



# Economic Development Element

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## Economic Development Element

### Goals

- EDG1** Add approximately 84,000 jobs in the city over the 20-year period covered by this Plan, in order to ensure long-term economic security and social equity to all Seattle residents.
- EDG1.5** Establish Seattle as a place where average wages are high and costs of living are reasonable so that the city can accommodate households at a wide range of income levels.
- EDG2** Recognize that Seattle's high quality of life is one of its competitive advantages and promote economic growth that maintains and enhances this quality of life.
- EDG3** Support the Urban Village Strategy by encouraging the growth of jobs in Urban Centers and Hub Urban Villages and by promoting the health of neighborhood commercial districts.
- EDG4** Accommodate a broad mix of jobs, while actively seeking a greater proportion of living wage jobs that will have greater benefits to a broad cross-section of the people of the City and region.
- EDG5** Encourage the growth of key economic sectors that build on Seattle's competitive advantages to provide sustained growth in the future.
- EDG6** Develop a highly trained and well educated local work force that effectively competes for meaningful and productive employment, earns a living wage and meets the needs of business.

- EDG7** Foster a positive business climate in Seattle by ensuring adequate public services, infrastructure, and high-quality customer service.
- EDG8** Promote access to working capital and other forms of financial assistance, in order to build a stronger economic future for all Seattle citizens and to nurture entrepreneurship, innovation and business growth.
- EDG9** Maintain Seattle's competitive advantage in international trade.
- EDG10** Recognize Seattle's cultural resources including institutions, art organizations, traditions, historic resources and creative people as important contributors to the city's economic vitality.
- EDG11** Support the retention and growth of the industrial sector, retain existing businesses and small firms, and actively seek to attract new industrial businesses.

### discussion

A strong Seattle and Puget Sound economy is a critical underpinning of a positive future for Seattle and is a central component of the Urban Village strategy. The Comprehensive Plan promotes a sound economy through planning for future growth in ways that maintain the city's high quality of life by directing facilities and services to areas that support jobs and by identifying and encouraging economic sectors that offer the best opportunities for new job creation and future economic growth. A diverse and stable economy offers long-term economic opportunity and social equity to all Seattle residents. Promoting affordability for Seattle residents as part of the overall strategy for economic development in the city will result in tangible benefits that improve the economic vitality of Seattle.



City government has limited ability to directly influence the economy, and thus must be strategic in its activities and use of resources. Through a Strategic Action Plan the City will implement the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and will undertake economic development initiatives that build on its competitive economic advantages to enhance its economic base. Realizing the increasingly international nature of the local economy and the pace of technological change, the City will monitor the economy and will periodically alter and refine the goals and policies in this element in response to on-going changes in the economy. In addition to the goals and policies of this element, the Comprehensive Plan contains a number of goals and policies in other elements that complement the Economic Development element.

A

## Economic Development & the Urban Village Strategy

### discussion

Central to the City's economic development efforts is the urban village strategy. Through the urban village strategy future growth is directed to areas that are supported by strategic investments in facilities and services to support this growth. By focusing growth in urban centers and urban villages this approach leads to greater proximity of jobs to housing and efficient investment in transportation and other infrastructure to support both business and neighborhood needs. Similarly, by directing industrial businesses to manufacturing/industrial centers, the City is able to more efficiently and effectively deliver services and invest in infrastructure that supports these businesses.

### policies

- ED1** Strive to maintain the economic health and importance of downtown as the economic center of the city and the region and home to many of Seattle's vital professional service firms, high technology companies, regional retail activity, as well as cultural, historic, entertainment, convention and tourist facilities.
- ED2** Pursue opportunities for growth and strategic development, where appropriate, in urban centers and hub urban villages, which are planned for the greatest concentrations of jobs and job growth outside of downtown.
- ED3** Strive to provide a wide range of goods and services to residents and businesses in urban centers and villages by encouraging appropriate retail development in these areas.
- ED4** Use cultural resources, such as public art and historic resources, as a tool for stimulating economic development in Seattle's neighborhoods, as these resources provide attractions that can draw people to and enhance public perception of an area.
- ED5** Use plans adopted for the manufacturing/ industrial centers to help guide investments and policy decisions that will continue to support the retention and growth of industrial activities in these areas. Continue collaboration with both geographically-focused and citywide organizations representing industrial interests so that the needs and perspectives of this sector can be recognized and incorporated, as appropriate, into the City's actions and decisions.



- ED6** Work with other levels of government and with the private sector to support and encourage the cleanup of contaminated soil and other environmental remediation associated with the re-use or expansion of industrial sites.
- ED7** Strive, through efforts with other public jurisdictions, to address the problems of site assembly, infrastructure improvements and traffic congestion which may inhibit industrial expansion in industrial areas.
- ED8** Strive to assist industrial firms in addressing capital needs through mechanisms such as the issuance of industrial development bonds or by expanding small business financing programs to assist manufacturers.
- ED9** Strive to address the special needs of areas in Seattle that historically have experienced less economic opportunity and that have high concentrations of people living in economic hardship.
  - a. Seek to provide resources to assist in planning for distressed communities and assist low-income areas in developing and implementing economic development strategies.
  - b. Attempt to gain state and federal special area designations for lower-income Seattle communities where such designation can confer tangible benefits.
  - c. Target programmatic resources, including small business capital access and entrepreneurship training programs, as well as new infrastructure investment toward the economic development objectives of distressed areas.
  - d. Support the role of community-based organizations in planning and implementing economic development activities in distressed communities.

**B Sectoral Strategies**

**discussion**

The City's ability to affect the local economy is limited because local economic conditions are the result of national and international economic forces outside the control of the City. Nevertheless, the city possesses competitive advantages and economic resources that can be used to promote a growing local economy. By identifying key sectors of the economy in which the city has a competitive advantage, the City can take specific actions to promote the local economy.

**policies**

- ED10** Encourage key sectors of Seattle's economy that provide opportunities for long term growth. Criteria for identifying sectors to support include the following:
  - Pay higher-than-average wage levels;
  - Bring new capital into the economy, reflecting multiplier effects other than high wage;
  - Have reasonably good future growth prospects;
  - Involve a cluster of businesses engaging in similar activities;
  - Use quality environmental practices; or
  - Diversify the regional economic base.

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**B**

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- ED11** Recognize the importance of tourism and its support of international trade as well as its contribution to the health of the Seattle retail core. Recognize the important contribution of historic districts such as Pioneer Square and the Pike Place Market to tourism, and support the continued protection and enhancement of these districts.
- ED12** Seek ways to create a local business environment that promotes the establishment, retention, and expansion of high-technology industries in the city. Where possible, look for opportunities to link these businesses to existing research institutions, hospitals, educational institutions and other technology businesses.
- ED13** Seek ways to assist clusters of related businesses in advanced manufacturing, information technology and biotechnology to collaborate more closely with one another and to market themselves as magnets for capital, research talent and high-skill jobs.
- ED14** Seek ways to support technology transfer and other efforts that increase the global competitiveness of Seattle's exporters in advanced manufacturing, information technology, biotechnology and services in cooperation with other jurisdictions and with major education and research institutions.
- ED15** Preserve and support continued use of suitable shoreline areas for water-dependent and related businesses involved in ship-building and repair, fisheries, tug and barge, provisioning and the cruise-ship industries.
- ED16** Support national policies which stabilize maritime industries and promote their expansion.

- ED16.5** Support key sectors of Seattle's economy to create jobs that pay wages that can support a family, provide necessary benefits, and contribute to the vitality of the City including, but not limited to, the industrial, manufacturing, service, hospitality and retail sectors.

## c

**Labor Force Education, Development & Training****discussion**

A skilled and competitive workforce is important to the city's growth and prosperity. While not having direct control over the education of its citizens, the City has a responsibility to advocate actively on their behalf. The following policies encourage employers, employee organizations and education and training institutions to provide all Seattle residents opportunities for academic and professional education, training and retraining. Certain policies related to education and employability may be found in Section D of the Human Development Element.

**policies**

- ED17** Work with the Seattle Public Schools to improve the quality of public education, identify opportunities to help implement the district's strategic planning goals, and increase the likelihood that all young people will complete high school having achieved the competency needed to continue their education or enter the work force.



**ED18** Facilitate the creation of coalitions of business, labor, civic and educational institutions, including community colleges, to develop competency-based education and training programs for Seattle community members that are targeted to the needs of business. This may include vocational training programs, apprenticeship programs, entrepreneurial skills training, customized on-site training and technical and vocational preparatory programs at the high school level.

**ED19** Support employability development and entry-level and career employment efforts for low-income youth and adults, people of color, women, individuals with disabilities and the homeless.

**ED20** Work with employers, nonprofits, educational institutions and social service agencies to create opportunities for people in training, retraining or working to meet their dependent care needs.

**ED21** Promote regional approaches to better link individuals in distressed communities with job resources and living-wage job opportunities in growing employment sectors (see policies related to Sectoral Strategies later in this element).

**ED22** Encourage the development of training programs for people currently employed so they may improve the skills they use in their current jobs or expand their skills into new arenas.

**ED23** Encourage and facilitate the development of programs for dislocated workers to assist in a successful transition to new jobs.

**ED24** Strive to increase access to literacy development and English-as-a-Second Language programs for those in need of assistance in overcoming literacy and language barriers to employability.

**ED25** Encourage educational and training institutions to provide education in foreign languages, geography and international affairs in order to enable people to better function in the international economy.

**ED26** Offer apprenticeship and other workplace learning opportunities in Seattle City government, with particular emphasis on providing access to low income youth and young adults from diverse cultures and races.

**ED26.5** Assist working families by increasing access to training and social service resources.

**D Business Climate**

**discussion**

A positive relationship between government, residents, and business is important to the well-being of the city. Business needs cover the range from those of major employers and institutions to small businesses.

**policies**

**ED27** Foster a positive entrepreneurial environment for business start-up and expansion and support the retention of Seattle's existing business and major institution base.

**ED28** Support the development of Seattle's major public and non-profit institutions because they contribute to a diversified economy, bring living wage jobs, stimulate new economic activity, supply capital to the local economy, develop and promote advanced technology, and provide substantial public benefits and needed services to Seattle's residents.



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- ED29** Support Seattle's artists, arts organizations, and institutions because of their significant contributions to the city's healthy business climate; their role in creating a cultural environment that attracts other living wage employers, as well as tourists, to the region; and the substantial benefits they provide to Seattle's residents and communities.
- ED30** Recognize the importance of the business climate in efforts to encourage the expansion of international trade in Seattle and the region. Consider support of programs to expand export opportunities for goods and services through the city. Also, consider support of programs to improve and maintain international cooperation. Examples of programs include industry-specific international trade fairs, export trade linkages for home-grown businesses, and Sister Cities programs.
- ED31** Support regulatory reform in order to strike a balance between the financial impacts of regulation on businesses and developers, and maintaining an appropriate level of safeguards for the environment and worker safety, consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.
- ED32** For regulatory activities that affect land development, consider ways to achieve greater predictability and efficiency in the review of permit applications, consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan.
- ED33** Consider use of programmatic environmental impact statements (PEIS) for geographic-specific plans which may help reduce the permit processing time and increase predictability for individual development projects.
- ED34** Recognize the importance of maintaining and enhancing the City's tax base, including property taxes, sales taxes and business and occupation taxes, to provide

funds for capital facilities and City services for existing and future populations.

- ED35** Periodically assess the effects of City policies regarding taxes, fees, or utility rates on economic development goals, considering the balance between economic development goals, financial health of City government, cumulative debt and tax burdens of overlapping jurisdictions, and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ED36** Strive to increase communication among government, businesses, major institutions and other entities that may provide economic opportunities, in order to: (a) enhance the common understanding of issues related to employment growth, business competitiveness, public policy goals and program implementation and (b) promote partnerships between government and business to achieve the goals of this plan.
- ED37** Strive to anticipate and lessen the impacts of involuntary job changes through efforts to retain businesses in Seattle and by providing those businesses with the opportunity to thrive.
- ED38** Strive to work with the business community and the residential community equitably to identify and promote areas of common interest and to facilitate the resolution of conflicts in a manner that recognizes and respects legitimate differences.
- ED39** Strive to improve coordination of information and services among government offices which affect the viability of business in Seattle. Seek to better coordinate changes to City policies and programs with other jurisdictions within the region, in order to more effectively participate in the development and implementation of state, regional and county economic development goals.



**ED40** Periodically analyze available economic information to understand the City's economic base and the regional economy in order to review and adjust as needed the City's economic development goals and policies.

**E**

**Infrastructure & Capital Facilities**

**discussion**

An adequate infrastructure is fundamental to Seattle's ability to attract and retain jobs, to enhance business growth and use existing development capacity to achieve job growth targets. The following policies supplement the policies in the capital facilities and transportation elements by addressing ways in which the City's infrastructure plans and capital investment decisions can support its economic development goals. Additional detail may be found in these other Plan elements.

**policies**

- ED41** Seek to coordinate, where appropriate, City investment in utilities, transportation and other public facilities with business, employment and economic development opportunities.
- ED42** Encourage deployment of improvements in technology and the telecommunications system within Seattle with the goals of:
  - a. Equitable access for all service providers that use the distribution network in reaching their customers.
  - b. Competition that promotes state of the art services and competitive pricing.
  - c. Universal access to citizens, businesses and institutions within Seattle.
  - d. Effectiveness based on:
    - 1. flexibility,
    - 2. system security,
    - 3. reliability, and
    - 4. affordability.

economic development element

**E**



- ED43** Take into consideration the ability of technology and telecommunications technology to enhance the provision of City services to citizens and businesses when making City investments in communications and computer systems.
- ED44** Encourage the development of technology and telecommunications infrastructure city-wide and region-wide.

## F Business Start-Up & Growth

### discussion

The majority of businesses in Seattle have fewer than 10 employees. Sectors with a high proportion of small businesses include construction, wholesale trade, manufacturing, retail and related services. Working capital and other forms of financial assistance are an important component of business start-up and growth.

### policies

- ED45** Continue to promote close working relationships between Seattle's financial institutions and its business community. Where appropriate, promote the development of new initiatives and innovative programs to lower the cost of borrowing or to assist small business growth, through increased access to capital.
- ED46** Where appropriate, support efforts to assist small business through technical assistance for business start-up and/or expansion.
- ED47** Recognize that artists make a significant contribution to the local economy as small businesses, and support efforts to ensure that Seattle's artist communities may thrive within the city.