.org/> or by calling (360) 671-3990.

6. Technology Alliance Group for Northwest Washington

The Technology Alliance Group for Northwest Washington (TAG) is a regional trade association that supports the region’s technology industry by connecting, highlighting and promoting the growth of technology companies through a variety of opportunities, partnerships and programs. It is the largest regional technology organization in Washington.

More information on TAG is available at <http://www.tagnw.org/> or by calling (360) 318-7710.

7. Northwest Innovation Resource Center

The Northwest Innovation Resource Center (NWIRC) is committed to creating economic opportunity and jobs by supporting entrepreneurial innovation. NWIRC staff provides oversight and ensures that each entrepreneur with whom it works has the opportunity to experience company growth and forward momentum. By utilizing high-caliber experts as mentors who are dedicated to understanding the whole business, entrepreneurs can focus on their passion and specialties, while benefiting from the guidance and experience of seasoned business leaders. NWIRC’s programs include:

- *The Enterprise Program*, which is focused on pre-start-up and start-up entrepreneurs with innovative, scalable or non-traditional business structures.
- *The Build It Program*, which is focused on inventors and product designers. The program provides guidance to inventors to help them create and grow their businesses into profitable ventures.

Information on NWIRC is available at <http://nwirc.com/> or by calling (360) 255-7870.

8. Northwest Workforce Council

The Northwest Workforce Council is a 27-member board responsible for governance and oversight of the workforce development system in Whatcom, Skagit, Island and San Juan counties. Authorized under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Council convenes the private and public sectors to address workforce development issues. Led by a business majority, the Council includes representation from businesses, labor, education, economic development and government. In partnership with local elected officials, it operates using a strategic plan whose regional strategies support the state’s strategic workforce plan while addressing local issues and economic development priorities.

The Council provides financial resources to qualified individuals for occupational or technical education programs and customized training in high demand occupations. Through resource leveraging with public and private investments, it targets its training resources to increase the

number of workers on the high-skill path and narrows the skills gap for employers. The Council also collaborates with the K-12 system and youth organizations to enhance educational attainment.

Through its WorkSource One-Stop Centers the Council links job seekers to employment opportunities, provides career information and job search training, and functions as the access point to an array of training resources. Customized services are available for veterans and to help traditionally underserved populations enter successful jobs and careers.

Information on the Northwest Workforce Council is available at <http://www.nwboard.org/>.

9. Sustainable Connections

Sustainable Connections envisions a thriving, collaborative community where local businesses are prosperous and contribute to a healthy environment and the well-being of all citizens. Its mission is to be the local forum where businesses come together to transform and model an economy built on sustainable practices. Sustainable Connections accomplishes this by working with local, independently-owned businesses that have the autonomy to make transformational changes in the way they operate, including reexamining where they buy goods and services, how they consume energy, grow and distribute food, build homes, and even how they define success in business. Sustainable Connections is supporting a community of innovators in green building, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, supporting independent businesses in town centers, and mentoring a new breed of entrepreneurs that have designed their business with a sustainable vision.

Among the services that Sustainable Connections provides are:

- *Education:* Providing technical assistance for businesses and partner organizations that builds our community's capacity to participate in the opportunities of a sustainable economy.
- *Connections:* Connecting businesses to each other to share best practices and do more business together.
- *Market Development:* Engaging in public promotion and education that creates opportunities for sustainable economy businesses.

Information on Sustainable Connections is available at <http://sustainableconnections.org/> or by calling (360) 647-7093.

10. Whatcom Council of Governments

The [Whatcom Council of Governments](#) (WCOG) operates programs for the benefit of Whatcom County's 206,000 residents and provides a variety of services to and on behalf of its members, which include the County's seven cities, Whatcom County Government, the Port of Bellingham and other regional entities. Established in 1966 by an act of the State Legislature, WCOG provides a forum through which mutual cooperation, information sharing and joint action are facilitated. Like most other councils of governments throughout Washington and the United States, WCOG has neither taxing authority nor the ability to regulate land use.

In 1982, WCOG was designated to serve as the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the federally-recognized transportation policy board for the Bellingham Urbanized Area. With the passage of the Washington State Growth Management Act in 1990, WCOG was subsequently designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for all of Whatcom County.

The MPO and RTPD are governed by a joint Transportation Policy Board which ensures that the region meets its obligations under the Growth Management Act as well as the transportation planning requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

Other important WCOG activities and programs include the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program, which facilitates improved transportation and commerce in the Cascade Gateway region of Washington State and British Columbia; staffing and convening the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group, which provides the perspective of private citizens in the regional transportation policymaking process; operating the Whatcom Smart Trips and Safe Routes to School programs; and serving as administrator and fiscal agent for the Northwest Economic Council.

11. Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County

Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County (PUD) was formed in 1937 by a vote of the people of Whatcom County. The PUD has countywide authority to supply electric and water services. The District is governed by an elected board of three nonpartisan commissioners who come from distinct districts in the County. The commissioners oversee policy decisions for the operation of a utility system that provides electric and water service.

- *Water Operations:* The PUD treats and distributes 5 billion gallons of water a year and is the largest water processor in Whatcom County with an average use of 17 million gallons per day. It operates one water system comprised of two river diversions, two treatment plants and 20 miles of pipeline, providing industrial-grade water to 10 industrial, two municipal and 50 irrigation customers. The PUD also operates a second system that provides potable water and fire protection for a large industrial park.
- *Electric Operations:* The PUD currently supplies three electrical customers an average of 27 MWh purchased from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The PUD owns 12 miles of transmission lines and two substations, with two points of delivery of 115kv and one point of delivery of 230kv. It has a separate power services contract with BPA and Intalco Aluminum to act as intermediary for energy supply as well as intertie agreements with Puget Sound Energy and BPA.
- *Engineering and Project Development:* The PUD provides engineering and technical support to the District, including planning and overseeing projects such as improvements, construction, operations and modifications to the water and electric utility systems and District facilities. This includes preparing bidding documents/procedures and working with consultants and contractors.

Information on the Public Utility District No. 1 can be found at <http://www.pudwhatcom.org/> or by calling (360) 384-4288.

12. Western Front Door to Discovery

The Front Door to Discovery is designed to stimulate economic development and greater social awareness in northwest Washington and throughout the State while enhancing the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation at Western Washington University. It makes the myriad of Western's resources – including faculty and students – available to meet needs in the broader community while providing opportunities for Western students to gain real-world experience.

Actions:

- Create an institutional mechanism to connect Western faculty, staff and students to each other and to organizations in the community to leverage the resources of all
- Overcome the psychological distance between Western and the community
- Create a direct personal connection between engaged students and faculty to resources and opportunities within the University and in the private and public sectors.
- Serve as a central clearinghouse to match needs to resources
- Develop and foster collaborative partnerships
- Create a space for people who are energized about creating a great climate for entrepreneurs in the community

Goals:

- Improve and stimulate economic and social growth in the northwest Washington
- Encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship, innovation and collaboration within the wider community and Western
- Raise awareness of innovation and research, technology transfer and commercialization of technology at Western

13. Whatcom Business Alliance

The Whatcom Business Alliance (WBA) is a non-partisan, privately-funded non-profit organization established in 2012 to provide a strong voice for business in Whatcom County, whether small or large, private or public, and in any industry or niche market. The WBA membership has grown rapidly with a unifying mission of supporting and celebrating a positive business environment and providing a vast communications network to address issues concerning businesses. The WBA encourages, supports, facilitates and advocates on behalf of companies that:

- Strive to grow and retain jobs
- Have interest in expanding
- Want to start-up or relocate in Whatcom County.

By creating a strong communications network of business leaders, the WBA and its support publication [Business Pulse Magazine](#) provide the business community a relevant and influential voice on issues that impact the quality of life for everyone in Whatcom County.

More information on WBA is available at <http://www.whatcombusinessalliance.com/>.

14. SCORE Chapter 591

[SCORE Chapter 591](#) is part of SCORE, a national nonprofit association founded in 1964 dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and helping small businesses start, grow and succeed. SCORE is a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Chapter's 14 counselors provide free, confidential business advice to start-ups and existing businesses in Whatcom County as well as to those in Island, San Juan and Skagit counties. With more than 275 years of combined business experience, Chapter 591's counselors can provide advice and mentorship across a broad set of business environments, including:

- Financial and general management of large and small businesses
- Retail store management
- Restaurant operations
- Commercial lending
- Business education
- Business accounting
- Human resource development and management
- Product development
- Manufacturing
- Quality systems, and
- Information technology management.

The Chapter also offers classes on starting and managing a business and in preparing business plans.

For more information on SCORE's services or to set up an appointment, please call (360) 685-4259.

15. Center for Economic and Business Research

The [Center for Economic and Business Research](#) (CEBR) was established in 1985 as an extension of the College of Business and Economics at Western Washington University. CEBR works in partnership with businesses, government entities and non-profits to bring to bear the resources of Western students, faculty and staff in finding solutions to challenges. CEBR's associates have expertise in the following areas:

- Human Resources
- Organizational Behavior
- Strategic Planning
- Management
- Marketing (Marketing Research, Marketing Strategy or IMC Strategy)
- Finance
- Accounting
- Business Planning
- Project Management
- Forecasting
- Environmental Economics
- Regional, Community and Business Economics
- Management Information Systems
- Operations Management
- International Business
- Supply Chain Management.

CEBR is a member of the Association for University Business and Economic Research. More information on CEBR and the services it provides is available by calling (360) 650-3909.

16. Municipal Economic Development Programs

All seven of Whatcom County's cities engage in economic development activities – either directly or indirectly – although they vary significantly based on budgets, staffing levels and program-

management structure. Complementing and supporting municipal economic development efforts are those of the various small chambers of commerce in the Region. Professionally-staffed chambers serve Ferndale and Lynden, while those serving Blaine, Birch Bay, Everson/Nooksack, the Mt. Baker Foothills, Point Roberts and Sumas are volunteer organizations.

a. City of Bellingham, Office of Business Relations and Economic Development

The City of Bellingham supports the regional economy in a variety of ways:

- Targeting specific neighborhoods for revitalization and redevelopment;
- Providing funding and strategic planning assistance to local economic development agencies and organizations;
- Creating great public amenities, such as parks, transportation infrastructure, street improvements, and projects such as the Depot Market Square; and
- Supporting tourism.

Business Incentive Programs include:

- [Green Building Incentives](#)
- Multi-family Tax Exemption Program - [BMC 17.82 Application](#) (PDF)
- Historic Preservation Tax Incentives
- [Washington State Department of Revenue - Deferrals, Exemptions and Credits](#)
- [Choose Washington Incentives for Business](#)
- [Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington](#) - Economic Development Program Incentives offered by Economic Development Organizations

Strategic Planning Overview: This Phase I report dated April 15, 2009 provides a current overview of Bellingham's industry sectors, employment zones, and future employment capacity. ([2008 City of Bellingham Employment Lands Report \(5,400K PDF\)](#); [Cover Memo from Tim Stewart, Planning Director \(PDF\)](#)). Phase II of the study, completed in December 2009, builds on the 2008 Employment Lands Report to identify ways to retain and expand existing businesses and attract industry sectors that are compatible with Bellingham's comprehensive planning goals ([2009 City of Bellingham Employment Lands Report - Phase II \(565K PDF\)](#); [Cover Memo from Tim Stewart, Planning Director \(PDF\)](#)).

Downtown Revitalization: Bellingham's revitalized downtown is due in large part to the concentrated efforts of the City, working closely with the [Downtown Bellingham Partnership](#) and other partners to take actions outlined in the [City Center Master Plan](#). Accomplishments thus far include new benches, public art, trash cans, downtown landscaping, sidewalk improvements, as well as improvements to Maritime Park and the boardwalk along Whatcom Creek. More residential units are now located downtown due to increased private sector investment, and projects such as Depot Market Square have had a huge influence on economic development downtown.

Grant Funding: The City also promotes Bellingham by funding arts and other organizations through the [Tourism Promotion Fund](#).

Waterfront Development: Please visit the [Waterfront Development Planning webpage](#) for more information.

More information on economic development programs in Bellingham can be found at <http://www.cob.org/services/business/economic-development.aspx> or by calling (360) 778-8105.

b. City of Blaine

The City Manager and Community Development Services Department - with policy direction provided by the City Council and the Blaine Economic Development Advisory Committee – are primarily responsible for facilitating economic development in the City of Blaine. The City has established a Rural Economic Development Revolving Loan Program to provide financing at below-market interest rates to existing businesses and to encourage new business start-ups. The City also relies on economic development services provided by the Port of Bellingham, the Small Business Development Center and other agencies.

More information on economic development programs in Blaine can be found at <http://wa-blaine.civicplus.com/index.aspx?nid=425> or by calling (360) 332-8311.

Priorities include construction of a downtown boardwalk that looks out over the Blaine Marina, Semiahmoo Spit and the Puget Sound; recruitment of businesses for the historic Central Business District; redevelopment of the Marine Commercial Waterfront District (managed by the Port of Bellingham); pre-approved development sites with planned infrastructure improvements in the Manufacturing District; reduced development permit costs; and better planning services for the community. The city also finances an innovative loan program for business and community development, funded through local utility tax revenues.

The Mayor and City Manager have recently conducted several “Town Meetings” to help the City develop a common “Vision” for future growth and development in Blaine. In addition, the city has completed and is implementing nine development and capital improvement plans.

c. City of Everson

In 2009 the City of Everson adopted its [2009-2011 Economic Development Work Plan](#). The City’s general economic development philosophy is to:

- Sustain moderate growth.
- Target a broad range of industries, family-wage to high salary employment opportunities.
- Ensure quality growth and land use by effective regulations and code enforcement.
- Encourage growth into certain areas through the use of zoning and other development regulations.
- Encourage the retention and growth of existing local firms.
- Provide efficient and timely administration of City services.

The general activities emphasize:

- Responding to specific requests for assistance from local firms.
- Maintaining public works and utilities so that existing systems are not over-utilized.
- Emphasizing business development for existing businesses to expand.
- Utilizing prompt and firm code enforcement to negate negative impacts of code violations on the surrounding areas.

The tools that support this general philosophy, specific goals and strategies outlined in the work plan include:

- Use of infrastructure investment to attract new firms and development to designated areas.
- Targeted local, state, and federal funds.
- Targeted government and private resources and partnerships.
- Funded, staffed, and administered code enforcement.

More information on economic development programs in Everson is available calling (360) 966-3411.

d. City of Ferndale

The Community Development Department is responsible for working with community members, elected officials, project applicants, and others to establish a collective vision for the community. The Department is tasked with establishing and enforcing regulations that will result in the realization of this vision and provides the following resources and services:

- [Building in Ferndale](#)
- [Downtown Planning & Development](#)
- [Environmental Reviews](#)
- [Maps & GIS](#)
- [Retail Development](#)
- [Main Street/ Axton Road Planned Action EIS](#)
- [Annexation and Urban Growth Areas](#)
- [Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [Land Use Code](#) (zoning code)
- [Development Standards Review](#)

More information on economic development programs in Ferndale can be found by calling the City's Community Development Department at (360) 685-2379.

The Ferndale Chamber of Commerce is also actively involved in promoting the City as a place to do business and in serving the needs of its members. Information on the Chamber can be found at <http://www.ferndale-chamber.com/> or by calling (360) 384-3042.

e. City of Lynden

Economic development in Lynden is coordinated in the City's Community Development and Planning Department. In 2008, with funding support from the Port of Bellingham, Lynden commissioned a [Retail Market Analysis](#). Lynden's 2005 Comprehensive Plan also addresses economic development in [Chapter 5 – Lynden's Economy](#), the update for which will be included in the City's process of updating its entire Comprehensive Plan. Lynden also prepared the [Downtown Lynden Development Plan and Economic Enhancement Strategies](#) in 2001 "to describe a 'vision' for what the Lynden downtown should be and to develop an economic enhancement strategy to increase its commercial and job base."

More information on the City of Lynden's economic development programs can be found at <http://www.lyndenwa.org/departments/planning/> or by calling (360) 354-5532.

The Lynden Chamber of Commerce also supports businesses in and around Lynden and promotes the City as a place to work, live and play. Information on the Chamber can be found at <http://lynden.org/> or by calling (360) 354-5995.

f. City of Nooksack

Economic development efforts in the City of Nooksack have focused on revitalization of the commercial core of the city. In 1999-2000, the City developed and adopted a Community Action Plan that laid out a 10-year plan for economic and community revitalization. It detailed a three-pronged approach to supporting economic development.

Since adopting the plan, the Nooksack City Council has implemented several components of the plan and modified others. In 2001, Nooksack rezoned the area to be included in the pedestrian-oriented Central Market District and adopted new zoning regulations for the area. The City also updated its *Parks and Open Space Plan* to lay the groundwork for development of the parks and trails component envisioned in the plan. Nooksack has recently completed two major sidewalk projects that will increase pedestrian access to the Central Market District.

Several major infrastructure projects intended to support economic development have also been completed, including installation of a 12-inch water main loop serving the downtown area, a water booster pump station, and a major upgrade to the Everson wastewater treatment plant (which serves Nooksack) that will expand capacity to serve new development through 2036. This last project is planned to be completed in 2015.

g. City of Sumas

The City of Sumas began to pursue an economic diversification strategy in the mid-1980s, with the assistance of the Port of Bellingham. The Sumas Industrial Cargo Terminal was built, including utilities and a unique heavy-haul road capable of supporting Canadian-weight trucks, which are heavier than typical U.S. trucks. The industrial area has been expanded several times and now includes 11 major tenants. The City continues to pursue tenants for the industrial park. Over the past decade, the heavy-haul road has also been expanded, and further expansion to open up access to additional industrial properties is planned for the future, the timing of which to be determined based on market demand.

The City has also worked with a local property owner to develop a privately-owned wetland mitigation bank where developers can access mitigation to offset unavoidable impacts to low-value wetlands. The entire mitigation site is now protected through a restrictive covenant that will allow the area to be preserved and enhanced in perpetuity.

Sumas also began a downtown revitalization effort in 1998. The program began with an assessment of current conditions based upon questionnaire and interview data compiled from City residents, nearby Canadian residents, downtown business owners and local industries. The assessment led to community clean-up programs, Cherry Street beautification efforts (new ornamental trees and planter boxes), and the hiring of a consultant to provide long-term, one-on-one business assistance counseling to local merchants. The City is still utilizing the business consultant, and it regularly makes public works and planning staff available to meet with new and existing business owners interested in expanding in Sumas.

Sumas provides grants and/or low-interest loans (funded through utility revenues) to public or private developers requiring off-site infrastructure improvements in order to accommodate their projects. The City has also completed a major expansion of its ballfields to attract more people to the area and help increase economic activity in the downtown commercial core.

17. Whatcom County Government

Whatcom County addresses economic development in [Chapter 7 – Economics](#), of the *Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan*. That chapter lays out a strategy to enhance “economic vitality,” which it defines as “. . . the measure of the economic health of the County – its people, its businesses, and its government.” To achieve this, it recommends public and private action designed to achieve:

- Maintenance of a strong, sustainable economic base
- Diversification of the local economy
- Improved job training and educational opportunities; and
- Creation and maintenance of a range of family-wage jobs

The County’s Economic Development Investment (EDI) Program provides financing for public facilities that support the local and regional economies and which will stimulate private investment. This is accomplished by offering very-low interest loans, grants or a combination of both to local governments or other public-sector entities that successfully apply for funding through this competitive program. The County’s cities, water and sewer districts, Public Utility District No. 1, the Port of Bellingham and Whatcom County itself are all eligible applicants for EDI funding. The program was established following a 1997 act of the State Legislature that authorized “rural” counties such as Whatcom to retain a portion of the sales tax collected to finance public facilities for the purpose of improving their economies. Financing provided through the EDI Program is intended to facilitate the expansion, retention and attraction of businesses and to increase employment opportunities in Whatcom County.

More information on economic development in Whatcom County is available by calling the County Executive’s Office at (360) 676-6717.

18. Lummi Nation

The [Lummi Community Development Financial Institution](#) (LCDFI) was founded in 2006 “to provide access to education, financing and asset growth in order to improve the prosperity and well-being of families.” In 2008, LCDFI was certified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and in 2011 it was granted 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status by the Internal Revenue Service. LCDFI has grown to be a leading organization catering to the Lummi Nation while partnering with the [Lummi Nation Ventures Program](#) in the areas of small business training and lending, entrepreneurship education, and financial literacy. Working with Lummi Ventures, LCDFI offers a selection of business development classes, one-on-one technical assistance, and business loan fund products to expand private small businesses and financial literacy on the Reservation. LCDFI also partners with the “Lummi Youth Build” program to expose young people to entrepreneurship and promote good money-management habits and the responsible use of credit.

Lummi Ventures has developed a 10-year strategic plan to eliminate poverty and increase prosperity in the Lummi community that addresses economic development, healthy families and education. More information on this initiative is available by calling Lummi Ventures at (360) 384-2331.

LCDFI currently offers small business loans for Tribal members, descendants, individuals employed by the Lummi Indian Business Council, and individuals residing in northwestern Washington who employ Native Americans or are interested in starting or expanding a business that would impact Indian communities, particularly the Lummi Nation. LCDFI can be reached by calling (360) 594-6004.

19. Nooksack Tribe

The Nooksack Business Corporation, a tribal corporation of the Nooksack Tribe, plays a leading role in tribal economic development. It operates the Nooksack River Casino and Nooksack Market Centre in Deming and the Nooksack Northwood Casino in Lynden.

The Tribe participates in the [North Intertribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program](#), which serves Native Americans enrolled in a federally-recognized tribe who have permanent disabilities that have interfered with their ability to work. These services are culturally appropriate and may include evaluation, assessment, goal planning, training, education, job search assistance, transportation assistance, mental health referral and advocacy. Information is available by calling (360) 592-5176, ext. 3667.

B. The Workforce Development System

Workforce development in Whatcom County is primarily implemented by the County's public education providers, the Northwest Workforce Council and the WorkSource One-Stop Center in Bellingham.

1. Public Education Facilities

Whatcom County's labor force is well regarded, which is due primarily to the quality and quantity of its public education institutions. The principal post-secondary institutions in the County are Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College and Northwest Indian College. There are also branch campuses of Charter College (based in Anchorage, Alaska) and Trinity Western University, whose main campus is in nearby Langley, B.C.

Participation rates describe the level of service provided by the public education system to each county in the state. It measures the fall quarter enrollment in 2-year and 4-year public institutions as a share of the State's population over age 17. There are 5 technical colleges, 29 community colleges and six 4-year public institutions in Washington. Table 10 indicates that Whatcom County exceeds the state average for all three indices and is ranked within the top ten for each statewide.

Table 10 - Whatcom County Higher Education Participation Rates, Fall 2008

	County rate	State Rank	State Rate
Community and Technical Colleges	5.18%	7	4.41%
Public 4-year Institutions	2.09%	10	1.88%
All Public Higher Education	7.26%	5	6.30%

Source: "Higher Education Trends & Highlights," February 2009, Washington State OFM

a. Primary and Secondary (K-12) System

Whatcom County is served by eight public school districts:

- [Bellingham School District](#) serves Bellingham, Chuckanut, Lake Samish, and Sudden Valley.
- [Blaine School District](#) serves Blaine, Birch Bay, and Point Roberts.
- [Concrete School District](#) serves the county's southeast corner including [Newhalem](#) and [Diablo](#).
- [Ferndale School District](#) serves Ferndale, Custer, Lummi Island, and the Lummi Nation.
- [Lynden School District](#) serves Lynden and surrounding areas.
- [Meridian School District](#) serves rural communities between Bellingham and Lynden.
- [Mount Baker School District](#) serves communities along the Mount Baker Highway and Nooksack River.
- [Nooksack Valley School District](#) serves Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas.

During the 2009-2010 school year, a total of 25,679 children were enrolled in public schools serving Whatcom County. In the 2007-2008 school year, nearly \$292-million were spent educating public school children in Whatcom County.

Numerous private schools also operate in Whatcom County including Assumption Catholic School, St. Paul's Academy, Lynden Christian Schools, Bellingham Christian Schools, and the Waldorf School.

b. Western Washington University

Located in Bellingham, Western Washington University is one of six state-funded, four-year institutions of higher education. The University's enrollment is approximately 15,000 students, approximately 95 percent of which are undergraduates. About 88 percent of the student body is composed of Washington residents. Western confers various bachelor's and master's degrees and offers more than 160 academic programs through its seven colleges and the Graduate School. The University is also home to more than two dozen centers and institutes.

c. Whatcom Community College

Whatcom Community College (WCC) is an accredited, comprehensive two-year college serving 11,000 students annually. On its 72-acre campus in Bellingham, as well as through on-line courses, WCC offers transfer degrees, professional and technical training programs, basic education, job skills, and classes through its Community & Continuing Education program. According to the Aspen Institute (April 2012), WCC is rated among the top six community and technical colleges in Washington and is recognized as one of the leading community colleges in the nation. Established in 1967, Whatcom has been accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities since 1976.

The College offers three degrees:

- *Associate in Arts and Sciences*, designed for students who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university. It is generally accepted as fulfilling the General Education Requirements for most four-year schools in Washington.
- *Associate in Science*, which offers a common core with a variety of science majors. This degree is accepted at many four-year public and private universities in Washington and is designed to enable holders to transfer into most science majors, including engineering, atmospheric science, biology, chemistry and others.
- *Associate in Liberal Studies*, which is designed primarily for students who wish to receive recognition for completion of 90 credits of general college-level learning but who do not plan on transferring to a four-year school.

WCC also participates in Running Start, a statewide partnership between high schools and community and technical colleges in Washington. Running Start offers families significant cost savings as students begin their college careers:

- Students may enroll simultaneously in high school and college classes, or solely at the college.
- Students receive both high school and college credit for classes completed at the college.
- Students do not need the permission of the high school to enroll in the program; the student and parents make this choice.

d. Bellingham Technical College

Bellingham Technical College (BTC) was founded in 1957 and is one of only five state technical colleges chartered in Washington. It is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The campus is located on 35 acres overlooking Bellingham Bay, the San Juan Islands and Mt. Baker. BTC serves a diverse population of about 8,000 students in more than 35 associate degree and 43 certificate programs. Students prepare for careers in many fields, including advanced manufacturing, accounting, process technology, culinary arts, nursing and many others. The College's approach is to provide a high-tech, hands-on, student-centered learning environment. BTC graduates have a job placement rate of 84 percent.

The College also participates in Running Start, and it is committed to providing flexible training under contract to private employers to meet their start-up training needs as well as to upgrade the skills of existing personnel.

e. Northwest Indian College

Situated on the Lummi Indian Reservation, Northwest Indian College (NWIC) is the only accredited tribal college in the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. NWIC traces its roots to the Lummi Indian School of Aquaculture (founded in 1973), a single-purpose institution developed to provide a supply of technicians for employment in Indian-owned and operated fish and shellfish hatcheries throughout the United States and Canada.

The College currently awards bachelor's degrees in Native Environmental Science, Native Studies Leadership and Tribal Governance & Business Management. Associate's degrees are awarded in

several fields, including Business and Entrepreneurship, Information Technology and several other fields. Several certificate programs are also offered.

The College is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and in 2010 was approved as a baccalaureate degree granting institution. The College's educational programs have been approved by the Veteran's Administration as well as the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board for the administration of financial assistance for eligible students. It is a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the American Association of Community Colleges, and the American Council on Education.

The educational philosophy of NWIC is based upon the belief that the opportunity of post-secondary education must be provided within the Native American community. The College is committed to the belief that self-awareness is the foundation necessary to: achieve confidence, esteem and a true sense of pride; build a career; create a self-sufficient life-style; and promote life-long learning. It is also committed to the belief that a self-awareness program must include a study of Native American culture, values and history.

II. Infrastructure Supporting Economic Development

A. Capital Facilities and Community Infrastructure

1. Water Systems and Supply

Whatcom County residents obtain domestic water from public and private water systems. The term "public" refers to the State Department of Health definition and not necessarily to ownership of the system. This distinction is important and can often be confusing. Public systems, as defined by the State, must comply with specific regulations designed to protect the health of people using the supply. Private systems do not have to meet these same requirements. However, the Whatcom County Council, acting as the County Board of Health, adopted the [Whatcom County Drinking Water Ordinance](#) in 2002, which established standards for private water systems used for new land development. This ordinance includes siting criteria, such as setbacks from septic tanks and initial water quality sampling requirements. It does not impose ongoing water quality monitoring on private water systems.

The complete definition of a public water system can be referenced in WAC 246-290 and WAC 246-291. In general, Health regulations define a public water system as all systems *except* those serving only one single family residence and a system with four or fewer connections all of which serve residences on the same farm. However, the regulations do allow systems with only two connections to be exempted from State Health rules at the discretion of local/State Health. Whatcom County has taken advantage of this allowance and, in certain circumstances, does not require residential systems with two services to meet public systems requirements. However, two-party wells that are exempt from state rules must still comply with the County's Drinking Water Ordinance.

In 2014, 87 percent of Whatcom County's population was supplied with potable water by approximately 415 public water systems. The remaining 13 percent of the population obtains its drinking water from private water supplies, including wells, surface water and rainwater catchment systems.

The largest purveyor of water in the County is the City of Bellingham. The City draws water from Lake Whatcom and the Middle Fork of the Nooksack River via a diversion pipeline. According to Bellingham's

[2013 Water System Plan Update](#), in 2011 the City had 25,011 service connections. The City also has the largest collection of water rights of all purveyors in the County, which should enable it to continue as a major supplier in the future.

Public Utility District No.1, which obtains water from the Nooksack River, has the second largest collection of right in the County. The PUD is a public water utility authorized under RCW Chapter 54 which provides retail service within its designated service boundary and has the potential to provide wholesale water on a county-wide basis. It currently provides both direct retail and wholesale water supplies to customers within the County and holds water rights for municipal water supply purposes, including residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural use. Pursuant to state law, the PUD develops and provides water supply within its service area in accordance with authoritative demand and/or population projections.

The PUD will consider petitions for service or assistance from all areas in Whatcom County which are not presently claimed by cities, water districts or other purveyors operating within the County. The level of service to be provided to PUD customers requesting service or new supply will be consistent with relevant capital facility and/or land use plans and policies in existence at the time of service extension.

Regardless of size, public or private, many water purveyors in Whatcom County face common challenges in meeting existing and future demands. Water quality concerns which have been identified include nitrates, arsenic, bacteria, iron/manganese, sea water intrusion, and pesticides/VOCs. Quantity concerns include legal limitations on supplies and questions regarding actual amounts and depletion of water. New regulatory requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act, for example, further challenge the ability of purveyors to meet new demands.

Meeting existing and future water demands throughout the county will require careful planning and a mesh of land use/zoning with supply availability. Some of the planning tools which exist to help accomplish this include:

- The Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1 Watershed Management Project, including the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan;
- The various protection and management strategies discussed in the “Water Resource Section” of [Chapter 11: Environment](#) in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan;
- Comprehensive water plans that have been developed by some of the water purveyors;
- Capital facilities plans and interlocal agreements developed by the cities and County under the *Growth Management Act*; and
- The [Coordinated Water System Plan](#).

With so many uncertainties and so few clear answers, caution is necessary in making water-related decisions. It is likely that much dialogue, coordination, and clear understanding will be necessary to work through a myriad of water-related issues and decisions. Changing priorities, organization, and regulations at state and federal levels make comprehensive decision-making yet more arduous. County staff and elected officials must participate in all processes aimed at quantifying, regulating, or controlling water in any way to protect the best interests of the citizens of Whatcom County. Specifically, the WRIA 1 Watershed Management Project has been initiated to address issues of water quantity, water quality, fish habitat, and in-stream flows. Additionally, Whatcom County created the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department in 1999 to address water issues.

This plan is based on the assumption that agriculture is important to the County as identified in the Visioning Process and that water will be available to serve the agricultural community. The plan also

assumes that adequate water will be available to serve the proposed Urban Growth Areas. It is recognized that certain actions are needed to ensure supplies to those areas. These actions will be pursued and the Urban Growth Areas will be revisited as part of the review process to determine if the boundaries are consistent with water availability.

Identified urban growth areas are served by public water either within an approved water service area or logical service boundary. Water rights are always an issue in planning for adequate facilities. Treaty rights of the tribes, minimum in-stream flows for adequate protection of fish, and use and protection pursuant to state water laws, all affect the ability of purveyors to meet service objectives. It is not the intent of the County to second-guess a projection in an approved or pending plan. The County will review plans periodically to ensure consistency with adopted growth and population projections, and changes in the availability of water which may affect the ability to provide service.

Because of concerns about water supply and requirements of state law, development will be contingent on providing evidence of adequate water supplies.

2. Energy

The principal suppliers of electricity in Whatcom County are [Puget Sound Energy](#) and [Public Utility District No. 1](#). Natural gas is supplied by [Cascade Natural Gas](#). Sustainable Connections' [Energy Efficiency and Renewables Program](#) assists businesses seeking alternatives to carbon-based fuels.

3. Wastewater Treatment

Municipalities in Whatcom County operate separate sewage treatment facilities, except for Nooksack, which uses the City of Everson's treatment plant and Sumas, which sends its sewage to the Joint Abbotsford Mission Environmental Systems (JAMES) Wastewater Treatment Plant in neighboring Abbotsford, British Columbia. The Birch Bay Water and Sewer District is a special purpose district providing water and wastewater services to about 7,500 people in northwest Whatcom County. The Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District provides sewer service to more than 3,700 residential customers in an 18 square-mile area encompassing Lake Whatcom. Water District 13 operates a sewer system that serves a portion of the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area. Whatcom County does not currently own, operate or maintain a sewage treatment facility or associated pumping stations or pipelines. Sewage treatment in the unincorporated areas of the County is primarily by septic system.

Goal 5T of the 2013 Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is to "Support development of new sewage treatment facilities, including new pipelines and extensions of existing pipelines, to areas designated for urban-level growth." The following actions are intended to achieve this goal:

- Discourage extension of sewer lines in areas not designated as urban growth areas or Rural Communities, except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development.
- For those areas designated as Rural Communities and wishing to infill, work with the communities to create sewer and water districts as necessary to manage both utilities. Public water and sewer service shall be limited to areas where existing lot sizes and development patterns make public water and sewer appropriate and shall not be extended outside of the Rural Community.

- Assist sewer and water districts in environmental review and mitigation and in preparing grant applications to obtain package sewer services that can be developed in a phased and cost-effective manner to serve designated Rural Communities.
- Support the development of new technology and alternative sewage disposal methods as an alternative to expensive sanitary sewer systems to assure ground water quality is maintained.

4. Solid Waste

According to the [Whatcom County Comprehensive Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008](#), solid waste management is a cooperative effort of Whatcom County and the seven incorporated cities, which collectively participate in the Whatcom County Waste Management System. Its 20-year mission, as outlined in the 2008 Plan, is “to facilitate an economically efficient waste prevention, recycling and disposal system that protects human health and the environment for the citizens of Whatcom County [and to] develop, monitor and enforce various federal, state and local government plans, laws, regulations and grants.” Based on this mission the following goals were established:

- To reduce, or prevent where possible, the generation of solid and moderate risk wastes and their associated problems through service-oriented, cost-effective actions where prevention or reduction will protect human health, safety and environmental quality.
- To solve problems related to solid and moderate risk waste through service-oriented actions that protect human health and safety, and environmental quality.
- To provide necessary support for the other two goals, using service-oriented, cost-effective actions.

5. Storm Water Management

Storm water is that portion of rainwater that does not naturally percolate into the ground or evaporate, but flows overland or through pipes, gullies or channels into a defined channel or a constructed infiltration facility. In many cases, storm water is associated with impervious surface in areas where development has taken place. In these areas, replacement of natural drainage systems with built systems results in short and long-term public costs and can lead to environmental degradation, including flooding, erosion, sedimentation, habitat loss, and degradation of water quality. Storm water management is addressed in [Chapter 11: Environment](#) of the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan.

6. Telecommunications

The principal provider of land-line telephone service to businesses in Whatcom County is [CenturyLink Business](#). There are also several providers of voice-over-Internet ([VOIP](#)) and [satellite phone services](#). Cellular telephone service is provided by AT&T, Sprint, Verizon Wireless and several other companies. Numerous [Internet service providers](#) serve commercial and residential customers in Whatcom County.

7. Industrial Properties

(The information in this section reflects the availability of industrial land as of July 2014 and is subject to change.)

Bellingham

- Curtis/Slater Roads, 190 available acres.
- Hannegan Road Corridor, 127 available acres. This business area has a large concentration of industrial employers in the Irongate Industrial Park and Strider Business Park.
- Kline/Kelly Corridor, 39 available acres.
- Bennett/Marine Drive, 139 available acres. This area includes Port of Bellingham properties and airport operations
- Cordata, 34 available acres. A large developed mixed use area with some light industrial. Whatcom Community College and PeaceHealth clinics are also included in this area.
- Pacific Highway/Northwest Corridor, 80 available acres, adjacent to a large planned commercial center on Bakerview Road.
- Orchard Street Corridor, 17 available acres. This area is primarily occupied by Bellingham Cold Storage and related facilities.
- Iowa/Fraser and Ohio Street Corridors are well developed industrial areas that include Haskell Business Center and existing buildings, with minimal vacant property.

Blaine

Total of 114 available acres of property zoned for manufacturing in the City, including:

- Gateway Business Park, a 28-acre commercial and industrial complex that was the site of the former Blaine airport as well as other City-owned property.
- Blaine Industrial Park, 45 acres of light industrial warehouse area.

Cherry Point

With a gross area of approximately 7,000 acres, this is the largest contiguous heavy-industrial area in Whatcom County and is home to the BP and Phillips 66 refineries and Alcoa's Intalco Works aluminum smelter. Several large, developable parcels are available in Cherry Point.

Everson

The South Everson Industrial Area contains approximately 91 acres off Mission Road surrounding the SELCO Lumber mill within the City, plus another 20 acres in the Everson Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Ferndale

There are at least 287 acres of available of land zoned for industrial or "general business" use (which allows for industrial use) within the Ferndale UGA, including the following:

- Grandview Industrial Park and COPAC Warehouse and Industrial Center, a total of 106 acres containing 200,000 square feet of industrial space adjacent to I-5 on Grandview Road. COPAC is home to several manufacturers and warehouses.
- I-5 Industrial Center, a 72-acre, partially-developed business park on the east side of Grandview Road.
- The Malloy Area, north of Samson Rope, which includes 144 acres of undeveloped industrial-zoned properties. The area is not currently served by City utilities.
- Peace Portal Way, with 147 acres zoned for general business.
- The Hovander Area, with about 128 acres suited for a variety of uses. Ferndale Business Park is located here.
- The Slater/Sunset/Smith area has a gross area of 464 acres with mixed-use zoning that allows for regional retail, manufacturing and other industrial uses. This is also the site chosen for the new Whatcom County jail.

- Pacific Industrial Park Area, a developed 113-acre site along Pacific Highway with warehousing and commercial business.

Lynden

The West Lynden Industrial Area between West Main Street and Birch Bay-Lynden Road encompasses a total of 240 acres, including the planned, 55-acre Lynden Business Park, which will accommodate medical, commercial and industrial uses.

Sumas

The Sumas Industrial Area has more than 150 acres available in six contiguous parcels, with heavy-haul road access to the Canadian border.

For specific information on industrial properties in Whatcom County, please contact the specific local government or the Port of Bellingham Economic Development Division at (360) 676-2500.

The Port of Bellingham

The Port owns 1,683 acres of property, which includes Bellingham International Airport (BLI), marina tidelands, deep-water marine terminal uplands, privately leased commercial/industrial land and undeveloped property. Additionally, it owns and manages about 1.4-million square feet of space in buildings, including about 800,000 square feet of warehouse/light industrial space.

Other Port properties in the County include:

- Sumas International Cargo Terminal, a 27-acre facility, much of which is currently in use.
- Blaine’s Wharf District, a master-planned development that includes 24 acres of uplands for mixed use, including a marina and marine industrial. Much of the property has existing uses in place.
- Airport Industrial Park, with 130 acres, about 96 of which are still available. An additional 300 developable acres are located on the west side of BLI for future aviation-related uses.
- Fairhaven, with 32 total acres largely occupied with marine industrial and water transportation uses.
- Squalicum’s 200 acres, with primary industrial uses including cold storage and fish processing. Remaining available development areas are for mixed use/commercial.

Bellingham Waterfront District

The Port and the City of Bellingham have joined forces to redevelop 237 acres of vacant industrial property owned by the Port along the City's central waterfront into a thriving, multi-use facility that is expected to draw high-quality industrial, commercial, residential and recreational development. Given the scale of this initiative and its reliance on private equity leveraged by strategic public-sector investments, it is estimated that full development of the site will take several decades.

Industrial opportunities include:

- The 52-acre, former “log pond” area has been identified for industrial mixed use and is available immediately.
- The 25-acre Bellingham Shipping Terminal for deep-water access adjacent to the log pond.

- A 58-acre marine trades area that will be developed over time for maritime uses. Fish processing, boat haul-out and marine repair businesses currently operate in this area.

B. Public Services and Facilities

1. Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by 13 [Whatcom County Fire Districts](#), the Bellingham Fire Department and the Lynden Fire Department. A [Mutual Aid Agreement](#) between the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County is in place to facilitate expeditious cooperation in the event of a serious emergency situation in the County.

2. Law Enforcement

Independent police departments serve all of the incorporated cities in Whatcom County except for the City of Nooksack, which is protected by the Everson Police Department through an interlocal agreement. The Whatcom County Sheriff's Department serves the unincorporated portions of Whatcom County, and District 7 of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) includes Whatcom County. District 7 has a full-service Crime Laboratory and Communications Center as well as personnel assigned to it from WSP's Commercial Vehicle Division Enforcement Bureau, Criminal Investigation Division, Fire Protection Bureau, Investigative Assistance Division, and the Homeland Security Division.

The County's five international ports-of-entry and the frontier along its border with British Columbia are protected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the largest law enforcement agency within the Department of Homeland Security. CBP's Office of Field Operations provides security at each of the ports-of-entry while the U.S Border Patrol performs its "line watch" of the border.

3. Sanitation Services

Three sanitation companies provide waste material (trash and recyclables) handling services to cities in Whatcom County. The cities of Bellingham and Ferndale and most of the rural county have contracts with Sanitary Service Company, Inc. for the removal of waste and recyclables. Blaine Bay Refuse serves the City of Blaine, while Everson, Lynden, Nooksack and Sumas are served by Nooksack Valley Disposal & Recycling, Inc.

4. Medical Facilities

PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center in Bellingham is Whatcom County's only hospital. It is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1891 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, who continue today as sponsors of the PeaceHealth system that serves communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth St. Joseph has been recognized as a Top 100 Hospital in America and as a top-ranking facility for patient quality initiatives in Washington.

The hospital has 253 beds, 2,600 employees and a medical staff of more than 400 physicians. It is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Among the medical services it provides are:

- Cardiovascular services

- Joint replacement
- Stroke Program
- Cancer Center, including radiation therapy, chemotherapy and comprehensive education and support services for cancer patients and their families
- Haggen Family Emergency & Trauma Center
- Neurosurgery
- Cascade Brain & Spine Center
- Behavioral Health including inpatient psychiatric and chemical dependency treatment
- Childbirth Center
- Pediatrics Unit
- Intensive Care Unit
- Inpatient Physical Rehabilitation Center
- General and specialized surgery

The County is also served by dozens of private and not-for-profit [clinics](#).

5. Parks and Recreation

Whatcom County is home to numerous parks, trails, natural areas and preserved spaces. The North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake National Recreation Area, partially located in eastern Whatcom County, contain some of America’s most beautiful and dramatic scenery. Three Washington State Parks – Birch Bay, Larabee and Peace Arch – are also located in the County. Whatcom County itself has a system of 36 parks and trails, and in 2014 it acquired an additional 8,800 acres of forest lands around Lake Whatcom which were conveyed from the Washington Department of Natural Resources, which are envisioned to provide passive recreational opportunities and watershed protection for Lake Whatcom.

The cities of Bellingham, Ferndale and Lynden each have a parks department as part of their city government, while Blaine, Everson and Sumas own, maintain and operate parks within their jurisdictions.

C. Transportation System

1. Transportation Planning

In accordance with urban transportation planning requirements imposed by the Code of Federal Regulations, the Whatcom Council of Governments serves as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Bellingham Urbanized Area. An MPO is required in any urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more for that region to receive federal transportation funding. The U.S. Department of Transportation has promulgated guidelines to ensure that a “continuing, cooperative and comprehensive” transportation planning process exists to meet established federal, state and local mobility goals. Among the principal products required of an MPO are a metropolitan transportation plan, a [Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP) and an annual schedule of funded planning activities known as the [Unified Planning Work Program](#).

With the codification of the Washington State Growth Management Act of 1990, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) were established and WCOG was designated as the RTPO for Whatcom County. The principal responsibility of an RTPO is to prepare and regularly

update a regional transportation plan. Since metropolitan and regional transportation plan requirements share common elements, WCOG has combined these plans into one document, known as the [Whatcom Transportation Plan](#).

To ensure that metropolitan and regional transportation planning are carried out in a coordinated process that minimizes unnecessary duplication of work and oversight, the MPO and RTPO policy boards have been merged into the [Whatcom Transportation Policy Board](#) (WTPB). In addition to governing the metropolitan and regional transportation planning processes, the WTPB is charged with allocating the combination of federal, state and local funds to the numerous projects contained in the TIP. The WTPB may also request WCOG staff to perform analyses or other research to assist them in understanding the often complex issues they are called on to address.

2. Freeway and Road Maintenance

Road construction and maintenance in Whatcom County is the responsibility of several jurisdictions depending on the facility in question. Interstate 5 and state roads are the responsibility of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Whatcom County is responsible for all other roads, except those under the jurisdiction of the seven cities. The National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service assume responsibility for road construction and maintenance in the various federal lands in central and eastern Whatcom County.

3. Pedestrian, Bicycle and Public Transportation

The Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) provides public transportation services throughout Whatcom County, including 30 fixed routes, specialized transportation (paratransit) and a commuter vanpool program. WTA serves the City of Bellingham as well as Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine/Birch Bay, the Lummi Nation, Sudden Valley, Kendall, Everson, Nooksack and Sumas. It also cooperates with Skagit Transit in neighboring Skagit County to provide service between Bellingham and Mount Vernon. WTA plays a major role transporting students to and from Western Washington University as well as to three other local colleges, middle schools and high schools.

WTA's fleet includes 60 full-size buses (including eight hybrid electric buses), 37 specialized transportation minibuses, and 39 commuter vans. It also operates four transit centers: Bellingham and Cordata stations in Bellingham, Ferndale Station and Lynden Station. From 2002 to 2012, WTA's ridership increased by 84 percent. It provided 4.9-million fixed-route boardings – approximately 17,000 per weekday – in 2012.

WCOG's [Whatcom Smart Trips](#) program helps community members make more of their trips by walking, bicycling, sharing rides or riding the bus. The program is administered and operated by WCOG with the support of WTA, WSDOT and the City of Bellingham. Whatcom Smart Trips is a collection of programs and tools that assist people in using sustainable modes of transportation and maximizing the use of sustainable transportation infrastructure, especially the City of Bellingham's growing network of bicycle lanes.

4. Aviation

[Bellingham International Airport](#) (BLI), operated by the Port of Bellingham, is located three miles northwest of Bellingham. It is the third-largest commercial airport in Washington, behind Seattle-

Tacoma (SeaTac) and Spokane international airports, and is one of the fastest growing in the United States, serving more than 1.2-million passengers annually. Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air, Frontier Airlines, San Juan Airlines and Northwest Sky Ferry provide commercial service to destinations including Las Vegas, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Denver, as well as to SeaTac for connecting domestic and international flights. BLI is also one of two general aviation airports serving Whatcom County, along with [Lynden Municipal Airport](#).

5. Marine

Whatcom County is served by the Port of Bellingham. The Port was established in 1920 to bring the harbor under the administration of a single organization in order to address the confusing array of docks, including those owned by private lumber mills, shipyards and canneries.

The Port serves the [marine trades and fishing industry](#) with a variety of services including ship- and boatyards, a large dry dock, floating cranes and more than 200 commercial slips. The [Bellingham Shipping Terminal](#) (BST) specializes in break bulk and clean bulk cargos. With 1,250 feet of dock space, more than 85,000 square feet of covered storage and 35 acres of available upland, BST is a full-service marine terminal that has the flexibility to customize its services to meet its clients' needs. BST is also available as a long-term lay-up facility for large ocean-going vessels of all kinds. Other services provide by BST include:

- Stevedoring/longshore services
- Fuel
- Potable water
- Voyage repairs
- Ship stores
- Tank cleaning
- Tug services
- Vacuum truck
- Security
- Shore Power

[Squalicum Harbor](#) in Bellingham is a full-service marina on the north shore of Bellingham Bay. It is the home port to more than 1,400 commercial and pleasure boats, including a large charter boat fleet. The newly renovated [Blaine Harbor](#) has nearly 600 state-of-the-art boat slips for commercial and pleasure boats. The harbor has permanent moorage as well as more than 700 feet of visitor moorage.

[Bellingham Cruise Terminal](#) is located in the City's Fairhaven District. It is the southern terminus of the [Alaska Marine Highway System](#). Seasonal foot ferries and charter vessels also provide connections to the San Juan Islands. The Cruise Terminal provides safe and convenient passenger facilities for more than 200,000 passengers each year.

Whatcom County provides [ferry service from Gooseberry Point to Lummi Island](#) for walk-on passengers and vehicles on the County's ferry boat, the *Whatcom Chief*. The City of Blaine's historic 17-passenger ferry *MV Plover* carries passengers during the summer months from the City's main dock across Drayton Harbor to the Semiahmoo resort dock.

The Gateway Pacific Terminal (GPT) project proposed by Pacific International Terminals, Inc., calls for a multi-user, import/export marine terminal for bulk, break-bulk and other marine cargoes. The project would include new rail loop tracks, covered and open terminal storage areas, and a pier and trestle connection to the terminal storage area. The project area is in the Cherry Point Industrial UGA, between the BP Refinery to the north and the Intalco Works to the south. At full capacity, GPT would export 54 million metric tons per year of bulk commodities – including up to 48 million metric tons of coal annually – and could generate 18 train trips (nine round trips) per day, and 18 or more deep-draft “Capesize” vessel trips per week.

Whatcom County, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Army Corps of Engineers – serving as co-leads – are producing a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed GPT as well as the associated Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Custer Spur track expansion. The County and Ecology must follow the State Environmental Policy Act while the Corps must follow the National Environmental Policy Act. The joint process enables the co-lead agencies to avoid duplication when the two laws overlap and to meet each statute’s separate requirements.

6. Railroad

[Amtrak’s Cascades](#) line offers two daily northbound trips from Bellingham’s Fairhaven Station to Vancouver, B.C., and two southbound trips to Seattle, as well as a midday Thruway Bus trip to Seattle to connect to other Amtrak services.

The Burlington Northern & Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway operates freight rail lines in Whatcom County. BNSF’s principal West Coast rail line runs through Bellingham, Ferndale and Blaine. There are also spur lines serving the Cherry Point industrial area, the Bellingham Shipping Terminal, the State Route 9 corridor between Sumas and Sedro-Woolley, and Lynden.

7. U.S. – Canada Border

The [International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program \(IMTC\)](#) is a U.S.-Canadian coalition of business and government agencies that identifies and promotes improvements to mobility and security for the five border crossings that connect Whatcom County and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, which together are known as the Cascade Gateway. The Cascade Gateway ports of entry are among the busiest and most economically important along the entire border. The goals of the IMTC program are to:

- Facilitate a forum for ongoing communication among agencies on both sides of the border that affect regional, cross-border transportation, safety and security.
- Coordinate planning of the Cascade Gateway as a transportation and inspection system, rather than as individual border crossings.
- Improve and distribute traffic data and information.
- Identify and pursue improvements to infrastructure, operations, and information technology.

Since 1997, IMTC has served as a model of international cooperation and coordination on border issues and has helped secure approximately \$40-million (USD) from U.S. and Canadian partners to pursue the goals listed above. More than 50 organizations from both sides of the border participate in IMTC.

D. Media

The Bellingham Herald is Whatcom County's only locally-based daily newspaper; it offers print and on-line editions. There are also several weekly and monthly newspapers serving specific areas of the County. *The Ferndale Record* focuses on Ferndale, *The Northern Light* serves Blaine and Birch Bay, *The Lynden Tribune* serves Lynden and the *All Point Bulletin* serves Point Roberts. There are also two publications focused on business in Whatcom County: the *Bellingham Business Journal* and *Business Pulse* magazine.

Whatcom County is part of the Seattle television market, although it is home to two broadcast television stations licensed in Bellingham. KVOS Channel 12 has been on the air since 1953 serving northwest Washington as well as the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island in B.C. KBCB Channel 24 is a ShopHQ (formerly "ShopNBC") station, although as of October 2014 its owner – Venture Technologies Group LLC – had accepted an offer from 21st Century Fox, Inc. to purchase it. Bellingham TV Channel 10 is operated by the City of Bellingham on Comcast to provide residents and others with information on City government and activities.

The County is served by three local AM and six local FM radio stations, and it also receives clear broadcasts from stations in Metro Vancouver as well as Victoria, B.C.

E. Grant and Finance Resources for Local Governments and Businesses

Like many government-funded activities, financial support for economic development has declined with the sharp downturn in the U.S. economy since about 2009. However, resources are still available to provide assistance to local governments and other agencies engaged in economic development activities.

1. State and Federal Agencies

A number of Washington State and federal agencies provide technical assistance, coordination, training and funding to assist community and economic development efforts. These are primarily programs that provide direct assistance to governmental units and qualified not-for-profit organizations engaged in economic development:

State Agencies:

- Washington State Department of Commerce, Community Economic Revitalization Board
- Washington State Public Works Board
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Transportation Improvement Board
- Washington State County Road Administration Board

Federal Agencies:

- Department of Commerce, U.S. Economic Development Administration
- Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
- Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development and Planning
- U.S. Small Business Administration loan programs
- U.S. Department of Labor

- U.S. Department of Transportation
- U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' EB-5 Foreign Investment Program, operated locally by the Whatcom Opportunities Resource Center.

2. Local Public Finance

Local resources available to support economic development include:

- Whatcom County Economic Development Investment Program
- General Obligation and Revenue Bonds
- Local Improvement Districts
- Public Facility Districts

In addition, some cities use special fees (impact fees, business taxes, etc.) for projects and capital improvements. Washington's tax code governs how communities can utilize these resources.

3. Incentives for Business Development

In Washington there are several different State [tax incentive programs](#) available to businesses, including the following:

- Machinery and Equipment Sales and Use Tax Exemption
- Rural County/Community Empowerment Zones Business and Occupation (B&O) Credit for New Employees
- Sales/Use Tax Exemption on Purchases of Server Equipment and Power Infrastructure for Use in Eligible Rural Data Centers
- B&O Tax Exemption for Manufacturing Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, Dairy and Seafood Products
- Sales/Use Tax Exemption on Machinery and Equipment Used to Generate Electricity Using Renewable Energy
- Washington Customized Employment Training Program (B&O Tax Credit)

SECTION 5: EXISTING PLANS

This CEDS draws from the goals and strategies contained in plans prepared by those entities within the region which are engaged in economic development or provide support for that process: Whatcom County, the seven cities, the Port, the Northwest Economic Council and various other non-governmental organizations. While numerous plans devoted specifically to economic development have been described in this CEDS, other plans and projects also impact efforts to grow the regional and local economies.

A. Local Comprehensive Plans

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted by State Legislature in 1990 to address the threat that uncoordinated and unplanned growth posed to the environment, sustainable economic development and the quality of life in Washington. It is codified in Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington. The GMA requires state and local governments to manage Washington's growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, preparing comprehensive plans and implementing them through capital investments and development regulations.

This approach to growth management is unique among states. Rather than centralizing planning and decision-making at the state level, the GMA built on Washington's strong traditions of local government control. The GMA established state goals, set deadlines for compliance, offered direction on how to prepare local comprehensive plans and regulations and set forth requirements for early and continuous public participation. Within the framework provided by the mandates of the GMA, local governments have many choices regarding the specific content of comprehensive plans and implementing development regulations.

Whatcom County worked with all seven of its cities to complete countywide planning policies in 1993, which have subsequently been revised. All local planning jurisdictions adopted these policies, which provide the framework for the development of the County and city comprehensive plans. Policies regarding economic development encourage the development and expansion of businesses to provide family-wage jobs; ensure an adequate supply of land and infrastructure to support industrial development, and; retain natural resource-based employment, including agriculture, forestry and mining. These policies also emphasize the protection of the County's environment and overall quality of life.

Whatcom County and all seven of its cities have comprehensive plans. There are also "sub-area" plans for unincorporated Birch Bay and Point Roberts. As of April 2014 the seven cities were in compliance with the requirements of the GMA; Whatcom County was one of 15 counties in Washington that was not. This is the result of findings by the Washington State Growth Management Hearings Board upholding assertions made in a petition that the amendments and development regulations adopted by the County to implement the Comprehensive Plan were not compliant with GMA with respect to its [Rural Element](#). The County is actively working to bring its Comprehensive Plan into compliance.

The GMA lists [13 planning goals](#), each of which must be considered in local plans. Comprehensive plans are intended to support the GMA's economic development goal to:

“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.”

Presently, four of the eight jurisdictions’ comprehensive plans included a section addressing economic development, although many related elements (land supply, infrastructure to support economic development, etc.) are found in other sections of those plans.

Table 11: Whatcom County Growth Management Plans

Jurisdiction	Approved or last amended	Includes economics or economic development section?
Whatcom County	2014	YES
Bellingham	2006	YES (added to Plan in 2013)
Blaine	2006	YES
Everson	2004	NO
Ferndale	2012	YES
Lynden	2005	YES
Nooksack	2004	NO
Sumas	2004	NO
Sub-areas:		
Bellingham Urban Fringe	2009	NO
Birch Bay	2009	YES
Foothills	2011	YES
Lummi Island	2009	NO
Pt. Roberts	2001	YES

As required by the GMA, Whatcom County and the seven incorporated cities in the County are in the process of, or are preparing to, update their comprehensive plans, which must be completed by 2016.

B. Other Plans and Projects

In addition to the various economic development and comprehensive plans already discussed, several other plans and projects have been completed or are underway that impact – to one degree or another – economic development in Whatcom County:

Port of Bellingham

- [Bellingham International Airport Master Plan Update](#) (2004)
- [Blaine Wharf District Master Plan](#) (2007)
- [Bellingham's Waterfront District Sub-Area Plan](#) (2013)
- [Fairhaven Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements](#) (2008)
- [Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Public Access Plan](#) (2011)

Whatcom Council of Governments

- [Whatcom Transportation Plan](#) (2012)
- [Bakerview to Grandview Sub-regional Transportation Analysis](#) (underway 2014)
- [Employment Access and Coordinated Human Service Plan](#) (2014)
- [Border Circulation Analysis](#) (2010)
- [NEXUS Marketing](#) (2012)
- [FAST Enhancements](#) (underway 2014)
- [Border Access Improvements: FAST and NEXUS Lanes](#) (2007)
- [Border Data Warehouse](#) (underway 2014)
- [Advanced Traveler Information Systems](#) (underway 2014)

Northwest Workforce Council

- [Northwest Workforce Council 2013-2017 Local Integrated Workforce Plan](#) (2013)

Miscellaneous

- [Kendall/Columbia Valley Connectivity Plan](#) (pending notice of award of WSDOT funding) – This plan would address the lack of pedestrian and bicycle access in the Kendall area. Partners include Whatcom County, WSDOT, National Park Service, WCOG and community groups.
- [Glacier Trail](#) – This project would address a number of safety and mobility concerns along SR 542 (Mt. Baker Highway) near residential and tourist areas in central Whatcom County.

SECTION 6: WHATCOM COUNTY’S PREFERRED ECONOMIC FUTURE AND ACTION PLAN

The preferred economic future for Whatcom County is drawn from *Whatcom Futures: Toward a Sustainable Economy*. The development of *Whatcom Futures* began in 2010, when the Whatcom Community Foundation (WCF) received an “Innovation Fund” grant from The Convergence Partnership, a collaboration of philanthropic organizations from across the nation that focuses on creating healthy communities. Using this grant, WCF engaged the Northwest Economic Council (NWECC) to take the lead in developing *Whatcom Futures*. NWECC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation established in 1984 to facilitate economic development in Whatcom County.

In 2012, more than 90 leaders and representatives from businesses, local governments and not-for-profit organizations helped shape the visions that constitute *Whatcom Futures*. This effort was also strongly influenced by public input, which was gathered in a variety of ways, including community forums in Kendall, Lynden, Blaine and Bellingham that drew more than 100 Whatcom County residents and generated candid, thoughtful ideas about draft vision statements and their significance to the participants’ specific communities as well as to the County as a whole. This input was central to the development of *Whatcom Futures*.

Based on three overarching vision statements and accompanying action items, NWECC developed this preferred economic future for Whatcom County using an approach that considered land use, community health and equitable access to economic opportunity. These visions for a prosperous and sustainable economic future reflect the Region’s shared values and the unique physical and geographic characteristics that make Whatcom County such a special place to live. They should inform the decision-making processes of those entities responsible for economic development and associated activities such as land-use planning and public health, including Whatcom County government, the seven cities within it and other entities from both the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Economic development, land-use planning and community health constitute the three linked elements of a vibrant economy and are the foundation of the Region’s preferred economic future. They can be described as follows.

- *Economic development* involves the establishment of policies that support a region’s business sector, allowing for the creation of wealth, provision of jobs, tax revenue to support local governments and an improved quality of life for individuals and the community.
- *Land-use planning* is concerned with the allocation of land for housing, businesses, schools, recreation, transportation, infrastructure, agriculture and everything else that encompasses the built environment.
- *Community health* embraces the total health and wellbeing of the people in our region, including access to needed health services (physical, mental and dental), healthy foods, recreation and exercise opportunities, sustainable employment, affordable housing and safe neighborhoods.

By properly coordinating these elements, Whatcom County will be well positioned for sustained economic growth that provides opportunity for all who want to work while maintaining environmental quality and facilitating healthy outcomes for all of the County’s citizens.

Indeed, these elements are visible in the three vision statements that constitute the County's preferred economic future:

- Whatcom County values its business community, which is principally responsible for the continued growth in jobs and incomes in the region.
- Whatcom County and its constituent communities have vibrant and dynamic economies where the region's abundant natural resources are cherished and protected.
- Whatcom County has an outstanding quality of life where all residents have opportunities to thrive and the support they need to seize those opportunities.

While not part of this CEDS, it should be noted that the *Community Health Improvement Plan* (CHIP) is the companion to *Whatcom Futures*. The Whatcom Community Foundation provided financial support to enable the United Way of Whatcom County, the Chuckanut Health Foundation, St. Joseph PeaceHealth Medical Center, the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County to partner to address several critical concerns identified in the Community Health Assessment. The priorities of CHIP emphasize three areas essential to improving the community's health: investing in the foundations of lifelong physical and mental well-being in our youngest children; creating communities that foster health-promoting activities; and broadening health care to promote wellness outside of the medical system.

An outline of the *Community Health Improvement Plan* can be accessed at <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/health/ch/pdf/communityhealthimprovementplanoutline.pdf>.

TABLE 12: VISION STATEMENTS AND ACTION ITEMS

<p>Vision Statement No. 1. Whatcom County values its business community – which is principally responsible for the Region’s strong job market and the living wages it provides – and is committed to its growth.</p>
<p>Identify, preserve and invest in our infrastructure and other physical assets to enhance the economic competitiveness of the region.</p>
<p>Support the retention, growth and attraction of businesses in the region.</p>
<p>Understand the role of Whatcom’s manufacturing and heavy industrial sectors in diversifying the regional economy and providing living-wage jobs for the County’s skilled blue-collar workforce.</p>
<p>Improve and expedite permitting processes so that prospective businesses will have a clear understanding of their requirements and more certainty with regard to the timeline for approval.</p>
<p>Recognize and enhance the economic linkages between Whatcom County and our neighbors in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.</p>
<p>Encourage and support the enhancement of Whatcom County’s workforce.</p>
<p>Vision Statement No. 2. Whatcom County and its constituent communities have vibrant and dynamic economies where the region’s abundant natural resources are cherished and protected.</p>
<p>Foster economic prosperity in a way that promotes the creation of opportunities that align with our shared desire to enjoy and sustain our natural environment.</p>
<p>Support the efforts of Whatcom County’s smaller communities to grow their economies while retaining the rural character cherished by their residents.</p>
<p>Understand that the Region’s environmental resources are important economic assets that draw people here and are integral to Whatcom County’s strong sense of place.</p>
<p>Ensure that the County’s land-use plans and those developed by the region’s local governments – as well as the regional transportation plan developed by the Whatcom Council of Governments – are informed by adopted economic development goals.</p>
<p>Encourage local governments, citizens’ groups and businesses to work together in developing economic strategies and plans.</p>
<p>Vision Statement No. 3. Whatcom County has an outstanding quality of life where all residents have opportunities to thrive and the support they need to seize those opportunities.</p>
<p>Ensure that approved land-use plans and economic strategies consider the health and quality of life of all of Whatcom County’s residents.</p>
<p>Support health initiatives that enhance the physical and emotional well-being of Whatcom’s residents.</p>
<p>Advocate for and support the region’s educational institutions, especially its university and colleges.</p>

Vision Statement No. 1. Whatcom County values its business community – which is principally responsible for the Region’s strong job market and the living wages it provides – and is committed to its growth.

A. *Identify, preserve and invest in our infrastructure and other physical assets to enhance the economic competitiveness of the region.*

The importance of functional, well-maintained infrastructure to successful economic development cannot be overstated. Businesses and residents rely on the region’s highways, power grid, water and sewer systems and telecommunications network – among others – to meet their own needs and, equally as important, the needs of their customers. Inadequate and/or failing infrastructure can disrupt commerce in the short term – as was illustrated following the collapse in May 2013 of the bridge that carries Interstate 5 over the Skagit River – and impedes investment and economic growth over the long term.

Responsibility for the construction and maintenance of infrastructure is assigned to both the public and private sectors, and with regard to the former is dispersed among local governments, water and sewer districts, the Public Utility District, Whatcom County and the State. Despite the inherent difficulty of coordinating infrastructure improvements and maintenance among the disparate entities responsible for those activities, such coordination would be beneficial, especially if it is informed by the region’s adopted economic development goals. A single countywide, multi-jurisdictional and multi-organizational inventory of infrastructure and other critical assets should be developed and mapped using a geographic information system (GIS), following all requisite security protocols. Such an inventory should include:

- Principal and minor arterial roads
- Existing and planned industrial parks and the services available by location (freight rail access, deep-water access, water and sewer, etc.)
- Industrial and commercially-zoned land
- Water and sewer systems, and the capacity of those systems
- Port and other maritime facilities
- Commercial and general aviation airports
- Electrical distribution capacity
- Areas served by “green” energy (hydropower, solar, geothermal, wind, etc.)
- Areas with broadband Internet access
- Areas with reliable cellular phone service
- PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center and other healthcare providers
- Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College, Western Washington University and Whatcom Community College
- Bicycle lanes and maintained trails
- Public libraries and services
- Parkland and recreational facilities.

A GIS-based inventory would facilitate a comprehensive and coordinated approach to prioritizing infrastructure improvements across jurisdictional and organizational boundaries. For example, it could identify opportunities where existing or planned facilities could be shared, which would save limited public funds and maximize efficiency. Such an inventory would also aid business recruitment

efforts by identifying locations for prospects, either on demand or in advance as part of a strategic planning process.

B. Support the retention, growth and attraction of businesses in the region.

Whatcom County benefits from a relatively diversified economy that includes retail, manufacturing, resource extraction, higher education, agriculture, tourism, health care and more. Among its eleven largest employers are representatives of the private (Alcoa Intalco Works, BP), public (Western Washington University, Bellingham City School District, Whatcom County) and not-for-profit (PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center) sectors. Of course, as in most places, small businesses are the mainstay of the regional economy, and those in Whatcom County offer a remarkable variety of products and services.

Maintaining a business is never easy – even in the best of times – and growing one is even harder. With the ongoing economic downturn that began in 2008, businesses of all sizes have found it even more difficult than usual to keep their doors open, and unfortunately, many have failed. Many more, though, are weathering the storm and some have even prospered, which speaks to the diligence and resourcefulness of Whatcom County’s business owners, managers and workers.

Keeping businesses here that currently call Whatcom home must be a priority at all levels of government. There should be open and regular dialogue between business owners and local and County officials in a spirit of cooperation, along with a recognition that a healthy business climate is essential to maintaining Whatcom’s outstanding quality of life. Additionally, local governments, along with the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce & Industry and other business advocacy organizations, should encourage the region’s State and Federal legislators to avoid imposing unnecessary regulations and other burdens on business, especially in such a challenging economic climate.

Of course, programs that help existing businesses grow or attract new businesses to the region must be maintained and strengthened, and should build on the spirit of entrepreneurship that has spawned so many business success stories in Whatcom County. This function rests primarily with the Port of Bellingham, which serves as the designated “Associate Development Organization” for the County. The efforts of the Port should be supported and augmented by resources from the County and other local governments, the Chamber, the Northwest Economic Council and other organizations with the tools and capacity to assist in this critically important endeavor.

C. Understand the role of Whatcom’s manufacturing and heavy industrial sectors in diversifying the regional economy and providing living-wage jobs for the County’s skilled blue-collar workforce.

Whatcom County has a long, rich history as an industrial area, which continues to this day. Indeed, despite the long-term trend of manufacturing leaving the U.S., Whatcom has retained a significant industrial and manufacturing sector. That small organic farms and an aluminum smelter can coexist in the County illustrates the diversity of Whatcom’s economy as well as the range of opportunities for workers.

Skilled blue-collar workers in particular benefit by the presence of manufacturing. With the relatively high cost of living in Whatcom County, manufacturing and industrial employers are among the few that provide jobs with wages that enable blue collar workers to live in the County. In fact,

Bellingham Technical College's Engineering and Advance Manufacturing programs offer degrees that are in demand by industries in Whatcom – and nationwide – with starting salaries for new graduates in excess of \$50,000 a year.

Manufacturers also support the regional economy by sourcing materials and other supplies from smaller local businesses, through the various taxes that they pay and by the financial support they provide to regional not-for-profit organizations.

D. Improve and expedite permitting processes so that prospective businesses will have a clear understanding of their requirements and more certainty with regard to the timeline for approval.

Clarity and consistency in land-use permitting are highly valued by business prospects, but the perception of that process in some of the jurisdictions in the County is that it is difficult to navigate, presents unanticipated roadblocks and that enforcement is too subjective. Whether this is the reality, merely a perception or something in between, it nonetheless impedes the region's business recruitment, retention and expansion efforts by casting the County as being unfriendly to business.

Land-use regulations and permitting processes should be reviewed regularly by all of the region's jurisdictions to ensure that they are reasonable, clearly written and predictable. They should be developed to be as permissible as possible while still ensuring that public safety and environmental quality standards are met. The County and cities should also consider a service model whereby applicants are assigned a specific staff person who guides them through the process, similar to a case manager. This individual would be the applicant's sole point of contact, which would reduce confusion, frustration and the time between starting the application process and the granting of permits, since he or she would also be responsible for bringing together all of the various departments involved in the permitting process. Given the importance to local governments of economic development for tax revenue generation and maintaining the quality of life, there should be active oversight of the process at the highest levels of the various governments.

E. Recognize and enhance the economic linkages between Whatcom County and our neighbors in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

Whatcom County is blessed by geography, and no more so than by its adjacency to the Vancouver metropolitan area. Thanks to bi-national cooperation facilitated principally through WCOG's International Mobility & Trade Corridor (IMTC) Program, the international border is porous enough to allow for a robust infusion of Canadian trade dollars into the County from Lower Mainlanders attracted to the lower cost of goods here and, in recent years, an exchange rate that favors Canadian shoppers. The convenience of Bellingham International Airport (BLI) to much of the Lower Mainland combined with the lower cost of plane tickets in the U.S. have contributed to making BLI the fastest-growing airport in the country. Similarly, Whatcom County's lower commercial real estate costs compared to those in B.C. – as well as the enhanced access to the U.S. market that a Canadian company enjoys with a U.S. location – has resulted in significant Canadian business investment in the County. Clearly, there can be no doubt that Whatcom's economy would be significantly weakened without the ongoing participation in it of our Canadian neighbors.

All economic development plans must recognize the importance of the Lower Mainland to Whatcom County and all of its communities and foster that relationship. Ongoing analysis of the efficiency and security of the County's five border crossings must continue under the auspices of the IMTC

Program, and when barriers that impede trade are identified they should be addressed as quickly as possible. Proposed legislation that would likely restrict trade between the world's two largest trading partners – originating on either side of the border – should be carefully tracked, and when such legislation coming from Congress is deemed to be onerous or unnecessary, vigorously opposed. Consideration should also be given to establishing a Whatcom County “trade mission” in B.C. to promote business investment in the County.

F. *Encourage and support the enhancement of Whatcom County's workforce.*

The availability of a motivated and skilled workforce is critical to the economic well-being of Whatcom County. Workforce development programs promote educational attainment and facilitate the acquisition of skills that allow workers the opportunity to pursue satisfying careers in Whatcom County. Collaboration among workforce development organizations, economic development agencies and the region's educational institutions at all levels is necessary to achieve the dual goals of having a skilled workforce that will draw employers to the region and enabling people to build productive and satisfying lives here. As the County's economy continues to grow and evolve, this coordination must continue to ensure that the pipeline of students graduating from the County's educational institutions is well matched and prepared for the types of jobs employers will need.

Vision Statement No. 2. Whatcom County and its constituent communities have vibrant and dynamic economies where the region's abundant natural resources are cherished and protected.

A. *Foster economic prosperity in a way that promotes the creation of opportunities that align with our shared desire to enjoy and sustain our natural environment.*

Whatcom County is a special place characterized and largely defined by its natural environment, which includes the mountains of the North Cascades, scenic rivers and streams, dense forests, remarkably productive farmland, bays and even a volcano. These ecosystems are home to a diverse assortment of wildlife, including bald eagles, orcas, mountain goats, cougars and moose. Without question, Whatcom's abundance of natural assets and its wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities are internationally recognized and draw people to the County. Snowboarding, paddling, snow-machining, fishing, sailing, climbing, hiking, hunting; all of these activities and more are available in the County, and it is entirely possible to engage in more than just one of them in a single day. It is not hyperbole to call Whatcom an outdoorsman's paradise.

Of course, most people need a job that provides a salary or pays wages that are high enough to enable them and their families to live in such a special place, and a sufficient number of those jobs will only be available if there is a healthy and growing local economy. In addition to the jobs it creates, a strong local economy is essential to fund the operation and maintenance of essential infrastructure and to provide other critical community services.

Growing and diversifying Whatcom County's economy is essential, but that growth must not occur at the expense of those attributes that make people want to come and continue living here. Offices, research facilities, retail, tourism and industry – including heavy industry – can and should be accommodated in the County, but great care must be taken to ensure that those enterprises will be responsible stewards of Whatcom's environmental assets.

B. Support the efforts of Whatcom County's smaller communities to grow their economies while retaining the rural character cherished by their residents.

Despite the presence of Bellingham – Washington's twelfth largest city – Whatcom is a rural county. In 2013, about 43 percent of Whatcom's residents lived in unincorporated areas of the County, and when the population of the four eastern cities of Everson, Lynden, Nooksack and Sumas is added to that of the unincorporated areas, that figure rises to about 52 percent. In fact, most of the communities in the North Cascades foothills – such as Acme, Deming, Glacier and Maple Falls – have only a few hundred residents each. Yet it is this rural character that draws so many people to Whatcom County, and it is cherished not just by the residents of those small communities but by almost everyone who calls Whatcom home.

Preserving the rural, agricultural character of the County's small communities is a widely-held value in Whatcom. Although farming cannot provide enough living-wage jobs for the residents of those areas, preserving productive farmland and encouraging its cultivation will maintain the County's agricultural heritage while supporting tourism and providing locally-grown produce for the Region's food processing industry, institutional markets, restaurants and direct sales to consumers.

Of course, it is essential that the residents of those communities have reasonable access to jobs, shopping, government services and other needs. Several impediments to diversifying and growing the economies of Whatcom's rural communities have been identified, including a lack of communication infrastructure (especially high-speed internet and reliable cell phone service) and a limited inventory of retail, commercial and industrial buildings with adequate utilities in which to locate businesses.

Identifying and addressing impediments to investment in rural Whatcom County is essential if these communities are going to remain desirable places to live. It should also be understood that there are tradeoffs when one chooses to live in a rural community, which most residents of those places understand and accept. For these reasons, rural economic development efforts should be led at the local level – with support from the County and other appropriate entities – since the residents of these areas understand best the strengths and weaknesses of where they live and how they want to see their specific communities develop.

C. Understand that the Region's environmental resources are important economic assets that draw people here and are integral to Whatcom County's strong sense of place.

The environment of Whatcom County is one of its principal economic assets. People are drawn here by the natural beauty, clean air and abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities. Whatcom has also been recognized as one of the nation's up-and-coming retirement destinations, largely due to its beautiful setting. Indeed, natural features rank high among Whatcom's best known assets and any regional economic strategy must explicitly identify how these assets serve economic growth.

The economic value of Whatcom's natural resources manifests itself in numerous ways. For instance, the County is the top producer of raspberries in the U.S. and a leading producer of other types of berries as well as dairy products, fish and shellfish. However, it is important to note that a single resource will often have value to more than one economic sector. For instance, the presence of timberland supports eco-tourism as well as the forest products industry. The same can be said of farmland – which in addition to the produce it generates also facilitates *agri-tourism* – as well as the

region's fisheries, which support both commercial and sport fishing. Those resources also add to the attractiveness and overall quality of life of the region, which in turn serve business recruitment efforts. And, of course, the various industries that use those resources provide jobs, the wages from which support all of the other sectors of Whatcom's economy.

Whatcom's natural and recreational assets should be integral to its economic development efforts; they are a selling point and should be used as such. Resource management plans – whether for water, timber, soil and even air quality – should be informed to some degree by economic planning considerations, and vice versa. Industries that extract natural resources must also steward those resources with implementable plans for restoration, and when that is done well, those companies should be recognized and their story told. Land-use and transportation plans should acknowledge the County's rural and agricultural heritage and strive to retain the majority of its productive farmland.

D. Ensure that the County's land-use plans and those developed by the Region's local governments – as well as the regional transportation plan developed by the Whatcom Council of Governments – are informed by adopted economic development goals.

Transportation, land-use and economic development are inextricably linked to one another. For example, improved access resulting from a new or improved transportation facility can spur interest for new commercial development in the vicinity, which will increase the intensity of land uses in that area. For this reason, transportation, land-use and economic development planning must not occur in a vacuum, but rather, those initiatives should be closely coordinated.

The primary economic development guidance for local comprehensive plans and the regional long-range transportation plan should be the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which will be prepared by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) for Whatcom County, which is expected to be completed by the summer of 2014 and adopted by the County Council in the fall of that year. The CEDS itself will be informed by economic development plans developed by the County, the seven cities and the Port of Bellingham. The engagement of economic development planning staff in land-use and transportation planning would be beneficial in ensuring that those efforts take into consideration economic development goals and how land-use and transportation plans can aid in – or at least not detract from – their attainment.

E. Encourage local governments, citizens' groups and businesses to work together in developing economic strategies and plans.

Those government entities with responsibility for economic development planning – Whatcom County, the seven cities and the Port – should facilitate and effectively communicate opportunities for engagement in the process by residents and business leaders, who desire an understanding of how priorities are set and how the programs that result will work across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries to achieve established goals. Business owners and residents – the region's consumers – can also bring much needed real-life perspectives to the economic development planning process that simply cannot be acquired without their participation, and those perspectives should be reflected in the economic development sections of local comprehensive plans as well as in the CEDS. Both traditional and new media (blogs, online forums, social media, video streaming, etc.) should be utilized to maximize the public's awareness of and contribution toward economic development planning.

There must also be coordination among the various jurisdictions and the Port in the preparation of economic development plans. While the CEDS will lay out a vision for the entire county, it must also take into account existing local strategies. Similarly, once the CEDS is adopted by the County Council, subsequent local economic development plans should strive for consistency with it. Consistency across these various plans will reduce confusion on the part of business prospects, avoid costly – and frequently unproductive – competition between jurisdictions, and project the image that Whatcom County and its constituent jurisdictions are acting strategically and in concert in growing the regional economy. Such a multi-jurisdictional focus on a common set of outcomes will serve to align the jurisdictions’ efforts and – using common metrics – enable measurement of the degree to which countywide goals are being attained.

Vision Statement No. 3. Whatcom County has an outstanding quality of life where all residents have opportunities to thrive and the support they need to seize those opportunities.

A. *Ensure that approved land-use plans and economic strategies consider the health and quality of life of all of Whatcom County’s residents.*

The relationship between land-use and transportation planning to community health is a relatively recent subject of research, but that which has been conducted thus far points to a correlation which has been decades in the making. For example, the ubiquity of the automobile, social policies that led to the decline of neighborhood schools and sprawling residential land-use patterns have inhibited walking and biking, which coincides with increased rates of childhood obesity and a host of other negative health outcomes. Community health should be considered when land-use and transportation policies are established. Public health professionals can add value to land-use policymaking by identifying potentially adverse outcomes to community health. Bicycle, pedestrian and transit use should be considered in local and regional plans and included wherever the use of those modes would be practicable.

The County and local governments should adequately support the Whatcom Transportation Authority bus service and Whatcom Smart Trips, the regional transportation demand management program that has been remarkably successful at increasing the share of bike, pedestrian and transit trips in Whatcom County, and especially in Bellingham. Expansion of outdoor recreation infrastructure such as bike lanes on secondary streets, walking paths, and trails promotes community health and personal well-being. Land-use policies should recognize the importance of preserving open space and recreational areas to facilitate healthy, active lifestyles. Mixed-use development proposals that enable people to live, shop and recreate without having to leave the neighborhood should be encouraged when deemed to be viable.

B. *Support health initiatives that enhance the physical and emotional well-being of Whatcom’s residents.*

Healthy and well-adjusted citizens are essential to a strong community, and vice versa. In addition to the intrinsic value of having happy and healthy residents, those communities derive certain economic benefits through reduced spending on emergency care and treatment for chronic conditions. Providing access to medical and emotional health services – and especially preventative care – is a social responsibility that can, if managed well, offset some of its costs through savings in other public services.

Certain sectors of Whatcom's population face more barriers to obtaining healthcare than others, particularly elderly residents and those experiencing poverty. Access to medical clinics and physicians is also a concern for many residents of rural Whatcom County, especially those with limited or no access to transportation. Barriers to improving community health must be identified and a plan for removing or mitigating those barriers developed. Public health agencies are encouraged to engage and empower residents to take more control of their health and wellbeing. Providing greater access to recreational opportunities and healthy food, especially for children with limited access to them, should also be explored. The *Community Health Improvement Plan* addresses specific community health issues and strategies for individual and community action.

C. Advocate for and support the region's educational institutions, especially its university and colleges.

Among Whatcom County's many resources is its wealth of educational institutions, which include seven public school districts, numerous private schools, Bellingham Technical College (BTC), Northwest Indian College (NWIC), Western Washington University (Western), Whatcom Community College (WCC), and extension programs and satellite campuses of several other institutions. The ability to receive a quality education from Pre-K through post graduate study greatly enhances the quality of life in the County and is an important asset in recruiting businesses to come to the region. Indeed, strong public schools and the availability of higher education are among the principal attributes that prospects look for when considering relocation.

Beyond the civic responsibility to the region's children to see that they receive a good education, supporting the County's institutions of higher learning – especially its brick-and-mortar institutions (BTC, NWIC, WCC and Western) – is essential to the economic well-being of the County. Those schools support the regional economy in several ways. Western, WCC and BTC were the second, seventeenth and twenty-sixth largest employers, respectively, in the County in 2013, with a combined workforce of nearly 2,300 employees. These institutions – especially BTC and WCC – support workforce development by offering programs that provide highly-skilled workers to industries critical to the regional economy. And, of course, they educate young people (and many not so young) from Whatcom County as well as other parts of the State, the U.S. and the world. For their part, those institutions must continually strive to offer academic and occupational training that is relevant to both the regional and the world economies and that takes advantage of the County's location as well as its existing economic assets, such as programs that address refining, international trade, maritime trades, brewing and distilling, agriculture and recreation.

SECTION 7: METRICS

Performance measures will be tied directly to the economic, environmental and social outcomes contained in the three Vision Statements that guided the development of this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The Whatcom Council of Governments – in cooperation with federal, state and local agencies (especially those described in Section 4 of this CEDS) – will monitor the following activities year-over-year, beginning in 2016 and running through 2019, subject to availability of data:

- The amount of investment in infrastructure by Whatcom County, the seven cities, the Lummi and Nooksack tribes, the Port of Bellingham and Public Utilities District No. 1
- Net business starts and expansions by existing businesses
- Manufacturing employment
- Changes in the average time needed to obtain business-related permits, by jurisdiction
- Changes in traffic volumes of Canadians entering Whatcom County as a proxy for their participation in the regional economy
- Comparisons of the County’s unemployment rate with those of Washington State and the U.S.
- Comparisons of the amount of jobs created in Whatcom County to Washington State and the U.S. as a percentage of the working populations of each
- Changes in the populations of the County’s smaller communities
- Public health statistics for Whatcom County’s population compared to Washington State and the U.S.
- Changes in enrollment at Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College, Northwest Indian College and Whatcom Community College
- Comparisons of the County’s per capita income level with those of Washington State and the U.S.
- Comparisons of the degree of industry diversity in the County with those of Washington State and the U.S.
- Other indicators as needed.

Trends in these indicators and any significant changes in the economy will be monitored by the Whatcom Council of Governments and reported to the Whatcom County Executive’s office annually to facilitate timely revisions to the action items contained in this CEDS to ensure that it is effectively meeting regional goals.



Whatcom County
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2017 Project List

Prepared by the Whatcom Council of Governments
Approved by the Whatcom County Council, April 4, 2017

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Project Name	Location	Description of Project	Project Type	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
WHATCOM COUNTY					
Target Growth of Family Wage Employment	Whatcom County	Employ innovative techniques to recruit and develop a diversified mix of businesses for a broader economic base starting a forward focused marketing strategy to solicit inward investment from targeted industry sectors that are forecast to provide growth in the type of family wage jobs that the community is well positioned to support.	Economic Development	1,000,000 per annum Sunsets in 7 years	EDI
Courthouse Exterior	Whatcom County Courthouse	Repair failing roof and exterior	Public Works	4,799,000	EDI, REET I
State Street Remodel	1500 North State St.	Remodel for reorganization	Public Works	2,805,000	EDI/State St. Fund
Civic Center Remodel	322 N. Commercial	Remodel for reorganization	Public Works	2,765,000	Civic Center Fund
Girard Street Repair	509 Girard Street	Repair and upgrade building	Public Works	511,000	EDI
New Jail	Whatcom County	Construct new jail	Public Works	87,000,000	Bonds
New Sheriff's Office	Whatcom County	Construct new Sheriff's Office	Public Works	13,000,000	REET I
Existing Jail Remodel	Public Safety Building	New dayholding facility	Public Works	3,000,000	Bonds
Mental Health Triage Center	Whatcom County		Public Works	7,000,000	EDI, Behavioral Health Sales Tax Fund, North Sound BHO, Federal, State and local grants
Emergency Operations Center Building	Whatcom County	What-Comm changeover	Public Works	50,000	REET I
South Fork Park Development	Whatcom County	Install public restrooms, replace Nasset Creek Bridge, construct access road, parking and landscape, trail development	Public Works	1,145,000	REET II, Park Improvement Fund, State grant
Hovander Maintenance Building	Whatcom County	Construct new park maintenance building/operation efficiency	Public Works	275000	REET

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Birch Bay Beach Park Development	Whatcom County	Construct new waterfront park/recreation and tourism	Public Works	3,979,000	REET II, EDI, Grants, Capital Funds
Plantation Range HVAC	Plantation Range	Replace HVAC and roof, make improvements to building	Public Works	729,327	REET I, State grant
Silver Lake Park	Silver Lake Park	Utility, road, day-use and campground improvements	Public Works	2,380,000	REET II
Slater Road/Jordan Creek Bridge	Whatcom County	Replace failed culvert with bridge	Public Works	5,500,000	Road Fund
Nesset Farm House Restoration	Nesset Farm	Restore historical home	Public Works	125,000	Nesset Foundation
Lake Whatcom Trails	Lake Whatcom Park	Trail development	Public Works	443,000	State grant, donations
Lummi Island Overlook Deck	Lummi Island		Public Works	100,000	REET II
Smith Road/Northwest Road Roundabout	Whatcom County	Install roundabout	Public Works	5,000,000	Road Fund
Canyon Lake Comm. Forest		Access road repair	Public Works	135,000	REET II
Lighthouse Marine Park	Point Roberts	Deck/playground replacement	Public Works	250,000	REET II
Birch Bay Drive Pedestrian Facility	Birch Bay Drive	This is a 1.58 mile separate berm to provide soft-shore erosion protection, habitat enhancement, and to encourage pedestrian use along Birch Bay Drive.	Public Works	10,694,000	Federal grant, RF, EDI, Flood, BBWARM, REET II
BBWARM Harborview Road	Harborview Road	Culvert replacement	Public Works	95,000	REET II
BBWARM Cottonwood Drive	Cottonwood Drive	Drainage improvement	Public Works	85,000	REET II
Beaver Creek	Sudden Valley	This project will restore and repair eroded sections of Beaver Creek to reduce sediment from entering Lake Whatcom.	Public Works	565,000	REET II
Agate Heights Estate	Bay Lane	Stormwater improvements	Public Works	610,000	REET II, Flood Fund
Sudden Valley	Sudden Valley	Stormwater improvements	Public Works	640,000	REET II
Silver Beach Creek	Silver Beach	Stormwater improvements	Public Works	750,000	REET II, Flood Fund
Northshore Drive	East North Street	Stormwater improvements	Public Works	200,000	REET II
Lowell Drive and Cedarbrook Court	Lowell Drive & Cedarbrook Court	Stormwater improvements	Public Works	150,000	REET II
Slater Road/I-5 Interchange Improvements	Slater Road	Construct five roundabouts on Slater Road at its intersections with Northwest Road, Pacific Highway, northbound and southbound I-5 on-ramps and Rural Avenue to improve channelization and stop control.	Public Works	30,000,000	Federal, State and local funds; Developer contributions

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

CITY OF BELLINGHAM					
Railroad Safety Improvements	Bellingham	Safety improvements to at-grade rail crossings and elimination of other at-grade crossings throughout the City via grade separation.	Public Works	5,000,000	EDI, Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes, Vehicle Reg. Fees, Sales Tax, Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
Railroad Relocation	Bellingham	Relocation of the BNSF line currently running through the Waterfront District to the base of the bluff to minimize at-grade crossings on Cornwall Avenue and to free up significant square footage for redevelopment pursuant to the adopted Waterfront District Sub-area Plan. Relocation of the tracks involves improvements to Cornwall bridge for compliance purposes.	Public Works	50,000,000	EDI, Private funds, Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes, Vehicle Reg. Fees, Sales Tax, Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
City Center Parking Project	Bellingham	Planning and implementation of parking improvements to increase parking inventory to meet current and projected demand in support of a comprehensive district redevelopment project.	Planning and Public Works	8,100,000	EDI, general or revenue obligation bonds
City Center Redevelopment	Bellingham	Redevelop 600 West Holly Street and other city-owned properties into a mixed use development compatible with the sub-area plans in an effort to spur additional private sector development to increase housing and job opportunities.	Planning and Public Works	10,000,000	EDI, Targeted grants, CDBG, HOME, HUD 108 and other Federal, State, local and private funds
City Center and Urban Village Infrastructure	Bellingham	Construct critical infrastructure in Bellingham's Downtown, Old Town and Waterfront Districts and other urban villages, including streets, parks and utilities.	Public Works	20,000,000	EDI, Real Estate Excise Tax, Greenways Levy, Private Funds, Park Impact Fees, LIFT, Street and Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
Regional Wetland and Stormwater Facilities	Bellingham	Explore regional wetland alternatives such as mitigation programs and regional stormwater facilities when they can provide equal or better treatment to on-site facilities	Public Works	5,000,000	EDI, Private funds, and Federal, State and local funding sources

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Mahogany Street Connection	Bellingham	Mahogany is a critical to retail and industrial development between Northwest and Pacific Highway.	Public Works	6,000,000	Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes, Vehicle Registration Fees, Sales Tax, Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
Orchard Street Connection	Bellingham	This new east-west arterial and trail connection under I-5 will enhance regional transportation circulation for all modes between rapidly-growing northern Bellingham, St Joseph's Hospital, and central Bellingham.	Public Works	10,000,000	Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes, Vehicle Registration Fees, Sales Tax, Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
West Horton Road	Bellingham and Whatcom County	West Horton Road is an important east-west connection in the City's UGA.	Public Works	20,000,000 (Bellingham: \$5-million, Whatcom County \$15-million)	EDI, Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes, Vehicle Registration Fees, Sales Tax, Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
Major Recreational Facility	Whatcom County	Provide parking and visitor facilities for a major mountain biking destination.	Public Works	5,000,000	EDI, Real Estate Excise Tax, Greenways Levy, Private Funds, Parking Impact Fees, Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
Waterfront District Specific Utilities	Bellingham	Provide infrastructure for district utilities for more efficient heating, irrigation, Encogen heat capture, and potential hydropower generation.	Public Works	6,000,000	EDI, MTCA, Private funds, Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
CITY OF BLAINE					
Improved Interstate Highway Access – Interchange 274	Northwest Whatcom County and Pacific Highway Border Crossing	This project implements the FHWA/WSDOT-approved Interchange Justification Report improving I-5 access at Exit 274 by replacing partial interchange with a full interchange. Provides direct connection from Blaine industrial area to I-5, serves as alternate access to truck border crossing, and serves as a critical access point to south Blaine and Birch Bay.	Public Works and Economic Development	50,000,000	STP Regional Funds, TIGER Grant Funding, WSDOT, TIB, Developer Contributions

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Boblett Street and SR 543 (Truck Route) Signalization Improvements	Blaine and Pacific Highway Border Crossing	This is the first intersection on northbound SR 543 and is the primary corridor for all cross-border freight. The Boblett/SR 543 intersection has several challenges; including the signal itself which is an antiquated span wire which requires frequent repair. This project improves channelization, traffic signal and equipment for improved operation and pedestrian safety. Boblett St. serves the industrial zone to the east and Blaine K-12 school complex abutting on the west.	Public Works and Economic Development	1,200,000	STP Regional Funds, WSDOT, TIB
SR 543 Widening On-ramp to H Street R3, Boblett to H Street	Blaine and Pacific Highway Border Crossing	Project adds an additional northbound truck lane to SR 543. This lane would add capacity to alleviate severe queue length which backs onto I-5 multiple times a month at the border. It would also provide capability for TDM solutions such as dynamic lane assignment at the Boblett intersection.	Public Works and Economic Development	1,500,000	STP Regional Funds, WSDOT, TIB
Peace Portal/Bell Road Signalization	Blaine and Birch Bay	Traffic signal installation to improve safety and congestion at this location. Serves as primary corridor between Blaine, Birch Bay, and Semiahmoo Spit, as well as I-5 Exit 274 off-ramp. Involves reconfiguration of RR crossing. Currently stop-controlled.	Public Works	1,500,000	STP Regional Funds, TIB, Developer Contributions
Mitchell Avenue/H Street Signalization	Blaine	Traffic signal installation to improve safety and congestion at this location. Serves arterial connection between mid-point of H Street and Peace Portal Drive.	Public Works	750,000	STP Regional Funds, TIB, Developer Contributions
Marine Drive Improvements, Phase 3	Blaine and Port of Bellingham	Marine Drive Phase 3 will improve the section east of Marine Park which serves the Port's Industrial Commercial area and the Public Pier. This project restores a badly deteriorated seawall on the south and enhances the riprap on the north. It also includes the addition of a pedestrian boardwalk to link Marine Park to the public Fisherman's Pier.	Public Works and Economic Development	2,300,000	STP Regional Funds, TIB
Harvey Road/Sweet Road Transmission Improvements (18" Line)	Blaine and Northwestern Whatcom County	Upgrade potable water line capacity outside city limits serving portions of NW Whatcom county within Blaine Water Service Area.	Public Works	2,200,000	DOE Centennial Funds, USDA-RD Grant/Loan, PWTF

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

New 630' Zone Reservoir (East Blaine) and Booster Pump Station, Phases 1 & 2	Blaine	New reservoir establishing new high pressure zone to increase storage capacity and provide adequate pressure to underserved areas and residential/commercial development of east Blaine.	Public Works	7,000,000	DOE Centennial Funds, USDA-RD Grant/Loan, PWTF
Regional Stormwater Retention Facility and Wetland Mitigation for Manufacturing Zoning District	Blaine	The City of Blaine manufacturing area consists of a number of small (2-7 acre) sites that are fully served with City utilities. This project provides a regional stormwater facility and associated conveyance piping to mitigate the stormwater impacts on industrially zoned properties to encourage manufacturing interests to locate in Blaine and create jobs. Many of these parcels contain small, low quality wetlands that pose significant development challenges and restrictions. This project includes a Regional Wetlands area that would provide collective mitigation enhancing an existing wetland that supports a large bird population.	Public Works and Economic Development	2,000,000	EDI Grant, PWTF, Developer Contributions
Peace Portal Boardwalk – Connection Between H and G Street Plazas	Blaine	Construction of a pedestrian boardwalk along the marine bluff of the downtown district in order to capitalize on the unique shoreline location and rich commercial fishing history.	Public Works and Economic Development	1,000,000	EDA/City of Blaine, CZM, Ground Fish Grant, Other Federal/State/Local
Pedestrian Bridge from the Wharf District to Downtown Business District (H Street Plaza)	Blaine and Port of Bellingham	Design and construct a pedestrian bridge crossing the BNSF rail lines (existing easement) to link the Peace Portal Boardwalk with Wharf District. Connects marina, marine recreational and historical fishing area to the downtown business district uniquely situated on an overlooking marine bluff. This is a priority project in the joint City/Port Wharf District Master Plan.	Public Works and Economic Development	1,500,000	EDA/City of Blaine, Port of Bellingham, CZM, Ground Fish Grant, Other Federal/State/Local
Reconstruction of the Semiahmoo Lighthouse	Blaine	This project will serve as a major tourist attraction. The lighthouse will be constructed to approximate life-size scale from the original plans secured from archives in Washington DC. This is a priority project in the joint City/Port Wharf District Master Plan.	Economic Development	750,000	EDA/City of Blaine, Port of Bellingham, CZM, Ground Fish Grant, Other Federal/State/Local

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Marine Park Improvements	Blaine	Major waterfront park on the north side of Marine Drive. Site of City's new Lighthouse Point Water Reclamation Facility and future site of replica Semiahmoo Lighthouse. Restoration includes Whale Deck upgrades, outdoor theater improvements, trail paving, irrigation, and replacement of two birding shelters and addition of a festival/parking area. This is a priority project in joint City/Port Wharf District Master Plan.	Public Works and Economic Development	325,000	EDA/City of Blaine, Port of Bellingham, CZM, Ground Fish Grant, Other Federal/State/Local
Pintail Marsh and Cain Creek Restoration	Blaine	Restore functioning wetland boundary between the Wharf District and BNSF railroad right-of-way and restores the mouth of Cain Creek. This is a priority project in the joint City/Port Wharf District Master Plan.	Planning	850,000	EDA/City of Blaine, Port of Bellingham, CZM, Ground Fish Grant, Other Federal/State/Local
Marine Park Shoreline Restoration	Blaine	Stabilizes and improves habitat functions for 650 feet of Marine Park shoreline, and rehabilitates/controls invasive species on 700 feet of shoreline. This project protects the shoreline from continuing erosion that would ultimately threaten City utilities and critical wastewater treatment facilities. This is a priority project in the joint City/Port Wharf District Master Plan.	Planning	3,500,000	EDA/City of Blaine, Port of Bellingham, CZM, Ground Fish Grant, Other Federal/State/Local
CITY OF EVERSON					
Lincoln Street, Phases 1 & 2	Everson	Reconstruct and extend Lincoln Street from State Route 544 through the downtown commercial area to Blair Drive.	Public Works	2,100,000	City Street Fund, STP, TIB
Kirsch Drive Improvements	Everson	Reconstruct and extend Kirsch Drive from SR 544 to the extension of Lincoln Street	Public Works	725,000	City Street Fund, TIB
Everson Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade	Everson and Nooksack	Design and construction of a major upgrade to Everson Sewage Treatment Plant.	Public Works	4,500,000	Nooksack Sewer Fund; Everson Sewer Fund; CCWF; Washington RLF/EDA
Downtown Market Analysis	Everson	Conduct professional market analysis to identify demand for products and services and assess the downtown's ability to capture that demand.	Technical Assistance	20,000	Local funds; Port of Bellingham
Gas Station/Mini Mart	Everson	Prepare site selection materials and research potential investor (local or national) to determine interest in locating a gas station in Everson.	Planning	5,000	Local funds

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Everson Road Sewer Line	Everson	Upgrade existing 8" line for future growth on the southwest portion of the City and UGA.	Public Works	165,000	Local funds
Business Incubator	Everson	Conduct feasibility study and potentially purchase property, if deemed feasible by study, for a business incubator. Consider incorporating other local studies and projects such as an agricultural center.	Planning	15,000	EDA/Port of Bellingham; LMF; CERB
East Main Street Water Main Upgrade	Everson	Increase water main from 6 to 10 inches from Kirsch Dr. east to City limits, providing better pressure for fire protection and emergency uses with the City of Nooksack.	Public Works	1,200,000	LMF
East/West Connector	Everson	Future all-weather arterial connecting Mission Road and Everson-Goshen Road (SR 544), used as primary arterial to future UGA and light industrial area of South Everson.	Public Works and Business Development/ Finance	2,400,000	CDBG; GMA Planning Grant; CERB; EDA
CITY OF FERNDALE					
Utility Extension to Malloy/Grandview	Ferndale	The nature of current and future development in this area is a combination of retail but more importantly light industrial – a sector of the economy that is growing fast at the same time that the inventory of available land has now reached critical levels. Ferndale is one of the only jurisdictions with theoretical inventory within its UGA in close proximity to highway and rail transportation, but development cannot be initiated without these extensions. Opens up area for development, protects sensitive watersheds from existing development built to rural standards – [Grandview area], provides fire flow, etc.	Public Works	2,000,000	PWTF, Local, EDA, DWSRF

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Water Reservoir – Grandview Area (Fire Flow)	Ferndale	Significant undeveloped and underdeveloped areas exist in this manufacturing and industrial zoned area of the City and UGA. Development interest in this area appears high, but lacks appropriate water infrastructure to support the zoning and fire flow requirements associated with potential industrial and/or manufacturing uses. A collaborative effort is needed between the City of Ferndale and PUD#1 to serve the area with fire flow via a potable water supply system.	Public Works	6,000,000	PWTF, Local, EDA, DWSRF
Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades	Ferndale	City's wastewater treatment plant currently runs at close to 80% capacity during low demand periods and at capacity during high flow demand periods (Fall/Winter). Future plant expansion is required or a development moratorium will have to be considered in 2017-18 until expansion is scheduled and funded.	Public Works	10,000,000	Water Quality Grants, EDA, CERB, PWTF, DWSRF
Gateway Area Stormwater Conveyance Improvements (LaBounty Road and Main Street)	Ferndale	As a result of the City's Main Street Master Plan Planned Action EIS, action was identified that a regional drainage study was needed and was subsequently completed in 2014. As a result of that study several drainage areas in the 443 acre basin were determined to have insufficient stormwater runoff capacity. Several culverts need to be upsized in and around Main street and several ditch sections need to be reconstructed and expanded to meet the future runoff demands in the basin.	Public Works	1,750,000	DOE Water Quality Grants, Special Assessment, EDA, CERB, PWTF, Local Match
Right-of-Way Beautification and Landscaping Along Major Corridors	Ferndale	Main Street, Portal Way and Slater Road: The creation of attractive, unified landscaping along major corridors provides a sense of place and welcome for new development. Project would include staff and consultant time to develop a coordinated landscaping proposal, funding for materials and plants, and planting.	Public Works	300,000	TIB, TBD, Local, Federal/State

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Advance Mitigation Program	Ferndale	The Advance Mitigation Program would allow private development to mitigate impacts to low-to-medium quality wetlands and critical areas by paying into a fund to establish mitigation and enhancement areas to be established and maintained by the City of Ferndale. The mitigation and enhancement areas that will be utilized have been identified as having degraded habitat and/or of ecological importance to the City. In many cases, mitigation areas may be established with the assistance of private and public partnerships and may include opportunities for public education. Depending upon the specific mitigation area, local or regional Low Impact stormwater elements may also be integrated.	Public Works and Planning	75,000	Private and Public Development (self-sustaining once created)
Wayfinding Sign System	Ferndale	Establish a coordinated system of wayfinding signs for the purpose of guiding visitors, residents and businesses to their destinations (and other points of interest) within the City and the surrounding area. Coordinated wayfinding systems enable jurisdictions to improve traffic circulation, create a sense of place, improve the characterization of sub-areas and districts within a community, and reduce sign blight. As proposed, the City would establish a series of signs throughout the City that will provide directions to points of interest within the City. As part of this program a variety of existing signs would be removed and consolidated into the proposed wayfinding program. The City expects to coordinate with the Lummi Nation, Whatcom County, private businesses and the general public to identify important destinations within the Ferndale area and to development variations from the central theme of the wayfinding program.	Planning	75,000	Public and Private Partnerships, Local Funds, TBD, Economic Development Planning Grants, CDBG

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Thornton Overpass	Ferndale	Construction of an overpass over BNSF Railway tracks with connection to downtown and freeway interchange. This will significantly reduce Peak Hour Demand traffic on Main Street and improve development potential extensively in the surrounding area. It also greatly benefits I-5 access for residents and businesses in the subregion.	Public Works	20,000,000	Local Funds, TIB, State/Federal, TBD, EDI, TIFs
Planned Action EIS – Grandview Interchange	Ferndale	Complete Environmental Impact Statement and Planned Action Ordinance to spur business location at freeway interchange.	Planning	200,000	Economic Development Planning Grants, CDBG
Main Street/LaBounty Road Roundabout	Ferndale	Construct multi-lane roundabout to accommodate anticipated large retail development along and adjacent to Main Street.	Public Works	2,000,000	REET, EDI, State Grant, Federal Grant
Main Street/Axton Road Roundabout	Ferndale	Construct multi-lane roundabout to accommodate anticipated large retail development along Main Street/Axton Road.	Public Works	2,000,000	REET, EDI, State Grant Federal Grant
Interstate 5 Exit 262 Roundabouts	Ferndale	Construct on/off ramp roundabouts along I-5 at exit 262 where they intersect Main Street.	Public Works	4,000,000	State and Federal Grants; WSDOT Funding
LUMMI NATION					
No projects submitted					
CITY OF LYNDEN					
7 th Street Rehabilitation and Intersection Improvement	Downtown Historic Business District	Reconstruction of approximately 1,200 feet of roadway between Judson and Grover streets on the west edge of the Lynden Historic Business District. Improvements (signal or compact roundabout) at both intersections. Preliminary planning was done under a 2014 Port of Bellingham Small Cities grant.	Public Works	1,300,000	EDI; TIB; TBD; Other Federal, State or Local funds
4 th Street Extension	Downtown Historic Business District	Street improvements to extend 4th Street to the south from Front Street to provide vehicle and pedestrian access between Lynden’s Historic Downtown District and 25 acres of currently undeveloped commercial and residential zoned properties.	Public Works	700,000	EDI; Transportation Impact Fees; TBD; Federal, State and other local funds

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

West Main Street Improvements (Phase 2)	West Lynden	Reconstruct existing 20-foot roadway to an industrial street standard including curbs, gutters and sidewalks as well as utilities (water and storm drainage). Also, culvert and bridge replacement for an existing, uninhabited drainage ditch.	Public Works	2,530,000	EDI; Transportation Impact Fees; Federal, State and other local funds
Tromp Road Extension	West Lynden	New construction of a north-south connection between West Main Street to West Front and Birch Bay-Lynden Road. This project will include an industrial-standard street complete with curbs, gutters and sidewalks. All utilities, including water, sanitary sewer and stormwater conveyance have been constructed. This project will complete the connection between the northern portion of the City's industrial area to Birch Bay-Lynden Road, providing safe and efficient access to State Route 539 and I-5.	Public Works	1,150,000	Federal/State/Local funds
South Guide Meridian Road Sewer Service	West Lynden Commercial Area	Extension of sewer infrastructure to area fronting SR 539 and bounded to the south by the City limits; to the east by Fishtrap Creek, and; to the west by an extension of Berthusen Road, south of Birch Bay-Lynden Road. The west basin (west of SR 539) encompasses approximately 153 acres, and the east basin another 93 acres. A Port of Bellingham study prepared in 2015 identified preferred solutions.	Public Works and Economic Development.	4,000,000	EDI; City Sewer Utility Funds; Other Federal, State and Local funds.
City Wayfinding Signage/Branding Project	Main Travel Corridors and Trailways	Develop a Lynden City brand and associated amenities package which includes a cohesive design for City entrance signs, wayfinding, park and trail signage and amenities such as park benches. Create a site map identifying and prioritizing City gateways along major travel corridors. Develop a site plan for improvements at each gateway.	Planning	150,000	EDI, TBD, TAP, City General Fund

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Pepin Creek	Lynden UGA	This project relocates year-round flow in north-south running, deep roadside ditches along Benson and Double Ditch Roads (0.5 miles apart) to a newly constructed channel halfway between the two roads and extending to Badger Road (SR 546). This allows re-construction of the roads to arterial standards, prevents flooding in neighborhoods and nearby agricultural areas, and improves ESA fish habitat.	Public Works	6,000,000	EDI; Transportation Impact Fees; TBD; Federal, State and other local funds
CITY OF NOOKSACK					
Garfield Force Main Extension	Nooksack	Extend the force main from the Garfield sewer pump station to Pump Station No. 4 in Everson.	Public Works	1,000,000	City Sewer fund, PWTF
West Columbia Water Line Replacement	Nooksack	Upgrade water main serving Nooksack Valley Middle School to intertie with Everson	Public Works	275,000	City Water Fund, PWTF, DWSRF
Stormwater Management Plan Development	Nooksack	Inventory and assessment of existing stormwater management facilities serving the City of Nooksack. Following analysis of existing system, system improvements necessary to accommodate anticipated commercial, industrial and residential development would be identified and prioritized.	Technical Assistance and Planning	30,000	City General Fund; CCWF
Historic Nooksack Store Building – Purchase and Renovation	Nooksack	Purchase and renovate the historic 1913 Nooksack Store Building located at the corner of Nooksack Ave. and Madison Street to serve as new City Hall and multi-purpose community activity/meeting place.	Public Works	750,000	City General Funds; Historic Preservation Fund; USDA Rural Development
Everson Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade	Everson and Nooksack	Design and construction of a major upgrade to the Everson Sewage Treatment Plant.	Public Works	4,500,000	Nooksack Sewer Fund; Everson Sewer Fund; CCWF; Washington RLF/EDA
NOOKSACK INDIAN TRIBE					
No projects submitted					
PORT OF BELLINGHAM					
Harris Avenue Shipyard Pier	Bellingham, Fairhaven	Replace wood pier to support business and job expansion by the shipyard. Design complete. Retains 145 jobs and could another 100 marine trades jobs.	Public Works	7,200,000	Port; Federal; State; Whatcom County EDI

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Shipping Terminal Rail Siding Connection	Bellingham Shipping Terminal	Reconnect the Bellingham Shipping Terminal to the mainline of the BNSF with the design and construction of a new siding.	Public Works	15,000,000	MTCA; Insurance; State (CERB and FMSIB)
Mooring Improvements to Bellingham Shipping Terminal	Bellingham Shipping Terminal	Design and construct new mooring dolphins and fendering system.	Public Works	12,000,000	Port; State; Federal
Marine Trades Area Travel Lift	Bellingham Waterfront District	Develop boat haul-out/travel lift on the north side of the Whatcom Waterway with a private partner. Feasibility/design and construction.	Public Works	2,000,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
Bellingham Shipping Terminal, Log Pond Redevelopment Area	Bellingham Waterfront District	Power upgrades and improvement to buildings and cargo facilities at the Bellingham Shipping Terminal. Also, provide uplands infrastructure, including rail spur restoration, to serve new economic development activity.	Public Works	5,000,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
Mt. Baker Products Peninsula Improvements	Bellingham Squalicum Waterfront	Provide infrastructure on 4.5 acre industrial site behind Mt Baker Products to support new marine trades activity.	Public Works	2,000,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
Schultz Way Improvements	Bellingham Squalicum Waterfront	Reconstruct Port-owned Schultz Way road to city standards as a secondary arterial, serving existing port tenants and extending it to the Mt Baker Products peninsula to serve new tenants.	Public Works	2,500,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
Aviation Capacity Development	Bellingham International Airport	Construct infrastructure to serve airplane hangar development with runway access, including demolition, re-grading and installation of utilities on Port-acquired Air National Guard site.	Public Works	7,200,000 (public funds) 1,500,000 (private investment and agency customers)	Federal, State and 20% local match through debt; FAA; Department of Homeland Security
Airport Industrial Park Infrastructure Improvements	Bellingham Airport Industrial Park	Infrastructure improvements to the 18 acres of immediately buildable property in the AIP to support business expansion and attraction.	Public Works	2,500,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
Visitor Moorage at GP Pier	Bellingham Waterfront District	Dock and moorage system in the Whatcom Waterway to serve visiting commercial and recreational boaters, improve water access and stimulate local spending.	Public Works	1,000,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Alcohol Plant Renovation	Bellingham Waterfront District	Renovate historic former GP ethyl alcohol plant for commercial uses.	Public Works	14,000,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
Fishers Pavilion	Bellingham Squalicum Harbor	Construct covered area to store/repair fishing gear, provide a fresh seafood market and host marine trades and community events.	Public Works	1,100,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
East County Light Industrial Park	Kendall UGA	Acquire property and develop infrastructure to support business development serving the community.	Public Works	2,000,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
Blaine Wharf District Marine Industrial Area	Blaine Harbor	Infrastructure improvements to support facilitate for boat haul-out, storing/repairing fishing gear, fish processing upland boatyard/small boatyard expansion.	Public Works	5,000,000	Port; State; Federal; Whatcom County EDI
CITY OF SUMAS					
Regional Recreational Facility Enhancements	Sumas	Replace bleachers at Sumas Rodeo Grounds and associated fields. Upgrade existing facilities and lighting.	Public Works	700,000	State Grant; Washington Wildlife & Recreational Program
Cherry Street (SR 9)/Front Street Roundabout	Sumas	Construct roundabout at intersection to allow for improved truck flow through city industrial sector.	Public Works	1,500,000	Federal (STBGP); State (WSDOT and TIB); EDI
Truck Bypass	Sumas	New road alignment for trucks seeking to utilize the industrial areas of Sumas and the international border crossing.	Public Works	8,100,000	Motor Vehicle Fuel Taxes; Vehicle Registration Fees; Other Federal, State and Local Funding Sources
Sumas Avenue Reconstruction	Sumas	Reconstruct Sumas Avenue from Front Street to Garfield Street.	Public Works	2,300,000	STP; City Street Fund
Cherry Street (SR 9) Bridge Replacement	Sumas	Replace Cherry Street bridge to remove blockage to flow of floodwaters and increase capacity on the State highway.	Public Works	3,000,000	STP; BRAC; FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant
WHATCOM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS					
Econometric Model	Whatcom County	This project includes acquisition and calibration of data and software intended to enable economic evaluation of various development and infrastructure improvement scenarios. This is a policy/decision-making tool designed to inform investment decisions toward best use of resources.	Planning	150,000	Federal, State and local funds

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Whatcom Smart Trips	Whatcom County	Three years of core funding for countywide program to reduce travel demand through the use of walking, bicycling, carpooling and transit.	Economic Development	450,000	Federal, State and local funds
International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC)	Whatcom County, State of Washington, British Columbia, Canada and U.S.	Three years of core funding for IMTC, a coalition of U.S. and Canadian government and business entities that identifies and promotes improvements to mobility and security for the four border crossings that connect Whatcom County and the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.	Planning	520,000	Federal, State and local funds (IMTC has received funding from the Province of British Columbia and the Canadian federal government to provide local matching funds for U.S. federal grants)
WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC UTILITIES DISTRICT NO. 1					
Grandview Industrial Park Water System Upgrade	Grandview, Interstate 5, Northgate Park, Delta Tech Park	Construction of pipeline and infrastructure from PUD industrial water system to the Grandview Fire water supply system to support industrial and commercial development.	Public Works, Economic Development and Public Safety	3,000,000	PUD; EDI; Private; State Dept. of Commerce
WRIA 1 Water Supply Infrastructure	Various Rural Areas in Whatcom County	Implement water supply plan by constructing water system infrastructure to provide water to agriculture, cities and Watershed Improvement Districts.	Public Works and Economic development	10,000,000	EDI; DOE; DOH; State Dept. of Commerce; Private Water Users
Alternative/Renewable Energy Project	Dairy Farms in Whatcom County	Construct Bio-Digesters to generate methane gas as a renewable fuel and electricity to market the products and reduce greenhouse gasses, enhance water quality and provide economic benefits to farmers.	Public Works	7,000,000	Federal; State; Private; PUD; EDI
Electric Utility Infrastructure	Western Whatcom County	Acquire existing BPA electric infrastructure and construct additional infrastructure to support industrial and commercial industries or redevelopment of existing industries.	Public Works, Economic Development and Renewable Energy	3,000,000	EDI; Dept. of Commerce; Private; PUD; EPA

Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Project List (April 4, 2017)

Broadband Service Infrastructure/Tower in Areas Underserved or not Currently Served by Cell and Broadband Companies	Eastern Whatcom County	Construct Core Infrastructure - Cell/Broadband Tower in East Whatcom County for cell and broadband service providers and public safety organizations to lease space on.	Public Works, Economic Development and Public Safety	2,000,000	EDI; PUD
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