XI. Economic Development

Introduction

Economic development for the City of Camas is the creation and sustainability of a diverse array of employment opportunities, ensuring the tax base currently enjoyed by the city is sustained and strengthened. The economic health and well being of the City of Camas is thus tied to a commitment to promote a wide range of employment opportunities for the citizens of the community as well as to provide a setting and quality of life that attracts businesses and residents.

The development of this comprehensive plan element can be linked to the adoption of the Washington State Growth Management Act adopted in July of 1990. Although not specifically required by the Growth Management Act, the City of Camas feels it is vitally important that an Economic Development Element be included in its Comprehensive Plan.

The following information comprises the Economic Development Element for the City of Camas. It reviews:

- Historical and existing economy
- Goals and policies for a future economic development vision

Background & Existing Conditions

For most of Camas' history, its economic health has been tied directly to the wood and pulp industry. The paper mill has been the mainstay of the city's economy. In an effort to widen the economic base and strengthen the community, the City Council in 1985 aggressively pursued the annexation of land on the western boundary of Camas to permit a high technology industrial park. This area was not meant to replace the mill as the mainstay of the local economy, but to diversify the city's tax base, thus buffering it from the economic downswings in the wood and pulp industry.

Goals, Policies and Strategies

The Washington Growth Management Act identified the following statewide goal for economic development:

> *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, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.*

The Clark County Community Framework Plan, adopted in May 1993, contains policies for economic development. This Camas element builds on the County's policies, provides more specific direction for implementation of the goals, and coordinates with other elements of the comprehensive plan.

Downtown

Adjacent to the paper mill is Camas' downtown. Many of the long-term businesses in the city are located in the downtown area and are also dependent upon the paper mill. Though these businesses are not the foundation of the economy in terms of dollars, they provide essential services and goods to mill workers and citizens, and are the physical center to the community. Reinforcing the downtown as the city's "heart", are governmental services located in downtown: city hall, fire, and library.

Downtown made significant modifications a number of years ago by means of a beautification project. It made the downtown more attractive physically and functionally, and had helped maintain downtown's central role in the community.

Commercial Areas

The development of commercial properties along the SE 164th corridor to the west of Camas will serve much of the newer residential development in east Vancouver. The City of Camas will provide appropriate new commercial/mixed-use centers to serve the areas west and north of downtown. Existing centers will be reinforced to retain their economic viability.

GOAL

GOAL EC-1: Provide commercial sites adequate to meet a diversity of needs for retail, service, and institutional development within the city.

POLICIES

POLICY EC-1: Ensure a minimum ten year supply of commercial land.

POLICY EC-2: Commercial properties may be converted to multi-family or other residential uses if doing so would serve job creation and housing objectives.

POLICY EC-3: Maintain and encourage retail areas designed to serve neighborhoods.

POLICY EC-4: Maintain existing commercial businesses and promote new commercial businesses that retain commercial sales within the City of Camas while sustaining commercial development nodes throughout the city.

STRATEGIES

Strategy EC-1: Recruit office, retail, and institutional employers including regional and corporate office headquarters which serve local and non-local customers and pay above average wages.

Strategy EC-2: Encourage commercial lodging, special use facilities, dining and retail facilities to capture and support tourism related traffic.

Strategy EC-3: Maintain design standards to ensure that commercial centers are developed with minimal impact on surrounding land uses and are consistent with related community appearance and design guidelines.

Strategy EC-4: Encourage appropriate re-use and redevelopment of older and/or deteriorating commercial areas.

Strategy EC-5: Provide flexibility to accommodate unforeseen and rapidly changing commercial development trends.

Strategy EC-6: Encourage retail developments to be located near arterial or greater roads, with access managed to address objectives such as convenient property access, roadway traffic and safety. Locate large community and regional developments (approx. 10-20 acres or greater) near limited access highways or arterials and within planned mixed use centers.

Strategy EC-7: Encourage appropriate neighborhood commercial to support residential neighborhoods.

Strategy EC-8: Encourage rehabilitation or development of upper story residential development in downtown Camas.

Industrial Park

Though the Georgia Pacific paper mill is the largest employer within Camas, Hewlett/Packard, just to the west, is a large employer in the county and indicates a new arena of business. Hewlett/ Packard does not directly contribute to the economy of Camas, but its location near the city's industrial park provides indirect benefit. The Cascade Business Park in Camas has a number of industries operating or in design and construction.

These companies have chosen Camas for:

- quality of life
- housing
- proximity to air, water, rail, highway
- availability of water, sewer and power
- proximity to similar industries
- responsive permit review times
- quality schools

This is indicative of the close relationship between economic strategy and the character of the community to attract and keep businesses in the City.

GOALS

Goal EC-2: Assure an adequate supply of prime industrial sites to meet market demands for industrial development.

Goal EC-3: Promote the creation of family wage jobs whenever possible.

Goal EC-4: Protect prime, secondary and tertiary industrial lands from conversion to other uses that are not consistent with the city's job creation and housing objectives.

Goal EC-5: Support the development of job and business opportunities compatible with other city goals, such as the maintenance of a strong tax base to effectively provide local services, and maintain and improve a strong educational system.

Goal EC-6: Maintain the current job base and strive for a jobs-residents balance.

POLICIES

Policy EC-5: Assure a job base consistent with the current ratio of one job to 1.9 residents.

Policy EC-6: Maintain a minimum ten year supply of prime or potentially prime industrial land.

Policy EC-7: Prime industrial land will not be converted to designations that create non-family wage jobs, such as commercial retail or residential. "Family wage jobs" are defined consistent with Clark County standards.

Policy EC-8: Secondary and tertiary industrial land will be converted if necessary to fulfill the city's mixed-use or multi-family objectives.

Policy EC-9: Secondary and tertiary industrial land may be considered for conversion if there are environmental constraints which make industrial development unlikely to occur.

Policy EC-10: Conversion of secondary and tertiary industrial land to mixed-use or multi-family will ideally be done if located near existing or planned transportation corridors.

Policy EC-11: Mixed-use developments on secondary and tertiary industrial lands must contain a minimum of 50 percent industrial/commercial development in order to be converted. Under documented site constraints, the amount of industrial/commercial development may be reduced to 25% when conversion is considered.

STRATEGIES

Strategy EC-9: Locate present and future industrial land so that it is accessible to roadways of an arterial classification or higher. Require that utilities are present or can be realistically extended.

Strategy EC-10: Establish incentives for the long-term holding of prime industrial land.

Strategy EC-11: Require appropriate setbacks, buffering, and lighting in order to protect industrial sites from encroachment or location of adjacent incompatible uses.

Strategy EC-12: Encourage, where possible, non-industrial uses on abutting parcels, when the non-industrial use would benefit from locating near the industry or vice versa.

Future Vision and Economic Development

The City of Camas' overall economic future depends on how well this area supplements the paper mill in response to the overall needs of the community. The primary uses permitted in this area are campus-style light industry/high technology developments. Part of the area will be used for a major mixed-use center with a retail center, motel, offices, and research institute, as well as high density residential.

The following issues and events have and will set the direction for the growth and economy of the City of Camas.

- The city has invested heavily in infrastructure to support the industrial and commercial ventures discussed above, and will continue to do so. (*See* the Capital Facilities Element.)
- The city is committed to balancing the jobs/residents ratio so that Camas is not a bedroom community.
- Conversely, much of the growth Camas is experiencing can be attributed to people leaving Vancouver and Portland. An indirect factor influencing Camas' growth is the current tax structure in Oregon.
- The City of Camas is in a strong position to continue its economic growth. The city should continue to enjoy its high tax base, while spreading the responsibility for that base from the paper mill. This will ensure a balanced local economy that is important in providing the quality of life associated with the City of Camas.

GOALS

Goal EC-7: Ensure that the economic and population growth balance is sustained, and that the type of economic development that occurs contributes to maintaining and improving the quality of life in the City of Camas.

Goal EC-8: Assure a wide range of land uses, services, and choices are available for Camas residents and businesses.

Goal EC-9: Keep and attract businesses that sustain a strong economy and are supportive of the community.

Goal EC-10: Maintain and improve a multi-modal transportation system that facilitates economic development, provides mobility for people and goods, and reduces air pollution.

Goal EC-11: Provide opportunities and incentives for a continuum of educational opportunities responsive to the changing needs of the work place.

Goal EC-12: Improve the air quality of the area. Preserve airshed capacity to accommodate job generating activities.

Goal EC-13: Build infrastructure in advance of its demand by industrial and commercial development.

Goal EC-14: Implement permitting processes and fee schedules that maintain a competitive advantage for high wage business and industry to locate in Camas.

Goal EC-15: Ensure the regulatory environment is balanced so that it nurtures economic activity, maintains jobs, encourages new employment, and maintains and promotes a high quality of life in Camas.

POLICIES

Policy EC-12: Promote a diverse economic base through growth that improves the lifestyle of Camas' residents.

Policy EC-13: Assure a job base consistent with the current ratio of one job to every 1.9 residents.

Policy EC-14: Actively encourage business investments that generate net fiscal benefits to the community, are environmentally conscious, and are consistent with the overriding goal of higher wage jobs for Camas residents.

Policy EC-15: The Transportation Plan of the City of Camas and adjoining jurisdictions will be coordinated to address countywide economic development goals, policies and strategies.

Policy EC-16: Camas, in association with the business community, will promote discussion between businesses and institutions to ensure that workers are trained for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Policy EC-17: Identify and pursue strategies aimed at reducing pollution from mobile sources and thereby preserving the remaining usable airshed for potential industrial and commercial users.

Policy EC-18: Ensure the capital facilities element addresses the infrastructure required to facilitate the locating of industrial and commercial employers in Camas.

Policy EC-19: Pursue strategies that are aimed at streamlining the permitting process, establishing predictable project approval mechanisms, and establishing fees for development commensurate with benefits received.

STRATEGIES

Strategy EC-13: Sustain commitment to existing enterprises that have created the economic base of the city, support their continued growth, thereby encouraging investment and job growth.

Strategy EC-14: Provide economic opportunity for all residents including unemployed and special needs populations.

Strategy EC-15: Support retention, expansion and recruitment activities for businesses of all types and sizes with a commitment to the environment and the community.

Strategy EC-16: Provide priority assistance to employers who pay an above average wage and will improve the community's standard of living.

Strategy EC-17: Encourage the recruitment of new business employers to absorb the local labor force, and to provide long term employment to a greater proportion of local residents who are currently employed outside the area.

Strategy EC-18: Participate in local and regional organizations that focus on recruiting new business to the area.

Strategy EC-19: Coordinate with local and regional agencies to implement countywide economic development policies.

Strategy EC-20: Facilitate industrial and commercial investments that generate tax revenues in excess of infrastructure and ongoing service costs.

Strategy EC-21: Adopt benchmarks that are common with adjoining jurisdictions to measure the community's overall economic viability.

Strategy EC-22: Promote productivity and quality among business, thereby meeting world and market standards for their products and services.

Strategy EC-23: Encourage alternatives to single occupancy vehicle travel including improved transit service to higher density residential and employment centers as feasible and appropriate.

Strategy EC-24: Assure maintenance and improvement of a competitive multimodal and intermodal freight transportation network between Camas and the surrounding area. This should include convenient, cost-effective access to highway, rail, marine and air freight services.

Strategy EC-25: Encourage new businesses that can employ residents to locate in Camas, thereby reducing travel times and the need for additional road construction.

Strategy EC-26: Encourage businesses to design projects in such a way as to support non-single occupancy vehicle access (transit, high occupancy vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians).

Strategy EC-27: Give priority to high density residential, industrial, commercial, and mixed use developments located on current or planned transit corridors.

Strategy EC-28: Encourage transit-oriented site planning and design.

Strategy EC-29: Encourage continuing education, skills upgrading, mentoring, and lifelong learning programs suitable for large and small employers.

Strategy EC-30: Encourage employers to provide information, employee mentoring, and other resources to schools with the goal of improving the quality of education and students' awareness of future opportunities.

Strategy EC-31: Continue to participate in Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs to reduce the number of Single Occupant Vehicles (SOV).

Strategy EC-32: Encourage the use of transit and participate with C-TRAN to ensure service is available when warranted.

Strategy EC-33: Plan for long-term economic growth that enhances the capacity of the existing air shed for job-generating activities.

Strategy EC-34: Prioritize infrastructure development to areas that are suitable for industrial and commercial development and that can be served on a cost effective basis.

Strategy EC-35: Consider incentives to encourage improved utilization of existing facilities.

Strategy EC-36: Regularly update the Capital Facilities Plan to ensure it addresses the current and future goals of the city. Maintain awareness of and sensitivity to changes in the business community to guarantee the city does not lose its favorable jobs to population ratio.

Strategy EC-37: Implement level of service (LOS) and concurrency management systems that are realistic and make it possible to achieve the economic goals and policies adopted by the city.

Strategy EC-38: Provide precise and timely information to potential businesses.

Strategy EC-39: Foster and encourage a positive relationship with existing and new businesses by using clear and open communication.

Strategy EC-40: Streamline land use approval and permitting processes to assure predictability, flexibility, and responsiveness.

Strategy EC-41: Ensure that economic and fiscal benefits will outweigh costs of impact fees for industrial, commercial, and residential development.