



Planning and Business Development Committee Meeting

May 23, 2023

5:30 PM

City Council Chambers

325 Metcalf St

Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

- **CALL TO ORDER:** [Time: _____]

- **AGENDA ITEMS:**

Changes to the Agenda

Review Draft Action Economic Development Action Plan

Discuss Next Meeting (8/23)

- **ADJOURNMENT:** [Time: _____]

Changes to the Agenda

Review Draft Action Economic Development Action Plan

Sedro-Woolley Economic Development Action Plan (Draft)

Ideas generated from economic development focus group(s)

Items in green are from the April 13, 2023 follow-up focus group.

General Ideas

- Leverage collective strengths in Skagit Valley and care out our area of that – possible focus on food. Leverage valley value-added agriculture as the theme
- Public safety, paring site readiness, removing obstacles
- Local business day in Downtown with booths

Retail & Services

- Support retail businesses providing local services and drawing people to shop in the community
- Support infill development – up and coming generations are all about experiences, combining selling things with an experience leads to placemaking
- Long-term potential for Skagit Industrial Park as an extension of Downtown – everyone needs to be equipped and able to do some business online, provide help/technical assistance in these areas
- Downtown can use some work
- Business friendly permitting
- Internet-proof retail

Housing Development

- Businesses need housing to support a local workforce – workforce is an issue nationwide, our vacancy rate (housing) is one of the lowest in the state. We are most behind on multi-family rental properties. This is a complex problem with multiple solutions. The cost of housing remains an issue, in addition to low supply. The SWIFT Center has a possible partial use for senior housing.
- The Skagit Housing Consortium supports cities and the county in building community support for housing solutions.
- Support infill development

Wealth Generating Employment

- Health care is a growing industry
- Clean Technology and Clean Industry are regional targets.
- The theme for the SWIFT Center is community wellness, which could work with senior housing. There are still some possible industrial uses that could take place at the SWIFT Center.
- Early stage entrepreneurial development is another opportunity and the Northwest Innovation Resource Center is a good resource.
- RAIN entrepreneurial ecosystem development
- Grassroots homegrown businesses that will grow into more substantial things
- Businesses of all sizes

- Agriculture Lab
- SWIFT Center incubator space with access to shared resources, like 3D printers

Local Businesses, Especially Small Businesses

- Provide programs that can help businesses
- Support businesses to better work within the City code
- Support infill development
- The traffic impact fee is too high for small businesses
- Focus on traffic impact fee – one site was too expensive for a project and went to a different area
- We could have a manufacturing days celebration – our economy was founded on it, technology and innovation
- There are not any business assistance organizations housed here – if there were something local, it would help (ex. SBDC, CIE, RAIN, etc.)
- Focus on Downtown
 - Keep Metcalf clean
 - Paint the light poles on Metcalf
 - Replace old planter boxes in the Downtown
 - Update the Woolley Market
 - Downtown has a lot of potential and is classic. It needs to stay clean and needs attention to detail. Make it pristine.
 - Develop parking regulations
 - Develop temporary use of unused BNSF land for a “mobile art walk” – the focus could be on the history of Sedro-Woolley

Tourism

- If we can't get hotels, support more vacation rentals, more ADUs could be helpful in this regard
- Leverage lodging tax funding
- Become the basecamp of the foothills
- Work with the North Cascades Institute
- Leverage outdoor recreation
- Tap into the City's history
- Tourism has very few negatives
- Promote and develop sports tournaments
- Connecting parks with trails
- A concert site would be amazing
- Capitalize on authentic small town Americana strengths with the experiences and services people want
- Year-round support for businesses, tourists, and residents
- Open and welcoming atmosphere
- We can solve our lack of hotels by learning more about hotel site selection requirements and trying to meeting them and then marketing our numbers to potential hotels

- State Route 20 presents a similar problem to what Anacortes faces with the ferry system (pass by traffic but people not stopping)
- SWIFT Center
 - \$45 million of initial investment is needed but the prospects are great – it is cheaper to renovate many existing buildings than to demolish them
 - Recreation, tourism, and hospitality are emerging as themes
 - Destination music in the park in the shorter term

Infrastructure Development

- Continue to fund and build projects to support growth. Review impact fees and project funding to make sure there is financial support for the planned projects.
- Develop small parks – ex. the lot by Tricky Busiu could be used for a park and parking if received from BNSF
- Plant beautiful trees
- Develop an archway to cover the railroad trestle and point tourists to Downtown
- Work to get Ferry Street properties improved on the entry to Downtown from Highway 9, perhaps some funds could be used for environmental studies, as needed, in this area
- Possible food truck pads at our parks (especially Olmsted and Memorial)

Workforce Development

- Provide opportunities for youth to get into apprenticeships, build partnerships with schools
- Possible education uses of SWIFT Center
- It is hard to work with people under 18
- We need businesses to be partners. It is harder for small businesses to be partners. Sedro-Woolley School District has an interest in mentorship for students
- Job Corps focuses on information technology, health care, and culinary. They used to feed the trades.
- Skagit Valley College
- CTE programs (career technical education)
- Get more of a workforce development focus and expand it out
- Have more of a trades focus locally

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