

With Changes Made by the FSPAC on 6-7-07 and 6-27-07

DRAFT PROPOSED FOOTHILLS SUBAREA LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

GENERAL

- 1.G Ensure a 20-year supply of Light Impact Industrial land in the Columbia Valley UGA.
- 2.G Assure a wide-range of land uses, services and choices are available for Columbia Valley and Foothills residents and businesses.
- 3.G Expand opportunities for home-based and cottage based businesses within the Foothills Subarea.
- 4.G Support and establish programs, events and attractions which reinforce the community's identity and support of Columbia Valley businesses and all businesses within the Foothills Subarea.
- 5.G Serve as a knowledgeable and reliable source for local business creation, assistance and development programs.
- 6.G Continue and expand efforts to improve coordination on economic development matters among elected officials, appointed boards and commissions, County senior management staff and department, local citizen and business organizations and residents citizens with an interest in economic development within the Foothills Subarea.
- 7.G Expand efforts to share information regarding the County's economic development programs and activities with community constituencies and Foothills organizations in order to develop a stronger community partnership in the County's economic development program.
- 8.G Work with the Economic Development Council, Port of Bellingham, Foothills Chamber of Commerce, Foothills Economic Development Association, local business and other organizations to promote the economic development potential and amenities of the Columbia Valley and the Foothills Subarea.
- 9.G Work with the local Foothills Chamber of Commerce, Foothills Economic Development Association, and merchants, property owners and local citizens to develop an "Implementation Plan".
- 10.G Continue support for the Economic Development Council and Port of Bellingham
- 11.G Maintain an open dialogue with the business community.

12.G Make the retention and expansion of new businesses a priority with assistance of the Western Washington University Small Business Development Center.

13.G Create new opportunities through public-private partnerships.

14.G Use the Economic Development Council and Port of Bellingham to assist implementing these policies.

15.G Use the Foothills Chamber of Commerce Foothills Economic Development Association to assist implementing these policies.

16.G Monitor, support, and where appropriate, participate in State, County and regional economic development efforts.

17.G Provide prompt access to information and data relevant to economic activity.

19.G Make safety and crime prevention in business districts a priority. (same as above

20.G Work with the local Block Watch to provide a crime-prevention program for the Columbia Valley. (same as above 20.G)

21.G Assure that Foothills residents and visitors have access to cell phone service and high speed internet service

EDUCATION

1.E Provide opportunities and incentives for a continuum of education opportunities responsive to the changing needs of the work place.

2.E Serve as a knowledgeable and reliable source for local business creation, assistance and development programs.

3.E Build on partnerships with the University of Washington, Western Washington University and Community Colleges to maximize the education benefit aspects to economic development in the Columbia Valley.

4.E Increase access to the services, training and educational opportunities offered by Whatcom Technical College, other regional technical and vocational colleges, and higher educational institutions.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

1.LD Encourage public and private investment in public infrastructure to improve the economic base and accommodate growth.

2.LD Where specialized industry requirement call for inspections by other government agencies, coordinate with those agencies to strive for consistency and minimize duplication of efforts.

3.LD Encourage local businesses to develop hazard mitigation plans.

4.LD Balance zoning and land use regulations to stimulate economic growth while promoting a high quality of life.

5.LD Consider resources, services, and infrastructure capacities when reviewing applications for new commercial development.

7.LD Protect prime, secondary and tertiary industrial lands from conversion to other uses that are not consistent with the Columbia Valley UGA job creation and housing objectives.

9.LD Implement permitting processes and fee schedules that maintain a competitive advantage for high wage business and industry to locate in the Columbia Valley.

10.LD Ensure the capital facilities element addresses the infrastructure required to facilitate the locating of industrial and commercial employers in the Columbia Valley.

11.LD Pursue strategies that are aimed at streamlining the permitting process, establishing predictable project approval mechanisms, and establishing fees for development commensurate with benefits received.

12.LD Develop an optional Light Industrial ~~master plan~~ [Bill – please put alternative language here – the committee wanted to replace the “master plan” language] process for parcels of sufficient size that would include light manufacturing and open space components and could include a residential component associated with the LI uses. Open space components could be of sufficient size that would be used for agriculture, forestry or active recreation. The Master Plan process would review concurrently all pertinent permit applications for the proposed site, including a comprehensive plan amendment request for change of land use designation.

13.LD Light manufacturing development and performance standards shall include traffic impacts, noise and the use and handling of hazardous substances.

15.LD Identify long-term infrastructure needs that support economic sustainability.

16.LD Encourage/support infrastructure enhancement to accommodate new information technology.

17.LD The County should maintain affordable development cost by avoiding or reducing unnecessary permit requirements, costs, or delays.

21.LD Consider a ~~master plan~~ (Bill please insert alternative language replacing master plan here) for the Columbia Valley UGA a template for development that would meet the area's economic development, land use, environmental preservation, transportation and overall design goals.

QUALITY OF LIFE

1.Q Task the appropriate boards and commissions to identify and promote recreational and cultural activities which might serve as an economic stimulus tax incentive, grants, potential changes in state legislation, or other mechanisms to encourage development and redevelopment.

2.Q Serve as a knowledgeable and reliable source for local business creation, assistance and development programs.

3.Q Ensure that the economic and population growth balances is sustained, and that the type of economic development that occurs contributes to maintaining and improving the quality of life in the Columbia Valley.

4.Q Encourage the use of "green" materials and Low Impact techniques in all types of construction.

5.Q Encourage local enterprises to participate in programs such as the Solid and Hazardous Waters and EnvirosStars programs.

6.Q Economic development recruitment efforts in the Columbia Valley should consider clean low-water use industries, professional services and corporate headquarters which provide moderate to high wages.

7.Q Identify, encourage and promote commercial development which generates a high annual revenue return while respecting the natural and cultural environments and preserving or enhancing the quality of life in the community.

8.Q Provide programs and/or partner with other agencies to upgrade sub-standard single family, multi-family and commercial properties.

9.Q Protect the beauty and function of the natural environment to maintain a community where workers want to live and work.

10.Q Encourage culturally diverse business leaders to become actively involved in the

Columbia Valley affairs.

11.Q Increase communication and outreach to all citizens so that they are informed and can participate in the Columbia Valley activities.

12.Q Promote actions ensuring a clean and attractive community.

13.Q Link the area's natural and built features in order to reinforce community identity and support Columbia Valley Businesses.

JOBS

1.J Promote the creation of family wage jobs.

2.J Strive for a ratio of one job to 4.0 residents.

3.J Prime industrial land will not be converted to designations that create non-family wage jobs, such as commercial retail or residential.

4.J 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 the Columbia Valley.

5.J 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 Columbia Valley residents.

6.J Retain light manufacturing employment as an important source of family wage jobs.

7.J Work corporately with Nooksack Tribe, Whatcom County, and other agencies to focus on economic growth and job creation.

8.J Encourage businesses to hire local residents.

9.J Develop guidelines for and encourage and offer incentives for the provision of day care by businesses for their employee's children.

10.J Identify sectors of the economy within the Columbia Valley where opportunity might exist to create additional jobs and identify potential strategies for attracting employment.

11.J Provide programs and facilities for all families and youth relating to jobs and business opportunities in the community.

12.J Work with appropriate local and regional human resource and social service

agencies to provide programs for underemployed and unemployed people in the community.

13.J Support appropriate economic development efforts in East Whatcom County, recognizing the benefits gained by Columbia Valley residents when jobs are created in any part of the sub-region.

TRANSPORTATION

1.T Maintain and improve a multi-modal transportation system that facilitates economic development, provides mobility for people and goods, and reduces air pollution.

2.T Ensure that new commercial development incorporates site and building design features to promote commuting by foot, bicycle, carpool and/or transit. Such features may include but are not limited to shower facilities, bicycle lockers, close-in carpool parking, and shelters at transit stops.

3.T Pursue transportation systems improvements to ensure efficient transportation of goods and convenient access for employees and customers to and from places of business. Such system improvements should include transit facilities and services.

FINANCIAL

2.F Seek to increase federal, state, regional and local grants.

MARKETING

1.M Promote new commercial businesses that retain commercial sales within the Columbia Valley.

2.M Keep and attract businesses that sustain a strong economy and are supportive of the community.

3.M Develop and utilize methods to help businesses find markets for surplus materials, by-products and waste.

4.M The County should cooperate with the Chamber and Economic Development Council to maintain an adequate data base and staff to encourage and assist businesses in expanding or relocating within the Columbia Valley.

5.M The County should coordinate with land owners, Realtors and regional economic development organizations to provide information about light impact industrial opportunities in the Columbia Valley and market available properties.

- 6.M Promote the advantages of the Columbia Valley's proximity to the Mt. Baker Hwy, raw building materials and Kendal-Sumas Hwy.
- 7.M Work with the real estate community, state and local economic development agencies and other partners to attract new business and industry to the Columbia Valley, only when those businesses are aligned with the Foothills Subarea Plan vision.
- 8.M Develop an inventory of available "tools" to aid in business attraction, including, where feasible, financial as well as non-financial incentives.
- 9.M Develop and update marketing materials, including signs, brochure, information sheets or other collateral materials which support the marketing of the Columbia Valley as a place to do business.
- 10.M Participate in a full range of Whatcom County and Economic Development Council activities, including industrial marketing and promotion, research, committee meetings and other efforts to attract new business and industry to the Columbia Valley. Work with the County departments to maximize opportunities to contract for locally provided goods and services.
- 11.M Wherever possible, show case local business success and expansion through Whatcom County participation in ribbon cuttings and other business recognition programs.
- 12.M Explore the potential for creating an annual Columbia Valley "Business Achievement Award" that would honor significant contributions by business and community leaders to the quality of life in the Columbia Valley.
- 13.M Create a Task Force or similar development authority to support development efforts in the Columbia Valley.
- 14.M Support a Demonstration Program to allow flexibility in the design of quality industrial/commercial developments.
- 15.M Regularly evaluate how regulations promote or constrain economic development.
- 16.M Where appropriate, participate or otherwise assist in business-sponsored activities to increase local awareness of goods and services available in the Columbia Valley.
- 17.M Act to influence federal and state legislation and regulations affecting the Columbia Valley economy.
- 18.M Identify and facilitate key public or private development projects with a high likelihood of market success and the potential to stimulate additional development.