

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: October 16, 2013

TO: Michael Drollinger, Planning Commission Chair
Members of Renton Planning Commission

FROM: Elizabeth Higgins, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update - Economic Development Element

ISSUE

Draft policies have been proposed that would update the current Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element.

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed policies of the Economic Development Element now include applicable policies from the Environmental Element regarding sustainability; policies from adopted city plans; and those from state, regional, and county plans that are consistent with Renton's economic development goals. The policies have been simplified and consolidate policy language for clarity.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

An update of the Renton Comprehensive Plan Update is required to be submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce in June 2015. Following a workshop on June 25, 2013, at which public comment was taken on aspects of Renton's economic health; city staff analyzed the goals, objectives, and policies of the current Economic Development Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, verifying their relevancy and incorporating policies from other Comprehensive Plan elements as seemed appropriate. A lengthy list of policies to be added based on Countywide Planning Policies, state mandates, and Puget Sound regional directives was reviewed to determine applicability to Renton.

The following are the proposed policies that would update the Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Element:

1. Develop incentives for businesses to locate, stay, and expand in within the City: providing incentives for Economic Development within the city's urban center, neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors.

2. Promote targeted local and regional industry cluster development: meet with top employers and key organizations to identify and discuss their future needs to determine how the City can assist them in being successful in expanding in Renton.
3. Foster communications with, and support for key local and regional economic foundations: support partnerships between businesses, government, schools, and research institutions to implement economic development policies and promote workforce development programs.
4. Develop a retail recruitment strategy with an emphasis on business district development.
5. Implement strategies to foster and expand knowledge-based businesses, high profile companies, and locally owned startups.
6. Ensure Renton's Economic Development Element is consistent with countywide economic policies and strategies in accordance with relevant Countywide Planning Policies.
7. Provide transparency, efficiency, and uniformity of City regulations, policies, and procedures: allocate sufficient resources to process development projects quickly and professionally.
8. Define and develop Renton's unique cultural, historic, recreational, educational, and environmental assets as important marketing and image-building tools of the City's business districts and neighborhoods.
9. Support Downtown Renton Redevelopment: engage Downtown stakeholders and business community members with efforts to implement the City Council's priorities for the City Center Community Plan.
10. Promote incentives for multi-family development in Downtown: work with prospective single-family and multi-family developers to facilitate new residential development with a diversity of housing types and price ranges to meet the future needs of Renton citizens.
11. Promote investment in mixed-use centers and compact urban development (including density, redevelopment, and infill design; encouraging growth and balance of employment and housing opportunities within designated urban centers.
12. Facilitate the Sunset Area Community Revitalization: engage with Renton Housing Authority and prospective developers to identify additional opportunities for the City to leverage successful capital investment in the Sunset Area.

13. Foster economic and employment growth by encouraging local investment, planning, and financial policies that advance the development of commercial, manufacturing, and industrial development centers.
14. Encourage investments that address future needs: focus investment in infrastructure and services in designated centers that align with the City's projected population, housing, and job growth targets.
15. Implement the Renton Airport Compatible Land Use Program (adopted 2004) when guiding development within the Airport Influence Area.
16. Further the provisions of Creating Renton's Clean Economy (adopted 2011): attract low-carbon and clean-energy sectors and promote green job development. Encourage economic activity that is highly resource-efficient and minimizes the generation of waste and pollution.
17. Promote the efficient use of services and resources, including conserving water and energy, reducing waste, and protecting resource lands. Work cooperatively with local businesses to help protect the natural environment in a manner that is efficient and predictable.
18. Provide peripheral support to community services to facilitate the growth of a regional food economy through the development and expansion of local farmers' markets, food co-ops, and community supported agriculture programs.
19. Support the Departments of Public Works and Community Services, the Department of Community and Economic Development Planning Division, and The Renton Housing Authority to encourage economic development strategies that address disparities in income and employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged populations, including minorities and women.
20. Develop and promote local arts and culture programs, particularly by supporting the Renton Municipal Arts Commission: encourage investments in creative industries and centers, bolster earned income for local attractions, and generate new tax revenues for the City by attracting cultural tourists to the city while expanding cultural experiences for residents.
21. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical, cultural, and/or archaeological significance.