



Tacoma City of Tacoma

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



2013 - 2014

Strategic Framework & Action Plan

Tacoma's economic future depends on the implementation of a strategy that brings all of the assets of our beautiful, vibrant and friendly city together to attract, retain and expand businesses. See how the combined forces of our economic development professionals will achieve the goals of our community.

Strategic Framework & Action Plan

OVERVIEW

This document contains two sections focused on the economic vitality of Tacoma:

- A. Economic Development Strategic Framework
- B. Economic Development Action Plan

It was designed to provide an overview to investors, developers, our economic development partners, Council and staff. The overall strategy is a comprehensive 5-year framework, built on priorities that are recognizable to all of our partners. The plan contains description of priorities that are a “point in time”, and allow for dialog, fluidity and action with a sound goal of implementing new projects in Tacoma between today and the end of 2014.

INTRODUCTION | RELATIONSHIP TO CITY COUNCIL'S GOALS

The City Council is developing priorities for the City's future development; these priorities include:

1. Create Fiscal Sustainability Taskforce;
2. Develop and implement a marketing/communication campaign;
3. Make Tacoma more physically attractive;
4. Foster Neighborhood Business District revitalization;
5. Develop and implement a comprehensive transportation plan;
6. Implement Economic Development Strategic Framework.

These priorities inform the work that the Community & Economic Development Department staff does each day to implement and foster new development in our City. This is the basis of our Strategic Framework.

Strategic Framework

A Five-year Plan for the City and its Partners, in eight key areas:

1. Central City, Dome and Brewery Districts
2. Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship Services
3. Waterfront Development
4. Port of Tacoma and Industrial Districts
5. Business District and Neighborhood Revitalization
6. Workforce Development
7. Arts, Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Initiatives
8. Professional and Business-Friendly Government

CENTRAL CITY, DOME & BREWERY DISTRICTS VITALITY: LAND AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Prioritize Infrastructure Improvements Associated with Catalytic Economic Development and Redevelopment Projects
- Pro-actively Market the development and reuse of High Impact/High Value City-Owned and Privately-Owned Properties

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SERVICES

- Support Entrepreneurship, Incubators and Small Businesses with Technical Support
- Partner with Higher Learning Institutions such as UWT, Bates Technical College, UPS, PLU, TCC and others to provide technical training for start-up small businesses including retired military personnel seeking to launch businesses

BUSINESS ATTRACTION, RETENTION & EXPANSION EFFORTS

- Focus on attracting industry which positively impacts the City's tax base, creates jobs and positively impacts the budget;
- Focus on retaining and expanding industry which generate significant revenues and offer good paying jobs and essential services for the local community and minimize revenue leakage to neighboring communities

PORT OF TACOMA AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Strengthen relationship and communications with the Port and focus to recruit companies to vacant and undeveloped sites and create more jobs
- Seek to expand the Innovation Partnership Zone (IPZ)
- Focus on business retention and expansion of existing industrial firms

BUSINESS DISTRICT AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

- Strengthen business district retail to its full potential, maximizing revenue impact and neighborhood livability
- Create more walkable, vibrant, mixed-use environments to spur interaction and attract talent
- Encourage and support adaptive reuse of existing buildings and infill development

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Strengthen the Quality and Competitiveness of Tacoma's Workforce
- Establish Business Development & Training Opportunities in Partnership with Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Higher Learning Institutions and Neighborhood Organizations focused on ethnic and economically challenged communities

CULTURE, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INITIATIVES

- Position Tacoma as a Destination City
- Partner with the Tacoma Regional Convention & Visitor Bureau, Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to promote the arts, culture, venues and other events and attractions

PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT:

- Foster a Supportive Business Friendly Environment
- Expedited Development Review Process and Stream-Lined Regulatory Review

Action Plan

INTENT OF A TWO-YEAR PLAN

With market conditions often changing, preparation of a two-year Economic Development Action Plan is most practical. It can be updated every eighteen (18) months based on an evaluation of market conditions, council priorities, available real estate, financing and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the prior 18 months. It should be noted that although this is an eighteen (18) month plan, as part of the biennium budget, Council will evaluate the effectiveness of the plan during the latter half of 2014 as part of the process to prepare the next biennium budget.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

The Plan relies on a collaborative approach including participation from several city departments, economic development partners and the broader community.

The Five Elements include:

1. Business Attraction & Retention
2. International Development & Relationships
3. Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship
4. Downtown Development & Revitalization
5. Neighborhood Revitalization

BUSINESS ATTRACTION & RETENTION

This involves attracting, retaining and expanding industrial, office, retail and restaurant uses working in collaboration with the private development community as well as our economic development partners. Key Strategies Include:

- A. Auto Dealers. Forming an active auto dealer association and seeking ways to retain and expand dealers along S. Tacoma Way.
- B. Industrial Uses. Forming an active industrial association as a method to retain and expand existing firms and recruit new companies to fill vacant sites and buildings.
- C. National Retailers and Restaurants. Working in tandem with Tacoma Mall and other shopping center owners throughout the City to pro-actively recruit national retailers and restaurants which are not presently in this market area and will serve to reduce sales tax leakage while increasing sales tax revenues and jobs for the local community.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SERVICES

The City maintains partnerships with several organizations and higher learning institutions which offer a wide array of programs and services including incubators, financing, technical workshops, and more.

- A. Procurement Program. Launch a program which creates training and opportunities for local companies including minority-women-owned businesses to procure contracts with local, county, state, federal, military and other governmental agencies.
- B. Incubators and Entrepreneurial Programs. Support existing incubators and programs including providing assistance with marketing and technical support.
- C. Financing Workshops. Collaborate with private lenders and SBA to host financing workshops.
- D. Start-Up Companies. Collaborate with local partners to host workshops for entrepreneurs, retired military personnel and minority-women-owned businesses.
- E. Round Table Events. Support home-based and small tech-related businesses with round table meetings to encourage networking and advice on growing their businesses.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & RELATIONSHIPS

This is key to improving the image of Tacoma and drawing foreign investment.

- A. Port of Tacoma. Maintain regular communications with Port staff to ascertain new and expanding industry and seek ways to leverage foreign investment in the City beyond the Port.
- B. World Trade Center. The World Trade Center works with small and medium size businesses to promote import and export activity and works with foreign investors to attract foreign direct investment to Tacoma.
- C. Sister City Program. The City currently has 12 sister cities. Staff will proactively seek ways to attract expansion of companies in sister city countries to Tacoma.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT & REVITALIZATION

Maintaining an active strategy to market high priority city-owned properties, underutilized privately-owned properties and drawing private investment from outside the City will be key.

- A. Market City's High Priority Sites for Sale/Lease, etc.
- B. Promote development in the Dome and Brewery Districts (including medical facilities)
- C. Market Downtown sites to developers and investors locally, regionally and nationally
- D. Support revitalization of Foss Waterway Project
- E. Explore potential to recruit a hotel for the Convention Center (priority site)
- F. Explore the feasibility for a mixed-use catalytic project Downtown consisting of residential, retail, restaurant & theater uses

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Tacoma is home to several business districts including Sixth Avenue, 26th/Proctor, Old Town, Lincoln & others. There are several opportunities to capitalize on the business activity by recruiting locally-serving companies and supporting mixed-use development where appropriate.

- A. Support medical center expansion along the Martin Luther King District Neighborhood as well as mixed-use, artist live/work and workforce housing
- B. Consider affordable live/work development as another option to fulfill affordable housing by creating housing for entrepreneurs and artists
- C. Assist private owners of underutilized properties to either develop or recruit developers to support mixed-use, residential and commercial developments

OTHER KEY STRATEGIES

There are several other areas where the Community & Economic Development Department will be involved but not play lead role:

- 1. Ombudsperson for businesses and development going through City's Development Review Process.
- 2. Infrastructure Development & Renovations. Cooperation with City's Public Works Department, Tacoma Water & Utility companies to upgrade infrastructure.
- 3. Hospitality & Tourism. Assist the Convention & Visitor Bureau to market the City for events and conferences. Assist South Sound Sports in recruiting amateur sports to the Dome and other sports venues.
- 4. Arts and Culture. Support the marketing of arts and cultural venues as a component of economic development. Support the creation of unique arts programs and installation of public art throughout the City. Promote affordable live/work developments to support low-income artists and entrepreneurs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

City of Tacoma

Community & Economic Development Department

Ricardo Noguera, Director

RNOGUERA@CITYOFTACOMA.ORG

(253) 591-5139

TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM

City Of Tacoma Community And Economic Development Department: Primarily responsible for business entrepreneurship, retention, expansion and attraction, deal-making and project implementation, including liaison with all City and TPU departments. Also assumes ombudsman role for major projects.

- **Economic Development Division:** Marketing, supporting business districts, conducting marketplace research, facilitating workshops, providing business loans, preparing proposals, negotiating development agreements, assisting with acquisition of New Markets Tax Credits and obtaining Federal/State funding. Meet with >200 Tacoma businesses annually to generate new U.S. and foreign investment as well as job creation.

Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County: Primarily responsible for retention, expansion and recruitment of primary businesses. Meet with >180 Pierce County companies annually to assist with problems related to permitting, financing, workforce, etc. Recruitment focuses on high-wage employers and on downtown Tacoma as an employment center for Pierce County.

Executive Council for a Greater Tacoma: Works on a project-specific basis, especially to improve the infrastructure and vitality of downtown Tacoma. Also engages in strategic matters at the State Capital in Olympia with a focus on expanding educational opportunities in the South Sound.

Pierce County Office of the Executive, Economic Development Division: Primarily responsible for providing technical assistance to new and existing businesses through referrals, demographic information and statistical analysis, assistance in obtaining permits and advocacy for supportive business regulations and legislation. Also organizes educational forums and works on special projects to enhance the County's business climate.

Port of Tacoma Economic Development and Government Affairs Department: Focuses on shipping and industrial development.

Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce: Provides business advocacy and member services to create and sustain economic opportunity. Lobbies at state, federal and local levels on business and community development issues. Conducts numerous events including business networking, local economic forecasts, seminars, luncheons, commute trip reduction, business sustainability practices, provides group benefits program, manages BIA and provides administrative assistance to the Tacoma Angel Network.

Tacoma Regional Convention + Visitor Bureau: Primarily responsible for generating business activity for the tourism industry through meeting planners, tour operators and travel consumers by using direct sales and marketing.

WorkSource: Provides services to increase the competitiveness of job seekers and businesses, including recruitment pre-screening and job matching; electronic job postings and resume banks; assistance arranging customized training; business, industry and economic trend information and workplace consultations.

World Trade Center: Trains companies on importing and exporting, provides trade-related research and matchmaking, hosts foreign dignitaries, organizes overseas trade missions, manages Tacoma-Fuzhou China Trade Program and conducts annual Globe Awards to recognize successful exporters.