

# CHAPTER 9

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

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### INTRODUCTION

The 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) established the following statewide economic development goal:

*“Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans; promote economic opportunity for all residents of the state, especially for unemployed and disadvantaged persons; and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, and local public services and facilities.*”

In 1994, Clark County adopted a 20-Year Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. The Plan included an economic development chapter and many elements that help promote and sustain business and industry county-wide.

Among other things, the economic development element establishes an economic vision for the community and expressed support for the core goal of the local and state planning principles. The county's 1994 Plan establishes a path for development. However, local land use plans are required to be updated periodically, through a “periodic review process”.

Clark County, representative business organizations, the Youth Commission, the Columbia River Economic Development Council, and other stakeholders contributed significantly in development of the proposed improvements to the local economic development strategies. Cyclical economic conditions underscore the need to continuously evaluate local economic development opportunities.

The following statement reflects the course set by the Growth Management Act and consolidates and summarizes the perspectives of the county and CREDC on economic development:

*Clark County's community and its future will take advantage of opportunities created by dynamic markets and competitive forces. Its unique position will be defined as much by style and process as it is by substance. The area will benefit from leveraging existing strengths into new economic power. The focus of Clark County's Economic Development strategy is to grow a high-wage, knowledge-based economy that creates jobs at a rate in excess of population growth while maintaining and enhancing community identity and our quality of life.*

*Industrial recruitment and other economic development activities will support existing and emerging industrial clusters that have a significant knowledge-based component. Clusters targeted to drive the future economy are semiconductor and electronic manufacturing, telecommunications, knowledge-based service industries, life sciences, healthcare, and expansion*

*of locally owned businesses. There will also be an emphasis on the retention and expansion of existing businesses as the baseline for additional job creation.*

*To grow targeted industries and support the desired pattern of growth, Clark County and its municipalities must increase the inventory of prime commercial and industrial lands. The inventory will include an increase in the number of larger parcels that individually and collectively accommodate knowledge-based campus development and the clustering of targeted industries.*

*Economic development will be increasingly supported by master-planned and mixed-use developments in select areas that incorporate both traditionally defined manufacturing uses office commercial uses, and in some cases residential. The focus on a knowledge-based economy will increase the demand for campus-style development.*

*The development and marketing of a designated area containing high-technology and knowledge-based industries (conceptually referred to as the "Discovery Corridor") will support the continued growth of existing high-technology firms and encourage more knowledge-based industries.*

*To be competitive for economic growth and investment, the development process must be redesigned to support shorter timelines, more predictability, and cost effectiveness.*

*Local and state governments must focus infrastructure investments in areas designated as nodes of growth to support economic development. These investments can be supported by new public sector finance mechanisms sufficient to allow for infrastructure investment in advance of development and to direct growth to identified nodes.*

*The future economy of Clark County will be characterized by an increasing percentage of individuals who both live and work in Clark County. Expanded opportunities and partnerships between education and business will provide an engaged citizenry and an educated workforce for existing and start-up companies. Our community will continue to recognize the expanding importance of our region and the significant economic benefit to be gained through regional cooperation and diversity.*

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Economic development planning cannot be conducted in isolation. The economy plays a vitally influential role in determining whether or not the broad array of objectives and the strategic vision for the regional community will be realized.

Economic development programs may not be successful without supporting land use, transportation, and capital facility initiatives. Therefore, the intent is to formulate a broad network of interdependent policies within those elements that are mutually supportive. The Economic Development Element has been designed as an integral part of the county's 20-Year Plan. Recognizing the reciprocal benefits derived from strategies based on well coordinated policies, Clark County has ensured that its economic development initiatives are members of a complementary network of Comprehensive Plan

policies (e.g., Land Use, Transportation, and Capital Facilities Elements). They support other goals expressed in the plan and the long-range vision for the region.

Clark County and the other local jurisdictions promote economic development as a way to stabilize the tax base. The emphasis is to create wealth for individuals and the community through aggressive job creation and diversified tax base opportunities.

## **BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to set forth the framework and guidelines by which a balanced and stable economic base will be pursued. In formulating future plans, the county recognizes that a dynamic and diversified local economy is important for a community's identity and its tax base. This section summarizes the existing information on historical and existing employment patterns, evaluation of current and projected socioeconomic trends, and characterization of these issues as a basis for the policies contained in the next section.

### **The Local and Regional Economy**

Clark County has had one of the most vibrant economies in Washington State and the nation during the past two decades. The decade of the 1990's was a period of remarkable economic and population growth. While the community's location, competitive strengths, and location of new industry have supported growth, the county's competitive advantages provide the basis for continued growth and prosperity. Competitive weaknesses and lost opportunities must be addressed to assure continued improvements to our economic health and quality of life.

Clark County is located in southwest Washington State, at the head of the navigable portion of the Columbia River, approximately 70 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The Columbia River forms the western and southern boundaries of the county. Clark County's incorporated communities include Vancouver the county seat, Camas, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, La Center, Washougal, and Yacolt.

Clark County's history, economy, and future are inextricably linked to its regional location. Clark County comprises a portion of the U.S. Census Bureau's Portland, OR/Vancouver, WA. - Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA). The PMSA is a six-county region encompassing Clark County in Washington and five Oregon counties: Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Yamhill, and Columbia.

The county's economy mirrors that of the PMSA as a whole. It is broadly diversified and has strong components in high-technology manufacturing, financial and business services, and international trade. While this diversification has made Clark County resilient to national economic downturns (e.g. 1991), it did not make it immune to the 2001 national recession that severely affected the technology and broader manufacturing sector.

The decade of the 90's ended with Clark County being the fastest growing county in the state of Washington and in the PMSA, as well as one of the fastest growing in the nation. The county population increased 45% from 1990 to 2000. Over 353,000 residents called Clark County home in 2000. Vancouver, with a population of 143,600 is the fourth largest city in Washington behind Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma. The Washington Office of Financial Management estimates that the county will continue to grow during the next twenty years with population estimates ranging from 453,280 to 571,061.

There are two drivers of local population growth. First is regional economic and employment growth from the location of new high-technology firms and expansion of existing industries both in Clark County and the greater metropolitan area.

The second driver is the availability of affordable housing. During the 90s, Clark County was able to provide affordable housing alternatives for individuals priced out of housing market in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties.

While the median age in Clark County is essentially the same as Multnomah County, it is higher than Yamhill and Washington counties. The overall population of Clark County is relatively young due to the large immigration of individuals in their working years.

The growth of the economic base is demonstrated by the growth in employment. The labor force grew to 178,000 in 2000, a 40% increase from 1990. In concert with the national experience, unemployment remained low during the 1990s, dipping to 3.5% in 1997. Starting in 2001, the national recession resulted in significant layoffs in Clark County and throughout the PMSA resulting in unemployment rates increasing to more than 7% in February 2003. This represented over 14,000 Clark County residents.

A Riley Research Associate's study on workforce travel (April 2002) placed the percent of employed workers working in Oregon at about one-third of the workforce or 53,000 people. The survey shows that the commuting work force travel to Oregon to work in various industries, but primarily: transportation services (13%), health care (13%), low- and high-tech manufacturing (11% and 8%), professional/business services (10%), and construction (9%).

The availability of employment opportunities allows the county to attract and retain working-age residents. There are several large employers in Clark County. Table 9.1 below shows the largest employers by location, product/service, and estimated employment.

**Table 9.1 Largest Employers Clark County, Washington**

Sector	Company	Location		Product/Service	Function	2 digit	Estimated Employment May, 2002
		City	County				
<b>All Sectors</b>							
	Vancouver School District	Vancouver	Clark	Public Education	School	61	3,050
	Bonneville Power	Vancouver	Clark	Utilities	HQ/Admin. Office		3,000
	Southwest Washington Medical Center	Vancouver	Clark	Medical Center	Hospital	62	2,900
	Evergreen School District	Vancouver	Clark	Public Education	School	61	2,600
	Hewlett-Packard	Vancouver	Clark	Inkjet Printers	R&D/Marketing Dept.	33	1,700
	Fred Meyer	County-wide	Clark	Retail	Retail	44	1,500
	Clark County	Vancouver	Clark	Government	County Government	92	1,300
	SEH America	Vancouver	Clark	Silicon Wafers	Branch manufacturing plant	33	1,260
	Safeway	Vancouver	Clark	Retail	Retail	45	1,223
	Georgia-Pacific	Camas	Clark	Pulp, Paper	Branch manufacturing plant	32	1,160
	City of Vancouver	Vancouver	Clark	Government	Government		950
	WaferTech	Camas	Clark	Silicon Wafers	HQ/Admin. Office	33	950
<b>Manufacturing</b>							
	Hewlett-Packard	Vancouver	Clark	Inkjet Printers	Marketing Dept.	33	1,700
	SEH America	Vancouver	Clark	Silicon Wafers	Branch manufacturing plant	33	1,260
	Georgia-Pacific	Camas	Clark	Pulp, Paper	Branch manufacturing plant	32	1,160
	WaferTech	Camas	Clark	Silicon Wafers	HQ/Admin. Office	33	950
	Frito Lay	Vancouver	WA	Food Products	Branch manufacturing plant	31	620
	Columbia Machine	Vancouver	Clark	Concrete Block Machines & Palletizers	HQ/Admin. Office	33	406
	Sharp Microelectronics & Sharp Labs	Camas	Clark	Electronics/R&D	Branch manufacturing plant	33	362
	Columbian Publishing Co	Vancouver	Clark	Newspaper	HQ/Admin. Office		260
	Linear Technologies	Camas	Clark	Linear & analog circuits	Branch manufacturing plant	33	260
	Matsushita Kotobuki Electronics	Vancouver	Clark	TV/DVD/VCR	Branch manufacturing plant	33	25
	Pendleton Woolen Mills	Washougal	Clark	Clothing	Branch manufacturing plant		250
	C-Tech Industries	Vancouver	Clark	Pressure washers	HQ/Admin. Office	33	240

**Table 9.1 Largest Employers Clark County, Washington**

Sector	Company	Location		Product/Service	Function	2 digit	Estimated Employment May, 2002
		City	County				
	Bemis	Vancouver	Clark	Multiwall and small paper bags	HQ/Admin. Office	32	150
Distribution							
	US Foodservice	Ridgefield	Clark	Warehouse/Distribution	HQ/Distribution center	48	120
	Corwin Bottling	Vancouver	Clark	Warehouse/Distribution	HQ/Admin. Office	48	55
	Food Express	Vancouver	Clark	Warehouse/Distribution	HQ/Distribution center	48	50
	Blue Bird Transfer	Vancouver	Clark	Warehouse/Distribution	HQ/Distribution center	48	55
	Vancouver Warehouse & Distribution	Vancouver	Clark	Warehouse/Distribution	HQ/Distribution center	48	50
Call Centers							
	Electric Lightwave	Vancouver	Clark	Full service integrated telecommunication services	Inbound	51	508*
	New Edge Networks	Vancouver	Clark	DSL Internet Network Provider	Inbound	51	275*
	CenturyTel	Vancouver	Clark	Telephone Provider	Inbound/Western Regional HQ	51	180*
	Nautilus Group	Vancouver	Clark	Exercise Equipment	Inbound	42	300
	Charter Communications	Vancouver	Clark	Call Center	Inbound	56	300
	Cascade Callworks	Vancouver	Clark	Call Center	Inbound/Outbound	56	140
* Total Employment Number. Only a portion of this total includes employees involved in inbound customer call center operations.							

Source: Columbia River Economic Development Council. May 2002.

Although 32% of the labor force commutes to Oregon, 68% are employed in an economic cluster or other Southwest Washington employment center. There are several large employers in Clark County. These firms are located throughout the county, with the majority of industries concentrating in the Vancouver/Clark County urban area. The top five major employers are Vancouver School District with 3,050 persons employed in 2002, Bonneville Power Administration with 3,000 persons, Southwest Washington Medical Center with 2,900, Evergreen School District, 2,600, and Hewlett-Packard with 1,700 persons employed in 2002. Existing firms have created both a skilled work force as well as network of suppliers and business relationships that will attract and foster the growth of these sectors.

The growth and development of significant industry clusters will serve as the basis to attract similar firms and investment as well as the basis for growth of existing businesses. There are many industry clusters in Camas in the Cascade Business Park area such as Sharp Microelectronics, Sharp Labs of America, WaferTech, C-Tech, Body Cote-IMT, Linear Technology, Heraeus-Shin Etsu, Furuno, and Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Table 9.2 below provides a profile of existing industrial clusters in Clark County.

**Table 9.2 Clark County Industrial Clusters**

Company	Product	2002 Employment	Cluster/Sub Cluster	Location
Blue Bird Transfer	Distribution	55	Distribution	Vancouver
Corwin Bottling	Distribution	55	Distribution	Vancouver
Food Express	Distribution	50	Distribution	Vancouver
US Foodservice	Warehouse/ Distribution	95	Distribution	Ridgefield
Vancouver Warehouse & Distribution	Distribution	50	Distribution	Vancouver
Control Tek	Electronics	71	Electronics	Vancouver
Furuno	Marine Electronics	62	Electronics	Camas
Matsushita Kotobuki Electronics Industries of America	TV/VCR's	258	Electronics	Vancouver
Radial/Larsen Antenna Technologies	Electronics	107	Electronics	Vancouver
Wacom Technology Corporation	Electronics	62	Electronics	Vancouver
Southwest Washington Medical Center	Healthcare	2,900	Healthcare	Vancouver
Bonneville Power Administration	HQ/Admin. Office	3,000	Knowledge Based	Vancouver
Columbia Ultimate	Software	157	Knowledge Based	Vancouver
Hewlett-Packard	Marketing Dept.	1,700	Manufacturing	Vancouver
RS Medical	HQ/Admin. Office	275	Health Service	Vancouver
Nutrition Now	Nutritional supplements	140	Life Sciences	Vancouver
Alpha Tec	InVitro Diagnosis	20	Life Sciences	Vancouver
Christensen Shipyards	Yacht Mfg.	180	Locally Owned	Vancouver
DeWils	Cabinet Mfg.	180	Locally Owned	Vancouver
BOC Gases	Chemicals	58	Manufacturing	Vancouver
Heraeus Shin Etsu	Quartz glass crucibles	37	Semiconductor	Camas
Linear Technologies	Linear/Analog circuits	260	Semiconductor	Camas

Company	Product	2002 Employment	Cluster/Sub Cluster	Location
nLight Photonics	Pump Lasers	21	Semiconductor	Vancouver
Saint-Gobain Crystals & Detectors	Crystal Mfg.	75	Semiconductor	Washougal
Sharp Labs	R&D	185	Semiconductor	Camas
Sharp Microelectronics Technology	Electronics	177	Semiconductor	Camas
Shin Etsu - SEH America	Semiconductor	1,260	Semiconductor	Vancouver
Shell Solar	Solar Cells	NA	Semiconductor	Vancouver
Silicon 2000	OEM's	70	Semiconductor	Vancouver
Underwriters Laboratories	Testing	200	Semiconductor	Camas
WaferTech	Semiconductor	950	Semiconductor	Camas
Sekidenko	Gauges for Hi Tech	50	Semiconductor	Vancouver
Silicon Forest Electronics	OEM's	75	Semiconductor	Vancouver
Cascade Callworks	Call Center	140	Telecommunications	Vancouver
CenturyTel	Telecommunication	180	Telecommunications	Vancouver
Charter Communications	Call Center	350	Telecommunications	Vancouver
Electric Lightwave	Telecommunication	508	Telecommunications	Vancouver
Hilton/Red Lion Reservation Center	Call Center	160	Telecommunications	Vancouver
Nautilus Group	Call Center	300	Telecommunications	Vancouver
New Edge Networks	Telecommunication	275	Telecommunications	Vancouver

Source: Columbia River Economic Development Council. May 2002.

## Income Profile

Personal and household incomes are closely related to employment opportunities. Industries that tend to pay low wages (e.g., restaurants and retail stores) result in lower annual incomes. Income in turn affects the type of commercial businesses and housing required to meet the needs of a lower income population. There are two measures of income: personal and household. Personal income is an indicator of the types of jobs available in the community and whether the income from one worker will be enough to support a whole family.

Household income is a good indicator of the price of housing needed in an area. As a rule of thumb, a household can afford to buy a house costing three times its gross annual income, or to rent at no more than 30 percent of gross monthly income. In August 1996, a Family Wage Jobs Project Committee appointed by the Clark County Board of Commissioners defined a threshold family wage as one that will allow a family of up to three members to function with a single wage earner and without supplemental public assistance. In 1996, the threshold family wage was \$33,796 and \$42,245 in 2002. A benefit package also must be present in addition to the cash income. A job that provides a cash wage that meets the threshold, but does not include benefits does not meet the definition. The benefit package may include a variety of benefits, such as basic health and dental care, vacation, personal leave, paid holidays, child care, elder care, and pension/retirement. Employees should have options within this spectrum.

The threshold family wage is measured by calculating the county's average covered wage, plus 25 percent. The Average Annual Wage data is available from the Washington Employment Securities Commission. The Threshold Family wage is a policy guideline created by the Board of County Commissioners to assist in development of economic development

strategies. It is not a “requirement” for employers; although it does constitute an incentive for industrial development applicants (see Goals 9. 1 and 9. 5)

### **Industrial and Commercial Land Analysis**

The industrial and commercial land demand and supply has a direct impact on employment. Estimates are that Clark County's population will continue to increase over the next twenty years. Improving the present jobs/population ratios will require a proportionate amount of usable industrial property to maintain a strong tax base.

The 2002 industrial land inventory revealed that the county's total industrial land base is approximately 12,000 acres. The categorizing of industrial lands based on the recommended criteria revealed that the county has approximately 705 acres of prime industrial land available for development within a total vacant inventory of over 5,186 acres. Prime is defined as immediately available industrial land of 10 acres or more in size that is vacant, properly zoned, served with adequate infrastructure, and free of land use and environmental conflicts.

### **Focused Public Investment Planning**

Since Clark County adopted its Growth Management Plan in 1994, county leaders have made a commitment to focus on economic development and balancing jobs and housing in the county. County leadership is committed to encouraging economic development and particularly the creation of high-wage jobs.

It is clear that existing revenue streams are not sufficient to keep up with demands for public services and facilities. Transportation concurrency policy has led to the delay of projects in some corridors. Park acquisition and improvements are not keeping up with population and employment growth. Schools rely heavily on portable facilities.

In the past, Clark County dispersed its capital improvements expenditure throughout the county providing partial solutions to many areas, but not complete solutions to priority areas. Given the limited resources available for infrastructure, the county needs a more strategic approach to investment of public funds. The county can focus capital improvements in some select areas rather than spreading capital improvements throughout the region. A particular geographical area will produce acceptable levels of service for development in that area. Such areas can be said to contain “fully-served” land because all public facilities meet or exceed future development standards. If these areas are planned for employment development, then the county will also be achieving one of its economic development goals.

The Focused Public Investment Plan (FPIP) would allow the county to target infrastructure improvements in areas that require the least cost to provide fully served land that is ready for industrial development by businesses providing family wage jobs. The FPIP does not dilute public investment by spreading it thinly in every part of the county at the same time. The FPIP also avoids public investments in areas that promote undesirable development.

Clark County has identified several Public Investment Areas (PIAs) that will be the industrial land geographical targets of the FPIP. PIAs are areas that concentrate the location of public facility capacity in order to produce fully served land suitable for economic development. Urban Growth Areas have been designated based on the availability of essential public facilities (such as roads, utilities, fire protection) and the amount of public investment required to bring these public facilities and services up to the level needed to support development. The county's priority for development is urban in character; therefore PIAs are within urban growth areas.

Focused Public Investment Plans are different than traditional capital facilities plans because they (1) use level of services standards as the basis for determining the need for capital facilities, (2) target capital improvement expenditures in PIAs to produce “fully-served land” for industrial development, and (3) represent a commitment of resources to fully fund the needed infrastructure in designated areas to support economic development.

The FPIP approach concentrates available funds in the most efficient and effective manner to upgrade PIAs to a “ready-to-develop” status. Experience shows that the market responds well to “shovel ready” sites at which development can begin as soon as plans and approvals are completed.

In order for land to be readily available for industrial development, it must be designated for industrial use and served by adequately sized public facilities for industrial development. Road, sewer, water, and storm drainage systems are among the important public facilities, which need to be in place for provision of urban levels of service to support industrial development.

### **Revenue Sharing Roundtable**

The Revenue Roundtable is an outgrowth of legislation passed in 2002 that allows industrial land banks outside of urban growth area boundaries. One of the important elements of this legislation concerned interlocal agreements on sharing any additional revenues. Whereas normally those additional revenues would only come to the county, under an interlocal agreement they would be shared with other jurisdictions.

The Revenue Roundtable expanded from its initial formation by exploring multi-jurisdictional opportunities for economic growth through regional funding mechanisms, infrastructure investment, and new revenue strategies. The context of those initiatives was to share the cost of targeted regional investments in economic development capital projects and for participating jurisdictions to thus share in the profits, which accrue from those capital investments. The Revenue Roundtable is currently inactive, but may be revived in the future.

### **Market Factors Influencing Economic Growth**

#### **Regional**

The existing economic conditions summarized in this section indicate broad potential for economic development in Clark County. However, it is recognized that various factors may hinder or impede the progress of development and the successful achievement of economic viability. For instance, the county has a high-tech manufacturing base that exceeds the state urban county average and has a concentration of business services in the form of corporate offices and technical support services, yet the county still exports workers to Oregon and develops more than its share of regional housing. In addition, the pace of industrial, commercial, and residential development within the county will be dependent on the economic prospects of the entire Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. Continued, albeit slower, economic growth in the Portland metropolitan area seems assured for the foreseeable future; however, the pace of growth is dependent upon significant regional planning decisions and the ability to capitalize on a combination of domestic and Pacific Rim markets.

## **Societal**

The Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area may not regain the number of heavy industry manufacturing jobs it had in the late 1970s. The shift from traditional manufacturing jobs to service employment is likely to continue. As a result, the total Clark County employment forecast could be impacted.

It is important to note that there is an implication that further expansion of the labor force could be constrained by a shift in demographics due to the forecasted aging of the county's population. These shifts are due to the fact that virtually all of the baby boomers that will work are now in the labor force and the age cohort coming behind is significantly smaller. Labor force participation rates tend to be highest where age is concentrated between 20 and 55 years and education levels are higher than average.

## **Local**

Another factor affecting the economic viability of the county is the ability to develop the industrial lands that have been identified. Clark County has the largest inventory of industrial lands in the PMSA. If managed appropriately, industrial lands can develop with high-wage jobs at a rapid pace and propel the county's economy. A major stimulus to long-term growth of the county is its location relative to the region. The Portland Metropolitan area attracts industry to the region, but in order to locate in the county adequately serviced and readily available land is needed. The most significant potential concerns could be the funding of infrastructure and jurisdictional questions between the land use planning and regulatory functions of Clark County and the water/sewer service functions of the cities.

Growth of low paying and part-time jobs (increasingly retail/service sector oriented employment) is consistent with international and domestic trends that will likely continue independent of local economic development policies and strategies. However, local policies can encourage a better balance of job opportunities to surpass statewide and national economic conditions. Achieving this better balance will require emphasis on encouraging a greater proportion of family wage jobs than are currently represented in the local economy. Increasing the average wage or income level also requires a local workforce of sufficient quality to attract family wage employers to locate in Clark County, and encourage existing family wage employers to stay and expand. Linking the economic development objective of family wage jobs to growth management and comprehensive planning represents a significant, but achievable challenge for public agencies, businesses, and residents.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

The Community Framework Plan contained a series of policies for economic development. The intent of this Economic Development Element is to build on the policies already in place, provide more specific direction for implementation of economic development goals, and coordinate with other elements of the comprehensive plan.

### 9.0 Clark County Economic Development Vision Statement:

*“Clark County will grow as a high-wage economy that creates jobs at a rate in excess of population growth, and an increasing percentage of the population will both live and work in Clark County. There will be an emphasis on emerging industrial clusters that have a significant knowledge-based component, while continuing an emphasis on retention and expansion of existing businesses. Economic growth will be supported by master-planned and mixed-use developments in nodes of growth, which will also be the primary focus for infrastructure investments that support economic development.”*

### 9.1 County-Wide Planning Policies

- 9.1.1 The county and cities will demonstrate their commitment to long-term economic growth by promoting a diverse economic base, providing opportunity for all residents, including unemployed and disadvantaged persons. Growth which helps to measurably raise the average annual wage rate of community residents and preserves the environmental quality and livability of our community, is viable growth and will improve the lifestyle of Clark County residents.
- 9.1.2 The county and cities will demonstrate their commitment to the retention of those enterprises, which have created the economic base of the county, and promote their continued growth in a predictable environment, which encourages investment and job growth.
- 9.1.3 The county and cities will encourage long-term growth of businesses of all sizes, because economic diversification and stratification are important factors in overall job growth for the county and cities.
- 9.1.4 The county and cities will promote productivity and quality among its businesses to meet world and market standards for their products and services.
- 9.1.5 The county and cities will encourage higher educational levels for residents, and improvements in the measurable performance of high school graduates compared with other counties in the state.
- 9.1.6 The county and cities may give priority assistance to employers who will increase the standard of living in the community.
- 9.1.7 The county and cities will plan for long-term economic growth, which enhances the capacity of existing air shed for job-generating activities.
- 9.1.8 The county and cities will provide for orderly long-term commercial and industrial growth and an adequate supply of land suitable for compatible commercial and industrial development.

- 9.1.9 The county and cities will encourage the recruitment of new business employers to absorb the increasing labor force, and to supply long-term employment opportunities for county's residents who are currently employed outside of the State.
- 9.1.10 The county and cities will work together to establish specific common benchmarks that will measure the region's overall economic viability. These benchmarks will be included in the county's Comprehensive Plan and are encouraged to be included in each jurisdictions comprehensive plan.
- 9.1.11 The conversion of industrial or employment center lands to non-industrial or non-employment center districts shall occur only during the 10-year update provided for in (RCW 36.70A.130(3)) unless equivalent acreage within an existing UGA is re-designated industrial or employment center.
- 9.1.12 Encourage use of a multi-modal transportation system that facilitates the reduction of travel times and reduces the need for additional road construction within the region.
- 9.1.13 Following consultation with interested cities, the county may, consistent with state requirements, designate Major industrial developments (RCW 36.70A.365) and /or Master planned developments – Master planned locations (RCW 36.70A.367) outside urban growth areas. Appropriate or required Intergovernmental Agreements consistent with the provisions of the state law shall accompany such designation

## Rural

The following goals and policies are not county-wide and applies only to the unincorporated areas.

**GOAL:** *Continue to identify targeted industries to guide public policy, infrastructure development, workforce training, and other economic development initiatives.*

## 9.2 Policies

- 9.2.1 Encourage long-term business investments that generate net fiscal benefits to the region, protect environmental quality, and are consistent with the objective of higher wage jobs for Clark County residents.
- 9.2.2 Encourage public and not-for-profit partnerships with private business interests in generating economic development projects that would not otherwise occur without the cooperation of all sectors.
- 9.2.3 Promote a diverse economic base, providing economic opportunity for all residents, including unemployed, under-employed, and special needs populations.
- 9.2.4 Provide priority assistance to employers who pay a family wage and thereby improve the region's standard of living.

**GOAL:** *Assure an adequate supply of prime industrial sites to meet market demands for industrial development over the planning horizon to create an environment conducive for the startup, growth, and expansion of “targeted” industries.*

### 9.3 Policies

- 9.3.1 In cooperation with local jurisdictions, maintain a minimum ten-year supply of prime industrial land based on average absorption rates over the last five years.
- Designate the necessary acreage of vacant prime industrial land for the 20-year planning period.
  - Discourage removal of land from the inventory that results in a less than 10-year supply of prime industrial sites.
  - Update inventories of industrial lands at least every ten years to reestablish the 20- year supply of industrial lands.
  - Encourage industrial land banking of large sites and “future urban reserve areas” to preserve large parcels at key locations for future industrial sites (per RCW 36.70A.367).
  - New industrial sites that are part of a major industrial land bank shall be required to have a minimum of 75 acres or more and shall not be subdivided less than 50 acres.
- 9.3.2 Designate sites for industrial use at locations that will be accessible from roadways of arterial classification or higher, potentially served with utilities, and free of major environmental constraints such as unsuitable soils, floodplains, archaeological sites, and wetlands. Program Focused Public Investment Areas and Capital Facilities Planning expenditures to assure development of these lands.
- 9.3.3 Maintain an adequate inventory of properties designated for industrial use and that are suitable for a mix of business and industrial park, light and heavy industrial uses; include properties developed by both private and public entities; and provide access to multimodal transportation services including motor freight, rail, and marine facilities.
- 9.3.4 Restrict rezoning of primary, secondary, and tertiary industrial parcels for non-industrial use by preserving industrial land exclusively for those permitted uses in the industrial zone within the urban growth areas (UGA's).
- 9.3.5 Consider amending the Comprehensive Plan Map and rezoning of prime, secondary and tertiary industrial or employment center lands to non-industrial or non-employment center uses, only after the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) determines that (1) such lands cannot feasibly be improved to prime industrial status due to physical conditions (such as topography, critical lands, street patterns, public services, existing lot arrangement, etc.), (2) a non-industrial or non-employment center designation and zoning is more appropriate in light of new circumstances and applicable planning policies, or (3) after other replacement sites within the existing UGA of equal or greater industrial potential have been designated industrial on the *Comprehensive Plan Map* and zoned to achieve no net loss of business park, office campus, and industrial lands.

**GOAL:** *Provide commercial sites adequate to meet a diversity of needs for retail, service, and institutional development in Clark County.*

#### **9.4 Policies**

- 9.4.1 In cooperation with local jurisdictions, maintain an adequate supply of commercial lands within designated urban growth areas, based on average absorption rates of the last five years plus an appropriate market factor.
- Designate sufficient commercial land for the 20-year planning period, preferably located within designated urban growth areas.
  - Discourage removal of commercial land from the inventory that results in a less than 10-year supply of commercial sites.
  - Update inventories of commercial lands at least every ten years.
  - Encourage infill and redevelopment of underutilized commercial sites.
- 9.4.2 Locate convenience-oriented retail and service developments adjacent to residential neighborhoods; encourage small-scale neighborhood commercial uses directly within residential areas.
- 9.4.3 Encourage commercial and mixed-use developments located on current or planned transit corridors; encourage transit-oriented site planning and design.
- 9.4.4 Maintain design guidelines to ensure that commercial projects are developed with minimal impact on surrounding land uses, are consistent with related community appearance/design guidelines, and assure pedestrian as well as vehicular access.
- 9.4.5 Permit home occupations that are consistent with the character of adjoining residential properties and neighborhoods.
- 9.4.6 Encourage responsible waterfront development for commercial uses where environmentally and economically feasible.

**GOAL:** *Provide a continuum of educational opportunities responsive to the changing needs of the work place locally and regionally.*

#### **9.5 Policies**

- 9.5.1 Encourage continuing education, skills upgrading, mentoring, and lifelong learning programs suitable for large and small employers.
- 9.5.2 Consider incentives to link proposed industrial development projects with job training, education, and housing programs.
- 9.5.3 Encourage improvement of the region's educational network, including K-12 and higher education.
- 9.5.4 Support conversion of Washington State University – Vancouver Campus (WSU) into a premier 4-year institution of higher education.

**GOAL:** *Promote long-term economic development that will improve air quality to attainment status and preserve air shed capacity to accommodate job generating activities.*

## 9.6 Policies

- 9.6.1 Give priority to industries and businesses creating family-wage jobs that operate within the available air shed capacity.
- 9.6.2 Encourage existing industries to reduce air pollution emissions in compliance with state and federal standards.

**GOAL:** *Encourage infrastructure development and services necessary to serve new industrial development.*

## 9.7 Policies

- 9.7.1 Coordinate the Capital Facilities Elements of local jurisdiction's plans so that infrastructure funding and construction is consistent with county-wide policies for industrial development.
- 9.7.2 Prioritize infrastructure development in advance of need to areas that are suitable for industrial development:
  - when siting a regional/corporate office development, land use compatibility, effectiveness, and family-wage jobs created shall be considered; and,
  - emphasis on infrastructure for development should be placed to serve major industrial areas with proximity to the I-5 corridor.
- 9.7.3 Encourage channel dredging/deepening of the Columbia River in order to expand support for deep-water vessels and industries dependent upon regional import-export trade.

**GOAL:** *Maintain and enhance opportunities for resource-based industries located on rural lands in Clark County.*

## 9.8 Policies

- 9.8.1 Encourage resource-based industries, including agricultural, forestry, and aggregate materials, which are consistent with rural lands goals and policies (Chapter 4, Rural and Natural Resources Element).
- 9.8.2 Implement programs to encourage agricultural and forestry management of smaller rural tracts consistent with sound environmental practices.

**GOAL:** *Provide incentives for "targeted" industries to guide public policy, infrastructure development, work force training, and other economic development initiatives. Incentives for targeted industries should focus on identified clusters for which the region has a strategic advantage and those supported by existing infrastructure and workforce base.*

## 9.9 Policies

- 9.9.1 Undertake county sponsored planning efforts in targeted areas to address industrial development and related commercial, open space, recreation, and critical land issues.

9.9.2 Conduct pertinent wetland delineation studies and master plans to identify areas for industrial, commercial, open space, recreation, and environmental uses, to include wetland banking.

## STRATEGIES

The following is the preferred set of strategies needed to implement the identified economic development goals and policies. The strategies fall into four areas: (1) industrial clusters, (2) industrial nodes, (3) projects of regional significance, and (4) economic development infrastructure. The Clark County Strategy and Action Plan is included in Appendix D.

- Focus on existing clusters where the region has a strategic advantage, are supported by existing infrastructure, and for which the county can provide a ready labor force.
- Identify existing new and emerging industrial clusters that offer the potential for growth within the local and regional economy. Refine the locational and supportive requirements for each cluster and recommend programs and public sector actions necessary to support sector growth.
- Fund regional targeted industry recruitment programs to attract new business investments and locations in Clark County.
- The Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) shall create a Targeted Industry Advisory Committee to advise Washington State University Vancouver and Clark College on the creation of strategies and programs to support targeted industries.
- Support the expansion of technical and professional training capabilities of Clark College and regional partners in those areas supporting targeted industries. In cooperation with WSUV, support establishment of a regional training center that offers career progression for those seeking advanced training in high-technology fields. Continue to support vocational skills training through the Clark County Skills Center and the Workforce Development Council.
- Increase the industrial land base to allow for large-acreage sites (greater than 75 acres) and support aggregation of land for large master-planned, mixed-use development on industrial lands.
- Support retail commercial development and residential development in order to create employment centers within nodes of growth.
- Allow for the development of a broader scope of non-retail office commercial uses on designated industrial lands to allow for the location of targeted industries. Routinely update development code to reflect the emerging market and economic demand for industrial development.
- Designate additional industrial land inventory in areas designated as nodes of growth sufficient to accommodate industrial clusters.
- Make targeted infrastructure investment in advance of business growth to guide development and to facilitate the development process.
- Create larger sites (greater than 75 acres) for industrial and corporate park development by using public sector mechanisms (e.g., ports and public development authorities) to aggregate smaller parcels.
- Establish industrial land banks in areas that have the capability and potential to support the development of targeted industrial clusters.

- Create and designate an area to be called the "Discovery Corridor" to further the growth of high technology and knowledge-based industries. Create a sub-area and infrastructure development plan in cooperation with the private sector to promote desired development and business within the corridor.
- Support the development of new broad-based funding mechanisms to finance infrastructure investments in support of focused industrial development and recoup investments as development occurs.
- Encourage inter-jurisdictional revenue sharing to support targeted investment.
- Support the improvement of the efficiency of the permit review process and a 60- to 90-day permit review for all priority projects.
- Regularly benchmark local development review processes against competitor regions with similar targeted industries with the intent to match or beat benchmarks for regions competing for like investments.
- Encourage all municipal jurisdictions to designate those commercial and industrial development proposals that result in significant economic benefits (including job creation, high-wage jobs, investment, and public revenue generation) as Projects of county-wide Significance. For such projects:
  - Develop expedited permitting processes and coordination mechanisms to facilitate economic development;
  - Create project advocates or permit teams within municipal permit authorities that provide individualized support and coordination; and
  - Establish a 60- to 90-day development review process benchmark.
- Conduct training sessions for public officials and staff on economic development to educate individuals regarding private sector perspectives of land development.
- Encourage and support public efforts that empower efficient development:
  - Create and fund a publicly owned and operated wetland mitigation bank to provide a convenient and efficient mechanism to convert low-value wetlands that impinge upon the development of industrial and commercial properties; and
  - Create sub-area plans for each node of growth to the level that developmental and environmental permits are available in a timely and efficient manner.
  - Create processes that allow pre-qualification of individual sites so development and environmental permits are available in a timely manner.
- Support transportation improvements in the interstate corridors to increase freight mobility and movement of the regional labor pool.
- Support the creation of the Clark County HCT system as proposed by the Portland/Vancouver I-5 Transportation and Trade Partnership.
- Support continued cooperation between regional port authorities to increase investment that improves the transportation of goods and services to export markets.

- Encourage the recruitment and location of compatible targeted industries, especially knowledge-based, high-wage businesses to Clark County.
- Support the economic transition and revitalization of downtown's through planning, targeted public investment, and business recruitment.
- Encourage the location and expansion of public administration facilities in core downtown areas.