

Economic Development

General

1. Economic Development strategies can be developed in a number of different ways. From a marketing campaign to creating a business friendly environment, e.g. streamlined permit procedures, tax incentives, etc. Identify at least 5 different general methods of economic development under which polices and strategies can be developed.
2. Identify at least 5 ways in which the development regulations can support economic development objectives.
3. What incentives can County government provide that will attract and assist new development and new tenants?
4. Is it important to perform a needs assessment of the types of businesses that residents want or is it better to let the market drive this issue?
5. How should the economic development sub-committee participate in the development of the other rules, e.g. signage rules being considered by the visual appearance group and the 525 overlay group, building size and height limits being considered by the visual appearance group, housing that may be allowed within the downtown core which is being considered by the affordable housing group?
6. The current project of creating rules for the Business General and Business Village designations is scheduled to conclude later this year. Economic development is an issue that requires implementation of strategies and ideas that is ongoing. How can the County, the Chamber and the sub-committee develop an initial plan that includes a framework for moving forward beyond the current project?

Specific to Business General and Business Village zones

7. The goal of the Business Village designation is to create a pedestrian friendly commercial area where businesses are small in scale and that consist primarily of retail, galleries, eateries, and offices. The goal of the Business General designation is to allow larger scale activity that is pedestrian friendly but also recognizes that people will drive their cars to these establishments, e.g. grocery store. Is it appropriate to develop strategies that are different for the types of businesses that are (or would be) in each of these designations? The Business General designation provides uses that serve the needs of the entire South Whidbey population – gas stations, grocery stores, athletic club, etc. The Business Village designation will no doubt serve South Whidbey, but it will likely attract tourists and residents of Freeland who can walk from their home to a coffee shop.
8. Is it appropriate to develop a marketing strategy that is geared towards tourists, or is the strategy more focused more on South Whidbey?