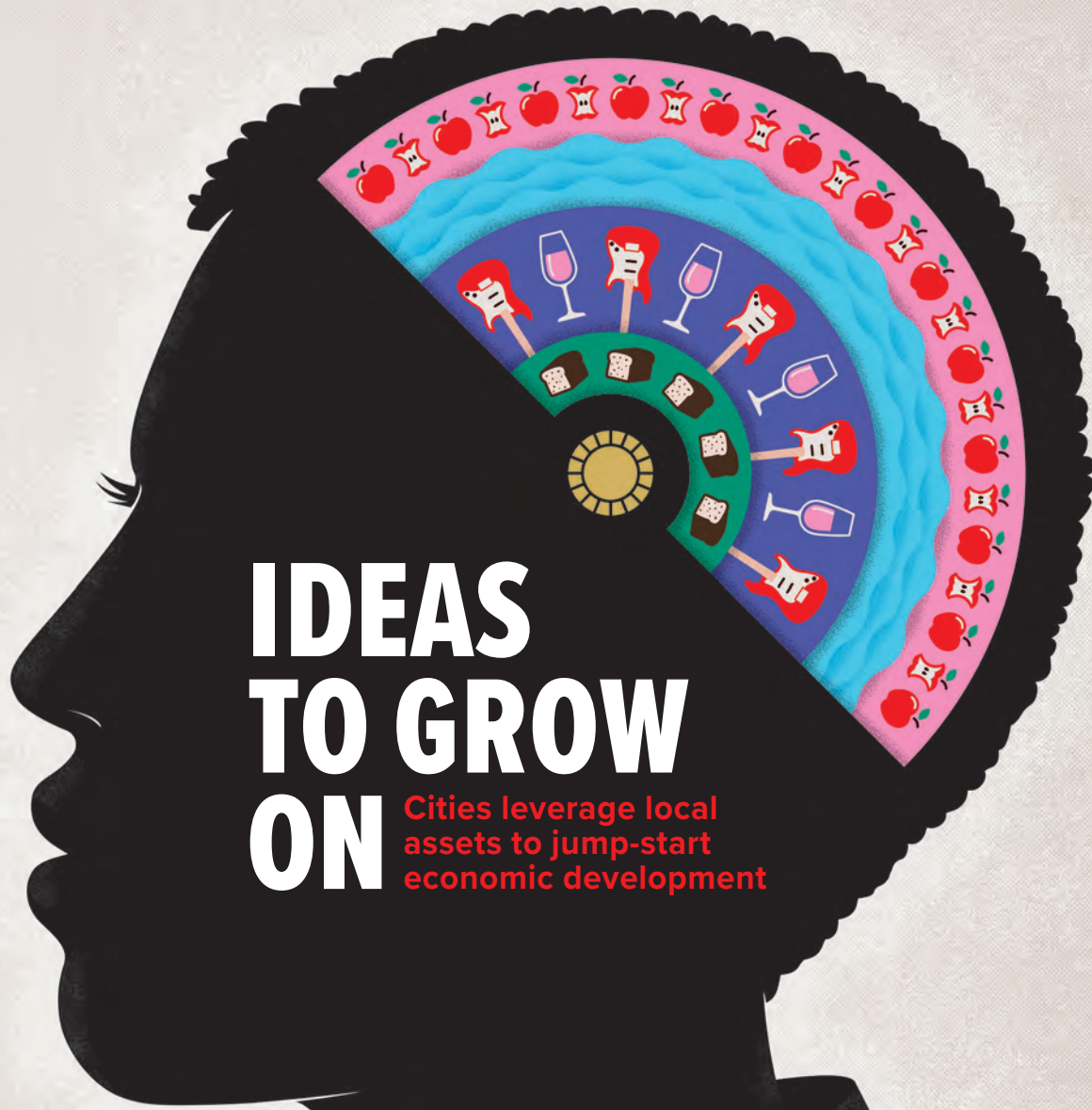


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THE ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON CITIES **MAGAZINE**



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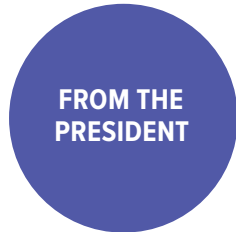
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As we prepare to go to print on this issue of *Cityvision*, our state, nation, and world are in the grips of uncertainty.

To slow the spread of Covid-19, schools across the state have shut their doors, along with many businesses. Financial markets are wildly volatile. City leaders are focused on providing basic services and accurate information to their residents. At such a time, what is there to say about municipal economic development?

Here's what I can say with some certainty: the economy of our state relies on the cities in our state. And our cities, in turn, rely on their small businesses. Sales tax, B&O tax, and job-generating businesses are disproportionately driven by Washington's 281 cities and towns.

Despite the efforts of local leaders, Washington is often at a disadvantage when competing with other states. Our state doesn't have a wide variety of incentives that local leaders can use to lure the right companies. City leaders have noticed the disadvantage: according to AWC's 2020 State of the Cities, 94 percent of cities report that creating new and enhanced state programs to help spur economic development would have a significant positive community impact.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is one common-sense measure that could be particularly effective.

The tool would give cities funding options that would allow them to build the public infrastructure necessary to accommodate new industry. Some version of TIF has been successfully implemented in 49 states and Washington, DC. It's time for our state leaders to level the playing field for Washington.

Think of what TIF could do for two changing industries: housing and retail. Many communities find themselves with a housing crisis that could be greatly alleviated by more affordable housing. Those same communities often have vacant, big-box retail properties located at their hearts. What if those communities could use TIF funding to convert these vacant retail properties into affordable housing units? It's an idea worth considering.

In the face of uncertainty, I hope you'll be encouraged as you read what your peers across the state are doing to spur their own economies and contribute to the financial health of our state.

Sincerely,

Ed Stern
Councilmember, Poulsbo

Cityvision

03/04.20

Vancouver's Grant Street Pier takes the Southwest Washington community to the river
WATER WORKS,
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When it comes to economic development, Washington's cities tap the staples: bread, apples, and—naturally—outdoor recreation. And in our popular **NOTED** feature, we look at the substantial potential of Tax Increment Financing.

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BY KIRSTEN DOBROTH

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A reminder that it may be wise to shoot for the stars

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Citybeat



Railroad to Riches

Buckley joins neighboring cities on a rails-to-trails recreation path to commercial vitality.

A LITTLE OVER 30 years ago, when the City of Buckley and Pierce County officials first floated the idea of converting a 21-mile stretch of decommissioned Burlington Northern railbed into a linear regional park, detractors dismissed the project as a boondoggle. As envisioned, the proposed Foothills Rails-to-Trails network would begin in Buckley and head mostly west along the flanks of Mount Rainier, connecting the community of 5,000 with South Prairie, Orting, and Puyallup—and one day perhaps even Tacoma—via a 12-foot-wide asphalt recreation path.

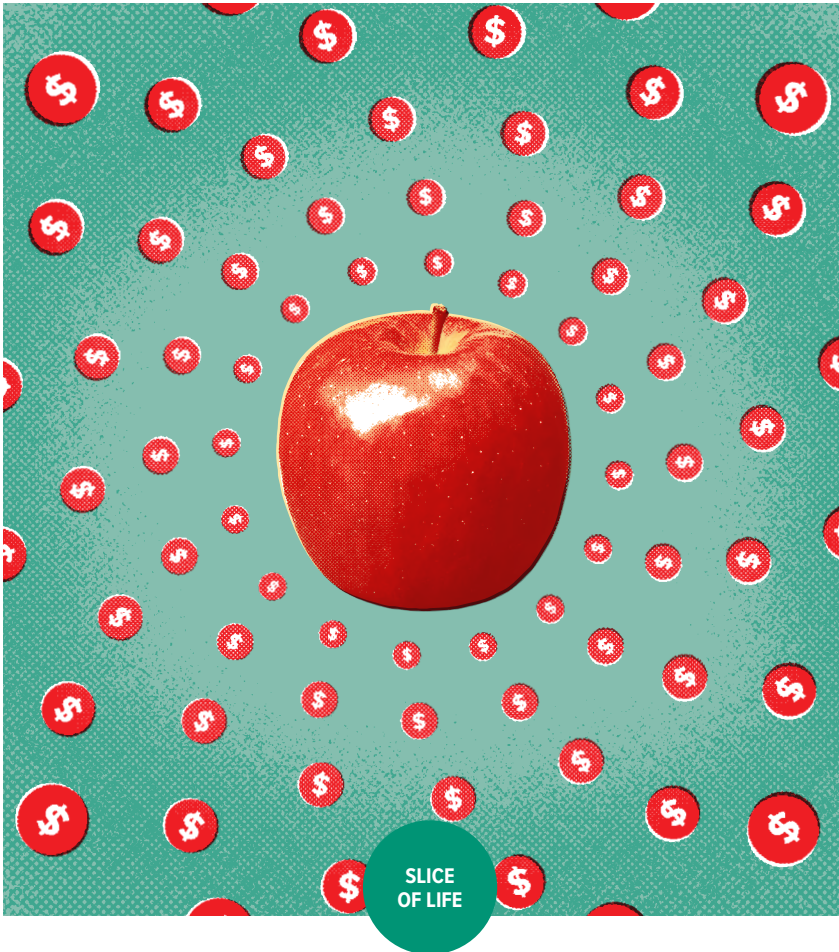
“The railroad had come through and removed all the railroad

ties, and the city owned the right-of-way,” says Buckley Mayor Pat Johnson of the mile-long section that would cut through the city’s downtown. “With grant money and volunteer labor, Buckley was able to build the first mile of the Foothills Trail.”

In 1998, Pierce County officials decided to build an additional mile of trail in Orting despite local opposition, since the county owned the right-of-way to that section of the old railbed.

“People nearly laid down in front of the bulldozers,” recalls Johnson. “But as soon as it was paved, they discovered people were using the trail: they have a huge parking lot and park that runs parallel to the trail right through **CONTINUED ON P.10** ▶

NOTED ▶ TAX INCREMENT FINANCING **THE QUESTION** ▶ WHAT ARE YOUR COMING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES? **TRAINING** ▶ E-LEARNING FOR A SOCIAL DISTANCING AGE



Seed Money

Wenatchee boosts its home-grown economy with a Cosmic development.

BY JENNIFER KRAZIT

ALTHOUGH WASHINGTON has long been the top apple producer in the United States, accounting for 65 percent of the country’s fresh supply, the state lacked one important asset: its own branded apple variety. Honeycrisp hails from Minnesota, Fuji from Japan, Gala from New Zealand. Even the ubiquitous Red Delicious originated in Iowa.

Finally, Washington has WA 38, a Honeycrisp/Enterprise hybrid dubbed Cosmic Crisp for its sweet, tart flavor, explosive juiciness, and crunchy texture. “The Cosmic Crisp was developed for our water, our climate, our soil,” says Kathryn Grandy of Proprietary Variety Management, the Yakima-based firm

that markets the apple, which first hit stores last December and is on track to sell 2.1 million boxes in its first year. While that may be a tiny fraction of the total apple market, it’s still notable for a brand-new product, Grandy says, adding that sales are projected to grow tenfold by 2026.

Pioneered in Wenatchee at Washington State University’s Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center, the Cosmic Crisp’s patent dictates that the trees can be grown only in Washington for the first 10 years. That’s a potential boon for agricultural communities like Wenatchee (“Apple Capital of the World”), where generational family-owned businesses

like Stemilt Growers and McDougall & Sons provide jobs that generate revenue that in turn drives the local economy.


“When the farmers do well, car dealers and tractor dealers sell more; warehouse investors invest in their plants,” explains Wenatchee Development Project Manager Matt Shales, who notes that agriculture is the city’s largest employment sector and third when it comes to GDP. “Those are big deals that affect city budgets.”

To that end, in 2018 Wenatchee created the Bridge Research & Innovation

“WHEN THE FARMERS DO WELL, CAR DEALERS AND TRACTOR DEALERS SELL MORE; WAREHOUSERS INVEST IN THEIR PLANTS. THOSE ARE BIG DEALS THAT AFFECT CITY BUDGETS.”

District, an economic incubator that seeks to leverage three key local assets: the expertise of WSU’s research center, a community that’s an attractive place to live and work, and commercial innovation that thrives at local companies like Stemilt.

“The Cosmic Crisp is a great example of this,” says Shales. “WSU gets money from sales, which goes back into innovation in research and education.” But Wenatchee isn’t putting all of its economic apples in one basket. Just upstream from Wenatchee on the Columbia River is the Chelan Public Utility District’s Rocky Reach Dam, a major source of hydroelectric power, which has made Wenatchee an attractive home for companies looking to innovate and leverage these types of symbiotic relationships.

“This is a community-based effort to draw people to Wenatchee who want to innovate around fruit and hydropower,” adds Shales. “This is how you provide good jobs and help a city compete in the world.” 

PAY GRADES

A number of economic sectors have recently been more lucrative in Washington than per the national average; others, less so. As cities look to boost their communities after Covid-19, these trends could help them decide how to allocate resources.

Average Annual Pay by Sector (2018)

WASHINGTON UNITED STATES

TOTAL NONFARM

\$66,119

\$57,266

CONSTRUCTION

\$64,432

\$62,727

MANUFACTURING

\$79,321

\$68,525

RETAIL TRADE

\$58,832

\$32,362

TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING

\$60,418

\$53,197

INFORMATION

\$194,631

\$113,781

FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

\$80,466

\$95,561

PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES

\$82,245

\$75,169

EDUCATION & HEALTH SERVICES

\$51,354

\$50,444

LEISURE & HOSPITALITY

\$25,357

\$24,087

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

FRESH
IDEA

GROWING WITH THE GRAIN

Skagit Valley cities are undergoing a whole-grain renaissance thanks to the Bread Lab.

BY KIRSTEN DOBROTH

WHEN WASHINGTON STATE University opened its Bread Lab in Skagit County in 2011, researchers had a simple goal: the Approachable Loaf, an open-source recipe for whole wheat bread that local bakeries around the country could use to offer an affordable, delicious, and nutritious alternative to mass-produced white bread. In addition to growing the market for an important regional commodity (wheat farmed in eastern Washington and Oregon), the Approachable Loaf would be less wasteful, using most of the bran from the wheat kernel—otherwise discarded in the milling of flour used in most white bread recipes.

“If you’re a farmer and you grow 100 pounds of wheat, only 70 of it is going to be made into food,” the Bread Lab’s head researcher, Dr. Stephen Jones, told *The New York Times* in February. “If you wanted to raise the yield of wheat tomorrow, just eat the whole kernel.”

With that in mind, Bread Lab researchers identified heirloom grain varieties that would thrive in the soil and climate conditions east of the Cascades and taste great when baked into bread. After years of trial and error, the Bread Lab released an Approachable Loaf recipe that bakeries around the nation could use as their own, and tweak to satisfy local palates, provided their loaves contained at least 60 percent whole wheat flour, used

“IF YOU WANTED TO RAISE THE YIELD OF WHEAT TOMORROW, JUST EAT THE WHOLE KERNEL.”

no more than seven ingredients (with no chemical additives or preservatives), and cost no more than \$6 when they hit store shelves. Since then, bakeries in more than 20 states (and in Australia, Canada, and England) have adopted and adapted the Approachable Bread recipe, chipping in 10 cents from each loaf sold to fund the Bread Lab’s research and plant breeding program.

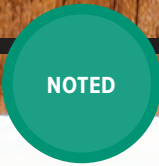
“Once we get things up to scale, I can connect [farmers] with chefs or bakers or businesses that are interested in the novel local grains that we work on,” says the Bread Lab’s managing director, Kim Binczewski.

Having attracted recent corporate sponsors and clients like Patagonia and Chipotle, the Bread Lab has expanded from its cramped facility in Mount Vernon to a 12,000-square-foot headquarters near Burlington’s regional airport that it shares with King Arthur Flour’s Baking School, which offers classes to home bakers and professional chefs from across the country. All of this bread buzz has spawned a grain-based boomlet in Burlington, attracting business like Skagit Valley Malting, which markets locally sourced malt to breweries and distilleries, and a pair of craft breweries that have co-located in the neighborhood of the Bread Lab.

“It brings an amazing diversity of interests, and it all coalesces around these aspects of farming and local products—it makes people proud that you can do things here,” says Burlington City Administrator Greg Young of the Bread Lab’s regional impact. “It really builds upon itself.” **C**



For more information:
thebreadlab.wsu.edu



HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4212

BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION ASSEMBLED:

THAT, At the **next general election** to be held in this state the secretary of state shall submit to the qualified voters of the state for their approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to Article VII of the Constitution of the state of Washington by adding a new section to read as follows:

Article VII, section ... Notwithstanding any provision of this Constitution, the legislature may by general law authorize the legislative authority of any county, city, town, or port district to **designate boundaries within its jurisdiction** containing only that property which that legislative authority determines will be increased in value by reason of public improvements within those designated boundaries, and may provide that all or **a portion of regular or special ad valorem taxes levied** within those boundaries against the value of property may be used to pay for the specified public improvements or to pay obligations issued or incurred to fund the specified public improvements. The levying, collection, allocation, or use of all or a portion of regular or special ad valorem taxes within those boundaries **to provide for the specified public improvements** or obligations issued or incurred therefor does not constitute a lack of uniformity of taxation on a class of property under section 1 of this article, but special ad valorem taxes must be uniform upon the same class of property within the designated boundaries. Special ad valorem taxes levied within those boundaries are not subject to the limitations imposed by section 2 of this article, and the rate of special taxation is not included in the computation of the aggregate of all taxes levied by any taxing district upon property within those boundaries for purposes of **section 2** of this article. The allocation and use of all or a portion of regular or special ad valorem taxes levied and collected within those boundaries to provide for specified public improvements or obligations issued or incurred therefor does not violate the requirements of **Article IX, section 2** of this Constitution. A pledge of special ad valorem tax revenues or apportioned regular ad valorem tax revenues from within those boundaries **to secure obligations issued or incurred for the specified public improvements does not cause those obligations to constitute "debt" or "indebtedness"** of the state, a county, city, town, school district, or other municipal corporation under Article VIII of this Constitution. Regular ad valorem tax revenues of the state apportioned pursuant to this section are not included as "general state revenues" under Article VIII, section 1(c) of this Constitution and are not subject to appropriation under Article VIII, section 4 of this Constitution. [...]

HJR 4212 was introduced during the 2020 legislative session. Along with HB 2778, it would have established the framework to implement Tax Increment Financing in Washington. However, neither action passed.

Constitutional amendments must be passed by two-thirds of the Legislature and approved by a majority of voters during a general election.

Article VII, Section 1 of the state Constitution requires that "all taxes shall be uniform upon the same class of property within the territorial limits of the authority levying the tax." TIF has been found to violate this provision.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows a city to widen its tax base in order to improve public infrastructure to spur economic and job growth within parts of its jurisdiction.

Washington is the only state that does not have a fully implemented, property tax-based TIF program in place. Programs like Local Revitalization Financing (LRF) are a modified sales tax-based version of TIF.

This constitutional amendment would allow the state to use a portion of new property tax revenue generated by the project to help finance the public improvements.

A designated TIF district can spark public-private partnerships, allowing for development that pays for itself.

In Leonard v. Spokane, the courts ruled that diverting taxes away from public schools violated Article IX, Section 2 of the state Constitution, which states that the "state tax for [public] schools shall be exclusively applied to the support of [public] schools."

THE QUESTION

WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE BIG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES OF THE 2020s?



Automation will continue to exert increasing pressure on workers. Governments and schools are slow to create retraining and upskilling outlets. Even a slowdown or curbing of globalization will not alleviate this trend, nor will an aging and shrinking population. Economic development needs to enter more forcefully into the fray of connecting careers to learning and incentivize employers to grow those pathways.

—BILL ELLIS
Chief Economic Development Officer, Kent



The accommodation of workforce housing will be a challenge for all communities. "Workforce housing" is the broad term used to describe a variety of housing types, location, and land supply issues. It includes all aspects of affordable housing for households that cannot afford market-rate housing units. It impacts all aspects of a healthy community and a healthy local economy.

—JOAN DAVENPORT
Director of Community Development, Yakima



Challenges include transforming and repurposing rural downtowns to prepare for the exodus of larger-city populations and the exorbitant construction costs in rural areas to build much-needed housing and repair failing infrastructure. But for every challenge, there is an opportunity. I'm excited about entrepreneurs bringing creative energy in downtown repurposing. And I'm encouraged to see innovative housing solutions.

—ALLYSON BREKKE
Director of Community and Economic Development, Port Angeles

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Citybeat

Railroad to Riches *continued from page 5*

the middle of town, and on weekends it was full because people were coming to recreate by walking and riding bikes—it was a safe place without cars.”

Fast-forward to 2018, when Buckley city officials cut the ribbon on the segment that finally connected Buckley’s original stretch of trail to the rest of the Foothills Trail, which now stretches from Buckley to Puyallup—after nearly 30 years of legal challenges and

“WE KNOW THAT TRAILS PROVIDE A LOT OF BENEFITS. TRAILS ARE GOOD FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES. . . IT JUST MAKES SENSE THAT STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS SHOULD INVEST IN THIS VALUABLE COMMODITY.”

negotiations with local property owners. From spring through fall since then, downtown attractions along the route like the Foothills Historical Museum and the local burger joint, Wally’s Drive-In, have experienced an uptick in visitors and customers. Residential property values near the trail have increased, and Johnson notes that the city has started fielding inquiries from real estate investors interested in purchasing commercial property along the path, too.

That’s not a coincidence; according to a 2019 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office study, trails like the Foothills project contribute over \$8.2 billion a year to the state’s economy and support over 81,000 jobs. In Pierce County, trail-based recreation adds \$161 million annually, and climbing, to the local economy.

“We know that trails provide a lot of benefits,” says Kathleen Cottingham, director of the Recreation and Conservation Office. “Trails are good for local businesses. . . It just makes sense that state and local leaders should invest in this valuable commodity.”

That’s exactly why local leaders in Pierce County are working together to expand the 21-mile paved section of the Foothills Trail: both west from Puyallup into Tacoma and in a spur from the trail to the northwest entrance to Mt Rainier National Park. Pierce County, King County, and the Cities of Buckley and Enumclaw are also working jointly on a bridge to be built over the White River that will connect the two cities, with a completion date of late 2022.

“The community is so involved in the trail—it’s our largest park,” says Johnson. “Most parks are open dawn till dusk, and we can’t keep people off it.”

With that in mind, the city plans to install lights along the trail as funding becomes available, so public enthusiasm—and economic activity—extends well into the night. **C** —*Kirsten Dobroth*

Cityscope



Q&A

Fiber Factory

Anacortes Mayor Laurie Gere talks about how city-provided broadband can enhance quality of life, help local businesses, and increase community connections.

INTERVIEW BY KIRSTEN DOBROTH

Anacortes Mayor
Laurie Gere

When did you come to Anacortes?

I was raised in the Seattle area, and I came to Anacortes in 1975. My first job was with the Red Cross, which was located in the city hall building—I think that’s kind of fun. My husband got his first job here, and we had a newborn—so right out of college, we were ready to start our life in a new community, and it ended up being the most amazing place to live and work and raise our son.

Why did you get involved in local government?

I grew up in a family where community service was one of the foundational pieces of living our lives. As a businesswoman (I started a Main Street restaurant and catering business in 1981 that’s still going today), I learned that civic engagement is really important. I volunteered, and I then served on the Chamber board and became the

CONTINUED ON P.12 ▶



Chamber president. The former mayor suggested that I become a planning commissioner, so I served there for 20 years. My first elected position was as a hospital commissioner at Island Hospital, where I served for 12 years, and I left both of those positions when I was elected mayor in 2013.

What’s the local economy like in Anacortes?

We have a little over 17,000 people. Historically, we’re a working waterfront town, and we’re now a designated Maritime Center of Excellence: our shipyards build Navy research vessels. We have the second-largest public marina in the state, and we’re on the shores of the Salish Sea: commercial and recreational boating is really key to who we are. We also have two oil refineries, an arts scene, and lots of tech jobs, so we’ve got a little bit of everything.

Which brings us to broadband—how was Anacortes’s previous internet service inhibiting economic growth?

When I went door-to-door running my campaign for mayor, people told me we needed to fix the internet. There was no redundant loop, so if something went down, we were out of service. We had older technology that was really slow, so if we wanted to have tech companies or any businesses thrive, we needed new technology.

So the city decided to build its own broadband network. We had no intention of



Anacortes Mayor
Laurie Gere

“THE FEW COMPLAINTS WE HAD WERE PEOPLE CONCERNED ABOUT WHY WE WERE GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, BUT THE REASON WAS THAT PRIVATE COMPANIES WEREN’T GOING TO BRING THAT KIND OF SERVICE TO OUR TOWN.”

getting into the internet fiber business, but we could not get the incumbent to invest in Anacortes. Our public works director came to me and said we had this outdated radio telemetry system for a regional water and wastewater system that our city operates. He had read of running fiber through water lines, so we learned how to do that. When we finished that project, we went, “Whoa, maybe the city could take on installing internet fiber in this same way.”

And residents were on board with that?

Over 1,600 residents responded to our broadband internet survey, and we were met with astounding support. The few complaints we had were people concerned about

why we were getting involved with the private sector, but the reason was that private companies weren’t going to bring that kind of service to our town.

So, what is Anacortes’s business model for city-provided broadband?

We’re in the second year of our pilot program. The city council agreed to lend the Fiber Department \$3 million in start-up money that we will pay back. This has to be a self-supporting business—we didn’t think it was appropriate to use tax dollars. We are installing fiber in downtown Anacortes, it will be in two of our residential neighborhoods come spring, and then we’ll move on to other residential areas. Fiber internet service is now

available in our commercial business district.

What do people pay for service?

Residential customers pay \$39 per month for 100 megabit-per-second service and \$69 for 1 gigabit speeds. Businesses will pay \$89 per month for 100 megabit-per-second service or \$149 for 1 gigabit speeds. We are passing 2,000 premises by the end of 2020 and are on track to meet our 35 percent target take rate. By the end of 2020, we project that the majority of our operating expenses will be covered by fiber revenue.

And the business community has remained supportive?

It’s been good—we’ve installed service at one of our shipyards. We’re in discussions with the hospital, the marina at the Port of Anacortes has been connected, and we’ve got several businesses downtown hooked up, too. And our residents are happy—when it gets to my home, I plan on switching over, and I’m looking forward to it. **C**

BY THE NUMBERS

Anacortes

Cityvision looks at how Anacortes expands opportunity through broadband.

POPULATION

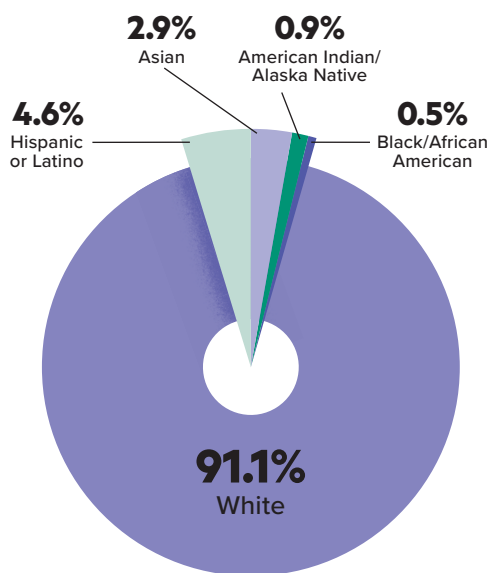
POPULATION DATA FROM THE 2010 US CENSUS, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

2010 **15,767** 

2018 **17,283** 

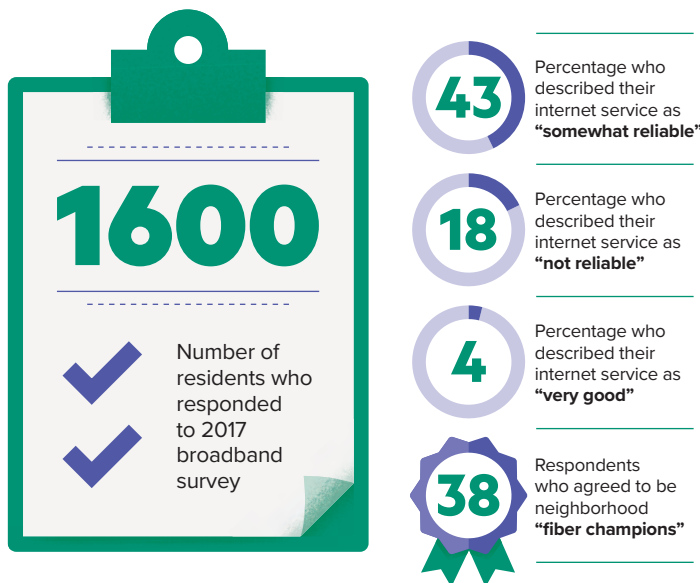
2018 SOURCE: WA OFM

DEMOGRAPHICS



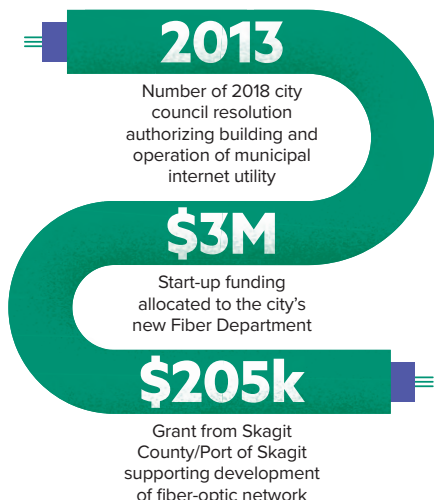
SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU

FIBER FRIENDLY



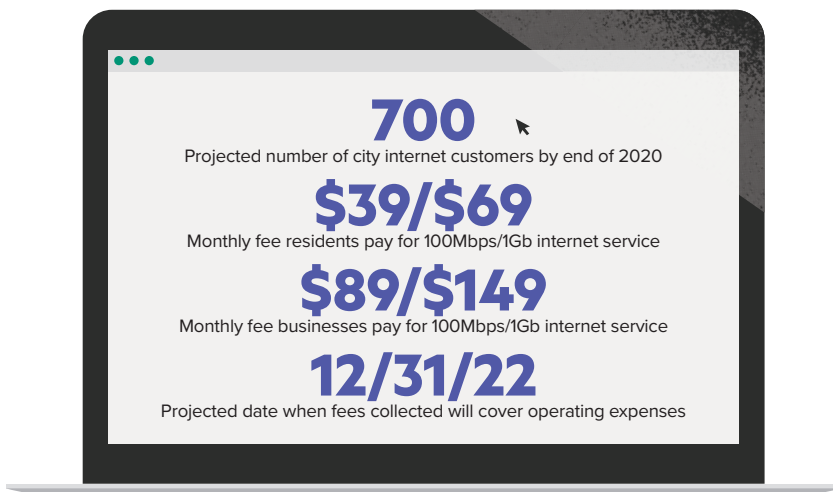
SOURCES: CITY OF ANACORTES, GOSKAGIT.COM

LOGGING ON



SOURCE: CITY OF ANACORTES

COMMUNITY POOL



SOURCE: CITY OF ANACORTES



WATER WORKS

BOTH PERCHED ALONG THE COLUMBIA, the cities of Kennewick and Vancouver invest in vibrant riverfront redevelopment projects that converge with their unique growth opportunities.

BY KIRSTEN DOBROTH

Grant Street Pier
along Vancouver's
waterfront

The Columbia River begins its 1,200-mile journey at Columbia Lake, a glacial pool nearly 3,000 feet above sea level in British Columbia. From there, it cuts northward through the Canadian Rockies before descending into Washington, where it winds swoopily southward before turning west to form most of the state's southern border with Oregon and emptying into the Pacific Ocean.

Lining the river's middle stretch in eastern Washington, the cities and towns that grew up along the Columbia heavily depended on its flow as a source of water for irrigating dryland wheat crops or as a maritime superhighway for barges and freighters hauling that bounty to distant markets. And thanks to hydroelectric dams that tamed rapids to make the river accessible for shipping and harnessed electricity in the process, the Columbia has served as a never-ending generator powering economic growth.

Near where the river takes its final westward tack some 300 miles from the Pacific, the City of Kennewick, incorporated in 1904, owed much of its early prosperity to its proximity to the Columbia. Its namesake Port of Kennewick was founded in 1915 as a riverside terminal for steamboats that began ferrying passengers and freight to and from Portland and Astoria, Oregon, aided by the opening of a navigational canal that

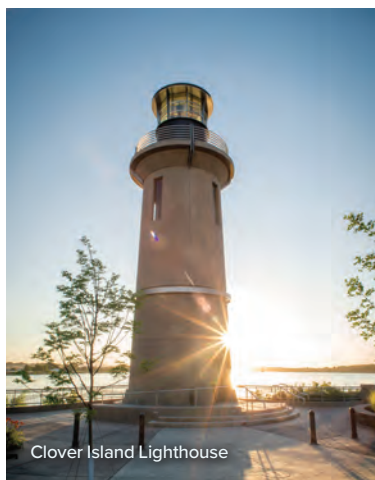


shunted maritime traffic around Celilo Falls, about halfway to the ocean. After a flood in 1926 destroyed the docks and other infrastructure, shipping activity subsided until the 1940s, when the Port of Kennewick purchased Clover Island and leased it to Columbia Marine Shipyards, which built tugboats and barges for the war effort. But Clover Island's success was short-lived: when another flood in 1948 inundated the shipyard, it ended the port's involvement in dock and barge loading facilities.

In recent decades, Kennewick is booming again. Its population has doubled since 1990, from just over 40,000 to nearly 83,000 in 2018; together with neighboring Richland and Pasco, it forms a Tri-Cities metropolitan area whose total population now exceeds 300,000. The mainstays of the Tri-Cities economy include research & development (such as at Battelle's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, which employs 4,365) and food processing (combined, Con Agra and Tyson Foods employ just



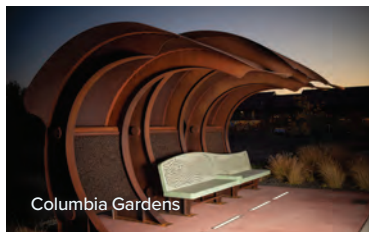
Kennewick
City Manager
Marie Mosley



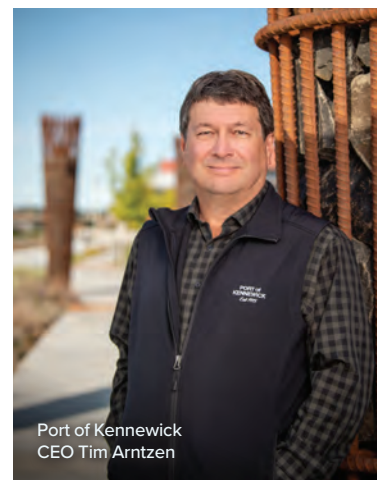
Clover Island Lighthouse



Columbia Gardens



Columbia Gardens



Port of Kennewick
CEO Tim Arntzen



Clover Island site

over 4,000). More recently, the abundance of cheap hydropower generated by the upstream Grand Coulee Dam has lured a digital-age farming industry: server farms, that is (a.k.a. data centers), including one operated by Amazon.

Adjusting to the times, during the past decade Kennewick's port and city have reevaluated their relationship with the river, targeting crumbling industrial infrastructure along the waterfront as ripe for redevelopment, but of a different sort.

"Over many years, when Kennewick first became a city, we turned our backs on the beautiful Columbia River that we have," says Kennewick City Manager Marie Mosley. "And the shoreline in Kennewick was used for industrial purposes rather than for enjoying the shoreline and the recreational opportunities that it provides."

No place was riper for redevelopment than Clover Island and the Columbia Drive area adjacent to Duffy's Pond. The pond, a retention basin embraced by acres of tired industrial buildings, storage lots, pawn shops, and auto-body shops, lies just inland from the island, sandwiched between a levee and East Columbia Drive, a busy thoroughfare that parallels the river.

"It's the eastern part of the community and the older part of town, and those early floods and resulting river levee kind of sucked the lifeblood out of our downtown," says Port of Kennewick CEO Tim Arntzen. "For a number of years, the port and the city were trying to do something to revitalize the area we call the downtown core—the waterfront—but I'm not sure how effective each party was."

Hence the current excitement over the frenzy of construction on Clover Island, and on Columbia Drive around Duffy's Pond, that started a decade ago. Partnering with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the port built a 62-foot navigational lighthouse on the island (completed in 2010) with a 15,000-square-foot plaza for special events and weddings that's become a favorite place for residents to gather and watch sunsets. They also rebuilt a private marina into

a 150-slip public facility, added a restroom and nine public artworks, and created a pedestrian promenade (dubbed the Clover Island Riverwalk) connecting the island to the Sacagawea Heritage Trail (a 23-mile paved recreation path atop the levee system) and to Duffy's Pond and Kennewick's historic downtown.

Back ashore, the strip of tired industrial buildings between Columbia Drive and the pond was cleared to make way for the Columbia Gardens Wine & Artisanal Village, a complex of wineries and tasting rooms that opened in 2018. Anchored initially by Bartholomew Winery and Monarcha/Palencia Wine Company, it expanded in late March to include Cave B Estate and Gordon Estate wineries, plus a food truck plaza for six vendors connected to city utilities. The port spearheaded the development (which received a 2017 Smart Communities Planning Award), while the city anted in a winery wastewater pre-treatment facility that it will continue to own and manage.

THAT'S JUST THE BEGINNING of the buzz in Kennewick. Having honed their ability to work together along the waterfront, the city and the port are now taking their collaboration inland to Vista Field: a 103-acre decommissioned general aviation airfield, also owned by the port, that abuts Kennewick's entertainment and shopping district six miles west of Clover Island.

After a four-year community visioning process, anchored by a citizen task force that convened a series of public meetings and surveys, the project will be guided by the principles of "new urbanism": 1,000 residential units that include a mix of housing for all ages and incomes, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure like 10-foot-wide sidewalks and small-scale multiuse streets, parks and other open public spaces, and 740,000 square feet of retail and office space (some in repurposed airport hangars). Upon completion, Vista Field will become a residential and commercial and cultural hub of the whole Tri-Cities area.

With support from the City of Kennewick and Benton County, the Port of Kennewick broke ground on Vista Field in April 2019, priming the old airport for development: installing underground infrastructure, streets, sidewalks, a linear park, water features, landscaping, and a plaza. Once Phase One (of an envisioned eight) is completed this year, the port will finalize plotting parcels, create



Vista Field site



Vancouver Waterfront Park site

a property owners association, set pricing, and begin marketing available lots in Vista Field’s central 20 acres for commercial, retail, and residential development. Real estate transactions will fund ensuing phases of construction until buildout is complete.

“It’s not really our downtown area, but it’s the center of the Tri-Cities area,” says Mosley. “And it was very close to our major retail hub in the city of Kennewick, so you can just imagine what an airport’s restrictions on building in the middle of the retail hub does to development.”

All that should change once the airport has been replaced by a regional town center that’s expected to generate \$460 million in private-sector investment, \$408 million in new (taxable) real estate, and \$51 million in new infrastructure—and create 3,380 new jobs. That’s economic activity the city couldn’t generate alone.

“The City of Kennewick recognized, and the port as they approached us, that these are important projects,” says Mosley. “Individually, it’s very difficult to get projects like this moving forward, but together, along with leveraging grant dollars and other partnership opportunities, we can make these things happen. Even though they’re very big projects, we felt like we could work together, and the timing was right to move them forward.”

Part of that leverage included tapping the Rural County Capital Fund, which supports new capital infrastructure projects that contribute to job growth and economic diversity in Benton County by utilizing a state sales tax rebate to help spur investment. Partnerships with county and tribal stakeholders helped move the project along.

But it was the cooperation between the city and the port that really turned both underused properties, at Vista Field and Clover Island/Duffy’s Pond, into assets for a growing community. The port took a leading role in developing the master plan for the projects, which included organizing the public engagement sessions for the Vista Field project and working in conjunction with developers. But Arntzen says what really helped move both projects forward was the willingness of city officials to adapt

zoning and building codes and provide public utilities like the wastewater treatment facility at Columbia Gardens.

“We have 76 port districts in the state, and we have a bunch of cities, and not very many port districts work very well with their city partners—and that’s kind of where we were,” says Arntzen. “The thing that I’m most proud of is that we now have a great working relationship with the City of Kennewick... I don’t care how many great projects you have, if you don’t have a trusting relationship, I know for a fact there’s not much you can do that will be meaningful.”

MORE THAN 200 MILES DOWNRIVER, Vancouver is also in the midst of construction on its own renewal project—redeveloping 32 acres along to the Columbia River in a project that, as in Kennewick, is reconnecting its waterfront to the city’s



Grant Street Pier



Vancouver Waterfront Park



Vancouver Director of Community and Economic Development Chad Eiken

downtown core. Historically, Vancouver's waterfront had been dominated by a sulfur-belching paper mill, empty warehouses, and an old railroad berm running along the riverbank that separated the Columbia from the rest of town. When the mill shuttered in 2006, Vancouver's waterfront devolved into a hollowed-out no-man's land, with only one road in or out.

"It was heavy industrial, and it hadn't been super active for many years. . . . The public couldn't get down there; it was all fenced off," says Chad Eiken, Vancouver's director of community and economic development. "The city wondered what would happen if that [industry] went away, and what it would take to make that part of downtown, so that had been talked about for almost 20 years."

In 2008, a group of investors, Columbia Waterfront LLC, purchased the property with ambitious plans for a mixed-use development. Then the recession hit, and plans stalled. Meanwhile, the city struck up an alliance with the new property owners in an effort to find common ground for the vision.

"We didn't own any of the property there, so we had very little control over how the property would develop other than through our regulations, but we also recognized that financial participation by the city would be needed," says Eiken. "A lot

WHAT'S BEEN HELPFUL IS THAT THE LOCAL INVESTORS DIDN'T GET SKITTISH EVEN DURING THE RECESSION. THEY PUT A LOT OF MONEY INTO BUYING THE PROPERTY, AND THEY WERE PATIENT.

—CHAD EIKEN, VANCOUVER'S DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

has changed since the first development agreement, but we still have the same developers and same investors. . . . What's been helpful is that the local investors didn't get skittish even during the recession. They put a lot of money into buying the property, and they were patient."

In addition to rezoning the parcel for mixed commercial and residential development, the city anted in \$40 million (with funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program and capital grants from the state Legislature and the governor's office) to create two new street connections through the old railroad berm that isolated downtown from the river and expand access to the waterfront. Then the developers, after soliciting community input, created a master plan to guide the process, which was reviewed and approved by the Vancouver City Council.

In total, Vancouver's Waterfront Development Project will add 20 new blocks to the cityscape, creating 3,300 residential units, over a million square feet of office space, 250,000 square feet of retail space for new restaurants and shops, a

COMMUNITY GARDENER

Q&A DOUG GRIFFITHS

Doug Griffiths, founder of 13 Ways Inc, a consulting firm that specializes in rural economic development (13ways.ca), talks about what all local leaders should be doing to help their communities grow and thrive.



13 Ways to Kill a Community is a humor-driven self-help book for leaders of struggling rural communities that draws on your experience as an elected member of the Legislative Assembly in Alberta, Canada. Why did you write it?

I had 13 years in politics, and I had lots of different jobs in government, but the first one—and the most important one—was writing a rural development strategy for the province. I'd travel all over telling everyone about it, and people would be excited, but every time I would tell people what they needed to do around housing, education, tourism, wastewater infrastructure—you name it—I'd watch them do things to sabotage their success. And then it was like therapy: I'd vent all this frustration about it onto paper.

What was the source of that frustration?

I was worried about the future of rural communities. I farmed in one and taught in another, and I lived in the one in between, and they were all shrinking.

I talked about the need for a rural development strategy, and someone said, "Put your money where your mouth is and run for office," and I did.

One point you make in your book is that municipal mottos like "The best place to work, live, and raise a family" can be devastating for a community. Why?

It's a lie. There's no best place on earth to do everything. One of the first things they tell you in a marketing class is not to over-market. When you start saying you're everything wonderful, it means you don't have any idea what makes your community truly wonderful and special. You're essentially saying you have nothing worth mentioning.

What's your alternative recommendation?

We have sort of an A to Z plan, and not everyone needs the whole thing. Most of the communities we end up working with need to start out by focusing on what makes them really unique and crafting that story. If you can't sum it up in three paragraphs—what your community was in the

CONTINUED ON P. 20 ►



network of recreation paths for cyclists and pedestrians, and public green spaces, plazas, and water features. The project's signature 7.3-acre Waterfront Park (a half-mile-long linear park connecting the development with a five-mile-long waterfront recreation path, the Columbia River Renaissance Trail) was completed in 2018, along with Grant Street Pier—a cable-stayed boardwalk that cantilevers 90 feet out over the Columbia River and offers a dramatic and iconic backdrop for the first wave of new upscale restaurants, bistros, wineries, tasting rooms, and taprooms that opened that year and in 2019.

Once completed, the \$1.5 billion development promises to create 10,000 new jobs and contribute over \$385 million in tax revenue to the local economy over 30 years. It also promises to make Vancouver, often overshadowed by its neighbor on the south bank of the Columbia, a regional destination, with newly accessible waterfront leisure options just blocks from an equally bustling downtown of new galleries and internationally tinged restaurants extending out beyond beloved Esther Short Park.

"We're used to being compared sort of unfavorably against Portland," says Eiken. "So it has resulted in a sense of pride over what Vancouver did and that we can do big things. . . . We still hear comments from people that they can't believe that it's Vancouver."

At press time, amid the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic, developers were still optimistically forging ahead with Phase I of the project, which, along with Waterfront Park and the Grant Street Pier dining and entertainment establishments, includes 45,000 square feet of ground-floor retail, a 138-room boutique hotel, 270 apartment units, and a fountain dubbed Headwaters Wall. Once normalcy returns, the hope is that crowds will be eager to explore and embrace the city's ever-evolving riverfront refuge, as they did when the city cut the ribbon on Waterfront Park in September 2018 and 30,000 Vancouverites showed up, including dignitaries like US Senator Maria Cantwell.

"I don't know if people realize how important rivers are to us culturally," Cantwell remarked at the ceremony. "When you think about it, they're a metaphor for life. And here we have a river that goes from the headwaters of Canada all the way to the Pacific, and now we get to enjoy a little path of it as it flows through the city of Vancouver."

AS DO THE CITIZENS OF KENNEWICK.

Leaders from Vancouver's upriver cousin echo a similar optimistic outlook about reinvesting in their local stretch of waterfront real estate. At press time in late March, as Cave B Estate and Gordon Estate wineries opened their tasting rooms in a new building that in February was added to the Columbia Gardens Wine & Artisanal Village, Pasco's Columbia

first one, what it is now in the second, and where it's going in the third paragraph—you don't really know what you're selling.

Do you have an example of a community that's had success with that strategy?

Lancaster, Pennsylvania—it's been one of the top five places in the country to retire for the past few years now. It's in the rust belt, so it lost a lot of industry and a lot of jobs, and a lot of young people left. So they focused on quality of life for seniors and retirees, and the population actually grew; then, when more developers started showing up, young people started opening businesses on Main Street. Now they have a robust Lancaster Young Professionals Association.

What are some other concrete steps local leaders can take to stimulate economic development?

Redo your downtown. And make it about socialization and housing and not about commodity-based

businesses, because you can't compete with Amazon—and you shouldn't bother trying. And build neighborhoods again: younger people are moving out of places like New York and San Francisco and moving to places like Boise, Idaho. The next generation doesn't want to live in a big house with a three-car garage where they have to drive everywhere; they want to move back into neighborhoods where they can walk places and have good housing that's smaller and more affordable. They're looking for authentic communities, and that's what rural communities are.

What's one seed you'd like to plant in the minds of Washington's local electeds?

There are so many communities that feel like it just won't work, and they're looking to the federal or state governments to help them. Unfortunately, we're going to have so much change over the next 10 years that the communities that survive are going to be the ones that help themselves.

Basin College was planning to add a \$13 million culinary school to the development on Duffy's Pond. Meanwhile, with Vista Field still years away from completion, the city has been encouraged by the public's enthusiastic embrace of the city's long-neglected properties.

"We were a little bit worried with the wine village location: there weren't a lot of things that brought you there, and it was a blighted area, so people stayed away," says Mosley. "But there's a lot of excitement. Throughout the spring, summer, and fall, there are lots of little events—the wineries might bring in a band or something that attracts visitors—and the community has come out and supported it. And Vista Field is exciting just because it's so different, providing a tremendous opportunity."

And amid uncertain times, it's an investment in the future: a bet that the best is yet to come. **C**

Citywise



Letting residents develop their own new ideas
is a powerful way to build your community.

—CITY 101 P.26 ▶

22 AN ECONOMIC CRESCENDO FROM LOCAL MUSIC SCENES
24 WISDOM FROM THE STATE OF THE CITIES **26** SMALL-TOWN INGENUITY



They Got the Beat

These are just some of the cities that successfully cultivate their local music scenes as a tool for economic development, according to Michael Seman.

■ **Austin** has done a great job of understanding and harnessing the economic power of their music ecosystem, integrating it as an action item throughout several government offices.

■ **New Orleans** is great in terms of their mix of music, education, community development, and tourism. **Memphis** has integrated their musical heritage with tourism quite well.

■ **Nashville** is possibly the gold standard of music cities: their regional economy thoroughly embraces all facets of the music industry, labels, touring, publishing, etc. **Atlanta** is similar in nature.

■ **Flint**, Michigan's all-ages, DIY music venue, Flint Local 432, has operated for the past 35 years and played a significant role in helping revitalize their downtown.

■ **Seattle**'s involvement with the all-ages DIY music venue The Vera Project helps develop talent from high school-age scene members to those in their post-college years.

TUNING UP

How local music scenes can serve as an economic development tool

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL SEMAN, PHD

YOUR WORK EXAMINES the intersection of music, entrepreneurship, and economic development on the urban landscape. How did you get into that niche?

I received my PhD in urban planning and public policy, specifically in looking at how music scenes can drive and fuel the economy. What I found is that a lot of people have looked at this concept from a fine arts perspective, but not necessarily in terms of popular music like rock, hip-hop, indie, country, and other genres.

My dissertation examined the robust local music scene in Denton, Texas, and noted how it operated much like a traditional economic cluster—think Silicon Valley. My master's thesis looked at Omaha's Saddle Creek Records and how the music scene around it was an economic driver within the city to the point where the label and those associated with it actually reinvested some of what they earned into building a \$10.2 million redevelopment project in downtown Omaha.

At the same time I was working on my degrees, I played in the band Shiny Around the Edges. We did, and still occasionally do, all the things bands do: releasing albums and touring in different parts of the country. I met a lot of people who were also musicians and policymakers, and the same subject kept coming up in all of these different places.

Right now, I'm very interested in illuminating how powerful all-ages DIY music venues are for cities, in terms of catalyzing entrepreneurship and also helping to redevelop spaces around them.

Do you think it's uncommon for local leaders to consider a local music scene as part of their economic development strategy?

I see the tide turning. I speak with a lot

of city leaders, and that's exactly what I encourage them to do. You want to address your music scene as you would any other industry you have within your region, because music scenes basically operate much like those other industry clusters.

In Omaha, you have a music scene that resulted in a several-million-dollar redevelopment project. In Denver, there's Youth on Record, a great alternative education program that works with at-risk youth in high school, introducing them to

IT'S AN AMENITY THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS SUPER CREATIVE, SKILLED PEOPLE.

music production and performance. The leaders of that project are now finding that it is positively influencing the graduation rates among this marginalized population.

You most likely already have similar music-scene activity in your city or region. Take some time to think about how you can positively interact with it, facilitate it. There are a lot of positive, hopeful outcomes that can happen.

Are local officials surprised by the different ways a music scene can benefit the local economy?

Definitely. The goal isn't necessarily to produce rock stars and sell tickets, although if that happens, great! But more commonly what you find is that the majority of people participating in music scenes become (or already are) teachers, graphic designers, nonprofit administrators, IT professionals, doctors, lawyers, real estate agents, and more. And they're staying in your region in part because of the music scene. It's an amenity that attracts and retains super creative, skilled people.



A lot of people want music to be in their lives. They want to play it. They want to experience it at concerts. And that's a strong anchor for community development. Scene participants will often end up in another career outside of music, and they're likely to be successful because, again, they are super creative, skilled people.

So a music scene can act as an unofficial job-training program?

Absolutely. It's another reason to love music scenes if you are local policymaker. Being in a band or being part of a music festival is one of the greatest unofficial job-training programs you can have in a city.

With music festivals, you are often dealing with volunteers between the ages of 19 and 25 who on occasion have to make decisions that could affect thousands of dollars or thousands of people—or both—at any given moment. I'm always amazed at how well these volunteers handle these situations. To this day, I still write reference letters for volunteers I encountered while working on music festivals in the past, and they all have built successful careers.

What can local leaders do to better understand the music scene in their city?

If you're a city leader who's unfamiliar with the music scene, go out and see some shows to start. And more importantly, find out who the gatekeepers and stakeholders are in your music scene, invite them to your office, and ask them what's going on. How is your experience in the music scene going right now? What are some challenges you experience on the ground? What do you think could help?

And you'll be surprised. These are people that have been involved in the music industry in your region, sometimes for decades. They know how it works, all of the dynamics to consider, and they are likely to be glad you're taking them seriously. **C**

Dr. Michael Seman is an assistant professor of arts management in Colorado State University's LEAP Institute for the Arts. His work primarily examines how music ecosystems help drive regional growth, with special attention paid to all-ages DIY music venues operating as entrepreneurship incubators.



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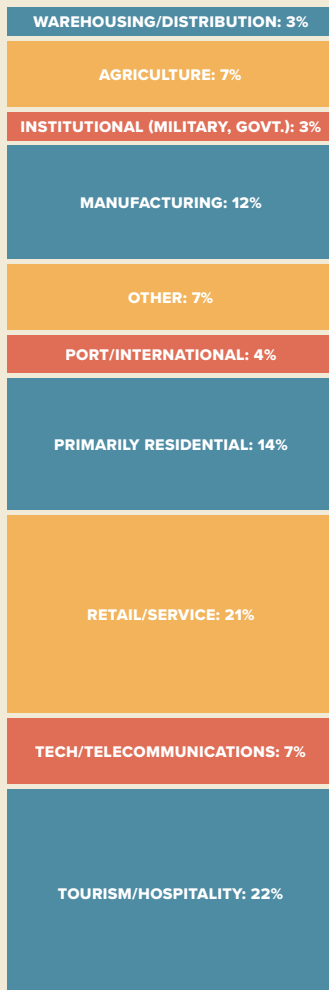
How to help cities help themselves in terms of economic development

LESSONS FROM AWC'S 2020 STATE OF THE CITIES

Primary Colors

City industries are diverse and have differing economic needs. A single solution from the state cannot adequately meet the vast variety of needs in all Washington cities.

Primary Industry in WA Cities



AWC RECENTLY RELEASED the 2020 State of the Cities report, a comprehensive analysis of the conditions that impact Washington cities today. The report included input from 142 of Washington's 281 cities and towns, supplemented by survey data from various state agencies. On the topic of economic development, the report focused on four conclusions.

1. Washington cities need financing options to boost economic growth and opportunity for residents.

>> 94% of cities report that creating new and enhanced state programs to help spur economic development would have a significant positive community impact.

To promote meaningful, sustainable economic development that supports employment opportunities and a healthy and diverse tax base, cities need a diverse economic development tool kit.

2. Broadband infrastructure is critical to spur economic development.

>> 54% of cities report broadband infrastructure as a significant barrier to economic development in their community.

Cities overwhelmingly report the need for state investment in local broadband internet infrastructure projects to help spur local economic development. Access to broadband and advanced telecommunications infrastructure is one of the most pressing needs for cities under 7,500 in population. These communities' economies rely primarily on retail, tourism, and commuter industries. To support cities and their unique needs, funding for broadband infrastructure is critical.

3. City economic development opportunities are unique and diverse.

City economies are diverse in nature—encompassing industries of agriculture, tourism, aviation, technology, and military (see “Primary Colors,” at left). Cities that report tourism and hospitality as their primary industry also have the lowest rates of local employment opportunities. Conversely, cities with

CITIES THAT REPORT TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY AS THEIR PRIMARY INDUSTRY ALSO HAVE THE LOWEST RATES OF LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

technology and telecommunications as the primary industry rarely struggle to provide local employment opportunities.

These varying trends highlight the diversity in economic needs across cities and show that a single solution cannot adequately meet the needs of all cities.

4. New tools can help support economic development.

Cities report that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) options can dramatically impact the economic health of their communities. TIF is a method of using property tax collections within designated areas to finance public infrastructure improvements.

The state has also utilized “tax increment financing lite” programs such as the Local Revitalization Fund (LRF). Under the LRF program, cities use sales tax credits from the state to fund infrastructure investments that support new commercial development. **C**





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It's hard to hear the good ideas amid the shouting.

Right now, you probably use just a few tools to discover new ideas and involve your residents. Public engagement gets filtered through public meetings, town halls, and other listening sessions that fill up with the usual people with the usual complaints. When someone shows up with an innovative idea, they are drowned out by the voices of the angry people.

When you do hear those rare innovative ideas, they often aren't practical, but you may never get the chance to explain why—even though you know that asking people for their input and then never acting on it is destructive to their trust in you.

We're not all equally innovation-friendly.

Even when you're personally open to innovative ideas, you'll still be working with other leaders who aren't as idea-friendly. They have objections; they want to slow things down. They do this to avoid failing. That's why we hear so often, "We tried that once." This is a natural instinct to protect ourselves and to serve the public trust: no one becomes a public official to become a public failure. But this fear of failure has become a trap, closing us off from the new ideas we need most.

Municipal leadership roles have been static.

All of us are caught between the world we gained our experience in and the world we know is coming at us. As a leader in a small city or town, you have worked in a formal structure under the control of just a few people who decided things for everyone in isolation from others. Only big projects were worth the effort to push through, but that meant failure could be catastrophic. Slowing things down and raising objections prevented us not only from failing but also from adapting quickly.

TESTING 1-2-3

Overcoming the innovation challenge for small towns

BECKY MCCRAY COFOUNDER, SAVEYOUR.TOWN

A S YOU WORK TO BALANCE all of the competing priorities of rural municipal leadership, you recognize the need for innovative ideas. Choosing which few to pursue is the real challenge. Your time, money, and capacity are all limited, especially compared to the resources of

your larger neighbors. By tapping the abilities of your entire community, you can identify the innovations that will help you prosper together into the future.

Here are some of the challenges and opportunities when it comes to moving small communities forward.





Open Season

These four small steps can help you be more open to innovative ideas and make your community more likely to prosper:

- **Declare yourself a “venture capitalist of new ideas,”** at least to your peers. Then publicly ask people to share the new ideas they’re working on. Refocus new and existing public engagement to identify new ideas.
- **Encourage everyone to test their ideas** in tiny ways. Treat every idea with respect, at least to the point of letting people try and test it out.
- **Help people build connections** from your network of resources. As a municipal leader, you are connected to many different resources, and people with ideas need those connections.
- **Invest your organization’s limited funds** only in the ideas that are doing well in testing. When people ask you to help or invest in their ideas, don’t say “no”; say: “How is it working in testing?”

OUR NEW ROLE AND MIND-SET IS TO ENCOURAGE A LOT OF SMALL-SCALE TESTS THAT START OUTSIDE THE FORMAL ORGANIZATION. THE PROVEN WINNERS GET ADOPTED BECAUSE THEY HAVE WORKED WELL ALREADY.

Our communities are driving change.

Today, we work in a more idea-friendly world. Action is informal to the point of feeling chaotic, with everyone able to try or test any idea. Many people will launch lots of small innovative tests, keeping failures small to provide valuable feedback about what might work on a bigger scale.

The people in our communities are already working this way, and local governments are in the middle of adapting to this change. Much of the innovation in your community happens outside of your municipal organization. The informal things that community members create for themselves can spark new ideas that work inside your organization. When you stay in connection with your community, you can be more open to these ideas.

“The time has passed when a few influential people could gather in a room to decide what a city will be,” civic expert Carol Coletta has said. “Instead, a city’s future is determined by hundreds of actions taken daily by thousands of people based on what they believe about a city’s future and their role in it.”

Follow a new role model.

To capitalize on innovation outside the organization, city leaders can take inspiration from venture capitalists. VCs research as many new ideas as they can, but they don’t invest in them all. While they’ll encourage the people who have the ideas and help them build their networks, they invest only in the ideas that are working well in early tests.

You can adopt that mind-set as “venture capitalists of new ideas.” Thinking this way can protect your organization from failure while keeping it open to innovation. Gather your crowd by publicly asking people what new ideas they’re working on. Encourage people to take small steps to test their ideas, and help them build connections from your network of resources. Invest your limited municipal resources only in the ideas that prove themselves.

Refocus your listening.

Listen for people who share the innovative ideas they want to work on, whether that’s a new business, a new mural, or a new activity. Connecting in this way reframes contentious public engagement as resource sharing and network building. You’re there to encourage small steps and to share connections to resources from your network; you’re not there to pick which ideas might work. None of us are that good at judging ideas, even though we may think we are experts. Author James Surowiecki has noted that over and over, relying on “expert” opinion has proved less effective than letting the crowd try things.

Community is our goal.

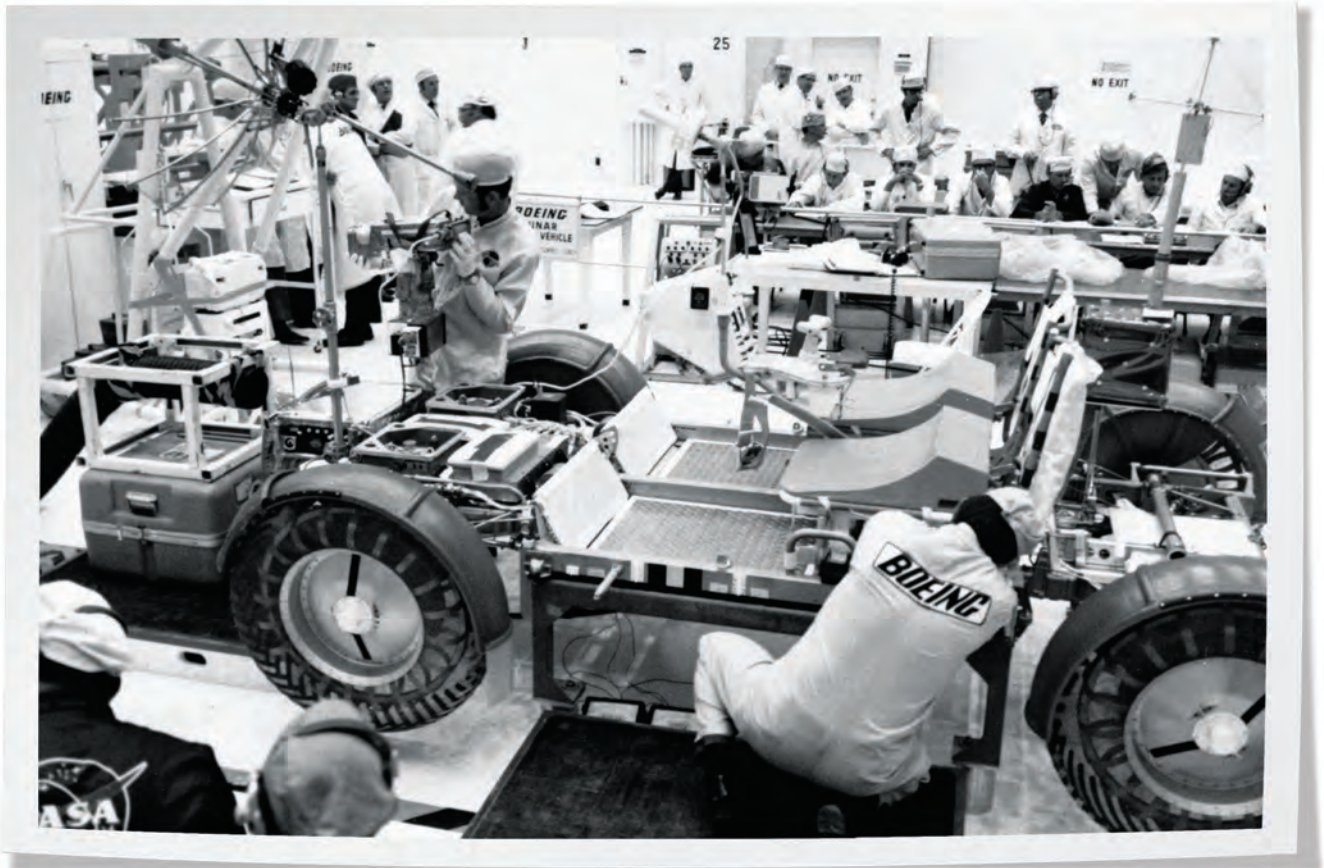
Our new role and mind-set is to encourage a lot of small-scale tests that start outside the formal organization. The proven winners get adopted because they have worked well already.

Why does innovation matter to small towns? Underneath it all, community is your goal. That’s why you do all of the hard work: you strive to improve quality of life. Letting residents develop their own new ideas is a powerful way to build your community. **C**

Becky McCray, is a lifelong business owner from Oklahoma. As cofounder of SaveYour.Town, she shares insights from her real-world experience serving rural communities in volunteer and paid roles for over 25 years.

Cityscape

Boeing technicians complete final prelaunch checks on the Lunar Rover 2 for Apollo 16 at Kennedy Space Center in April 1972.



Moon Dreams

Celebrating its aerospace heritage, Kent looks to build a rocket-propelled future.


HOW'S THIS FOR A MOONSHOT: From 1969 through 1972, some 2,000 employees of Boeing's Kent Space Center assembled a trio of Lunar Roving Vehicles (LRVs) for NASA, which sent them to the lunar surface on the final three missions of the Apollo program. Those Kent-made moon buggies remain exactly where astronauts parked them nearly 50 years ago, the vehicles and their tracks still visible in photographs taken by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.

On March 27, the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation was scheduled to consider Kent's petition to designate the three LRVs remaining on the moon as historic landmarks. The city, with the Kent Downtown Partnership, is also leading a capital campaign to construct a space-themed park in 2021 that will feature full-scale interactive replicas of an LRV, an astronaut, and a lunar lander.

"We aim to establish an inspirational, hands-on experience

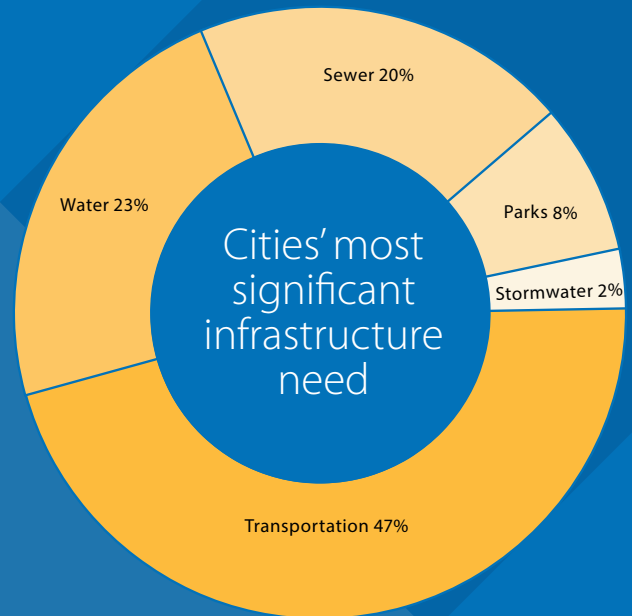
for kids and their parents to learn more about Kent's aerospace legacy," says Michelle Wilmot, a project manager in Kent's Economic & Community Development Department. "By placing this opportunity in a public park, accessible to all, we hope to spark the imaginations of many more kids."

And perhaps keep them near home. Just a five-minute drive from the Kent Space Center, which remains a key Boeing research and development site, Kent's largest private-sector employer, Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin, recently dedicated a \$14 million headquarters building, where a mockup of the next-generation aerospace company's Blue Moon lunar lander hovers over the lobby.

"Blue Origin is leading the resurgence of the space sector in Washington," Wilmot adds. "By celebrating Kent's continuing legacy of innovation, we hope to also inspire children—tomorrow's workforce—to pursue out-of-this-world opportunities." 

Read the 2020 State of the Cities report

Highlights



54% 

of cities report broadband infrastructure as a significant barrier to economic development in their community.

75% 

of cities list transportation maintenance as one of the top three significant capital budget needs. *For a quarter of those cities, it ranks as the number one need.*

77% 

of cities report that inadequate street infrastructure is a significant barrier to economic development.

77% 

of cities list a lack of low-income and affordable housing as a problem in their community.



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