



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POD Work Plan 2013 – **YEAR END Update**

Public Works, Community & Economic Development, Parks & Recreation, Information Systems, Human Resources, Finance

The City of Mount Vernon “economic development pod” has been tasked with working on goals common to economic development. The Directors of the Departments assigned to this pod met during the month of January to discuss areas in which working collaboratively would result in fulfillment of common goals, better inter-departmental cooperation, and gained efficiencies.

The information in green font is the results of their work in 2013.

Economic Growth Sectors: Jana Hanson, Mayor, Kim Kleppe

The City of Mount Vernon supports a healthy business environment in all sectors including retail, services, industrial, etc. As a strategy for success, the City believes in asset based economic growth; focusing on sectors that are already successful in the City and working to retain, revitalize, and recruit in these fields. The sectors listed below reflect what we believe to be a good fit for the community.

- **Technology** – with our Fiber Infrastructure backbone, Mount Vernon is the perfect place for technology companies to locate and thrive.
 - Complete a Fiber Infrastructure Master Plan
 - Fiber map is complete with existing and proposed fiber expansion
 - Continue to support the formation and vitality of a NextTech Group, fostering collaboration, growth, workforce development
 - Established Board for the NextTech in collaboration with EDASC – Board is active with events and regular meetings

- Attracted expansion interest from local tech companies
- Plan for and expand Wi-Fi services in public places
 - Not complete, added to 2014 work plan, specifically Skagit Station
- Market “Intelligent City” concept
 - Recognition for community fiber through Community Networks website/podcast
 - Mayor and IS Director Kim Kleppe participated in a nationwide roundtable discussion in New York City (September) to discuss fiber infrastructure and growth
 - TV10 filmed Skagit TEDx event (June)
- Develop a “meet in the middle” plan: meeting space and support services for technology focused companies in Seattle and Vancouver BC
 - Met with Representative Jeff Morris who is interested in supporting this idea
- **Health Care – in partnership with Skagit Regional Health**
 - Medical based research – continue a partnership with Skagit Regional Health to develop community based research models
 - Successful initiative in partnership with Skagit Regional Health, Skagit County Public Health and Mount Vernon School District with free Kindergarten vaccination program in May 2013, and free sports physicals in the Fall
 - Conducted health survey in conjunction with the MV Community Survey (September)
 - Wellness based activity focus – Mayors Wellness Challenge
 - August 15 – September 15 – 35 free activities involving 35 businesses and non-profits; 1500 participants
- **Investigate Innovation Partnership Zone - Value-added Agriculture & Agriculture Tourism – in partnership with Port of Skagit, WSU Extension, Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Skagit County, EDASC, Skagit Valley Malting, Knutzen Farms, Sakuma Farms, Skagit Valley College**
 - Innovative Partnership Zone (IPZ) – 2013 is the year to apply for an IPZ designation through the State. Each IPZ offers a unique environment that brings research, workforce training and private sector businesses together in close geographical proximity to create new companies, products and jobs. IPZs are set up by “cluster”, for example Walla Walla (wine & hospitality) and Snohomish County (aerospace).
 - Successfully received IPZ designation through the State. Partnership with above listed organizations. Administered by EDASC and City, led by Chairperson Dr. Steve Jones (WSU)
 - Collaborative monthly meetings began in October, work plan developed and adopted for 2014 goals
 - Mount Vernon Restaurant Week – focusing on farm to table experiences
 - Support “Eat Local Mount Vernon” Restaurant Week – September 2013 (connecting local farms to participating restaurants) Chamber of Commerce & Northwest Agriculture & Business Center partnered with 25 restaurants for a month long local eating event
 - Farmers market and wholesale market expansion
 - Continued dialogue with Northwest Business Agriculture Center to support a Skagit County commercial food hub, temporarily located at Bow Hill Blueberries. Future expansion could be located in Mount Vernon
- **Aerospace Supply/Advanced Manufacturing – in partnership with Port of Skagit**
 - Support of workforce development, expansion and diversification
 - Continued work with regional partners at the Port of Skagit and EDASC in promoting our region for manufacturing. Participated in EDASC event “Schmooze Cruise” promoted the region – the City of Mount Vernon has seen recent interest in expanding existing businesses and attracting new opportunities

- Recent advertisements in Canadian business journal, Western Investor, through “Create a Great Life” campaign, generating 2 business leads

Fiber Optic Master Planning: Kim Kleppe, Doug Nathe, Esco Bell, Jana Hanson

The City of Mount Vernon owns fiber optic infrastructure that has the capacity to provide the foundation for business and local economic growth. The Fiber Network will provide the foundation for broadband Internet access, Voice over IP, interactive video, medical imaging, Application Service Provider (ASP) services, Cloud computing and server farm growth.

- Plan, Prioritize & Propose ideas
- Addition of expansion areas to master map to include Little Mountain, Waterfront, high volume intersections
 - Fiber map is complete with existing and proposed fiber expansion
- Identify added resources needed for successful expansion. With expected rapid recruitment in this sector, additional staff time is needed to manage the workload.
 - Completed standardized dark fiber lease agreements
 - Successful 2014 budget requests – gaining support for reclassification of employee to fiber optic infrastructure support & capital expenditures for PON equipment
 - Began working on new ISP licensing agreements with new rate structure
 - Working on new professional agreement for fiber maintenance and installation in partnership with the City of Burlington and the Port of Skagit

Infrastructure: Esco Bell & Public Works Department Managers, Larry Otos

The City of Mount Vernon is poised to accommodate economic growth with well-planned infrastructure. Funding is prioritized to maintain existing infrastructure. The goal for 2013 is to have ‘shovel ready’ projects to maximize any funding available from State or Federal agencies.

- **Transportation**
 - Completion of LaVenture/Anderson project
 - Completed
 - College Way widening under I-5 – funding, design, partner with WSDOT. Complete preparations to be “shovel ready” & construct 2014
 - Continued attention from Congressman Larsen and Congresswoman DelBene’s office, who are supportive of requesting movement of funds to this project
 - Applied for a State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant to fund part of this project and was unsuccessful on the first try. However, the City is working with regional partners to acquire federal STP funds to further finance the project and greatly improve its prospects for a TIB grant to complete funding next year
 - Basic Maintenance – Streets to include: Aggressive thermoplastic, crack sealing, overlay, sign replacement, signals, weed control in right of way, lighting
 - Ongoing
 - This year’s street maintenance program (REET) was completed and finalized and a draft work plan for 2014 projects was prepared
 - Upgraded signalization equipment on Freeway Drive, College Way, Riverside Drive, and Memorial Hwy as part of WSDOT detour during bridge collapse (no charge to City)
 - Mount Vernon School District Traffic Planning (bussing changes)
 - Implemented

- Safe Routes to School – continue to plan and construct projects
 - o Improvements to Section/Laventure intersection funded by a grant that will be designed and constructed in 2014
- Grant administration
 - o Ongoing
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant**
 - Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) – complete compliance
 - o Effluent pump upgrades completed
 - o Influent pump upgrades completed
 - o Automated gate valves installed in CSO structure
 - o Improved ragging issues at Pump Station
 - o Completed public information campaign – utility inserts, Mount Vernon Birthday Trail walk booth, TV10, website
 - o Developing pump and valve work modifications that are needed
 - Basic maintenance
 - o Ongoing
 - Turbo blower project
 - o Professional services agreement approved for HDR (engineering consultant) that includes services to implement turbo blower upgrades
- **Facilities**
 - City Shop yard waste relocation – complete in 2013
 - o Complete
 - Review 2000 feasibility study for relocation of City Shop, review conceptual needs for future growth and expansion, consolidation
 - o Not complete, added to 2014 work plan
 - Hillcrest Lodge remodel – complete in 2013
 - o Kitchen & storage area remodel complete
 - Public Restrooms – complete in conjunction with Phase II construction
 - o Successful RFQ, currently working with architect on design, completion expected in 2nd quarter 2014
 - o See Waterfront Revitalization & Flood Control section below
 - Audit Parks/Public facilities – prioritize maintenance
 - o Ongoing evaluation – will included in Park Comprehensive Plan update

Waterfront Revitalization & Flood Control: Jana Hanson, Esco Bell, Larry Otos, Alicia Huschka, Mayor
 The Downtown Mount Vernon Flood Protection and Revitalization Project will protect Mount Vernon’s historic downtown from flooding with FEMA certified flood protection and serve to revitalize the historic downtown area. We believe this project will release pent up economic opportunities that are so important to our community and region.

- **Construct Phase II** (12-18 months – beginning April 2013)
 - o Under construction!
- **Phase III**
 - Move toward “shovel ready” (property acquisition, final design, secure funding, certification)
 - o Secured \$5 million in State budget, actively seeking remaining \$5 million for full funding
 - o Public Works to re-examine \$10 million estimate – refresh projected expenses
 - o Received support letters from Mount Vernon Leadership Group

- Scope of work and agreement for professional services needed to complete final design and bid documents is prepared in draft
- Strategized with Directors on opportunities for remaining funding
- Department of Ecology grant application (\$2 million) in process (due February 2014)
- **Public restrooms**
 - Design, construct
 - Acquired building at Gates/Main – Teamsters Building
 - Funding confirmed through State Budget
 - Request for Quotation (RFQ) for architect completed
 - Construct and project to open by 2nd quarter 2014
- **Maintenance – operations/maintenance manual**
 - Function of flood protection – FEMA
 - Park
 - Restrooms
 - Funding & resources
 - Not complete – added to 2014 work plan
- **Future Downtown Parking Garage**
 - Secure a site, plan preliminary design & financial plan
 - Not complete – added to 2014 work plan
- **Public Art** – continue collaboration with Arts Commission
 - Requested Arts Commission work on public art installation in Phase 2 of the Waterfront Project, located in walkway under Westside bridge.
- **Technical Assistance** – The City of Mount Vernon received valuable technical assistance from a Housing and Urban Development grant – providing funding options and suggested strategies for redevelopment investment.

Regulatory Framework: All pod members

Ongoing advocacy is needed to express the needs of the City of Mount Vernon, provide the most streamlined process to work through regulations.

- **Advocacy to State/Fed**
 - Lobby for streamlined processes
 - Received direction from the State on marijuana legislation in late 2013
- **Relief of unfunded mandates (e.g. stormwater)**
 - On February 26, 2013, Mayor testified to State House panel requesting an extension of LIFT award timelines
 - Travelled to Olympia 3 times in 2013 to engaged with Legislators on various issues – ongoing communication
- **Modern Tools**
 - Cityview, online services technology, increased revenue to accomplish (technology fee)
 - Technology Fee approved by Council in March 2013
- **Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan**
 - Currently underway, will complete in 2014
- **Updated Sign Code**
 - Planning Commission completed review

- City Council continues to work through code – expected adoption in 2014

Communication & Collaboration: All pod members

Staff highly values the relationships that have been developed with the following partners in Skagit County and will continue to value partnerships in 2013.

- Chamber of Commerce, PSE, PUD, Downtown Business Association, Service Groups, Senior Center, Mount Vernon School District, Skagit Valley Hospital, Skagit County, Dike Districts, EDASC, SCOG, Port of Skagit, WSDOT, State Agencies, Skagit Land Trust, Ag Community, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, our Federal representatives
 - Continued successful relationships being strengthened with listed groups, specifically with State and Federal officials
 - Regular meetings & communication is ongoing
- **Communications plan** – Mayor has authored a communications plan, outlining the areas that we can use to relay information to both internal and external customers. Distribute, train, and set up communications representatives from all Departments.
 - Not completed – added to 2014 work plan

First Impressions: Mayor, Public Works, City Work Program, Jana Hanson, Kim Kleppe

An attractive environment influences human behavior, including investment, tourism, and community pride. The City of Mount Vernon will concentrate on our First Impressions program to ensure we are projecting the best possible image of the City.

- **High visibility areas** – freeway exits, College/Riverside, downtown, West side, entrances, public restrooms. Parks and Public Works complete a public spaces book with photos and specific measurements and needs for each space. Develop landscape “color spots” listing and prioritization.
 - Partnership with Mount Vernon School District – completed upgrade of reader board and corner at Kincaid and First
 - Donation from Skagit Gardens Wholesale – complete upgrade of planters in Downtown area and ongoing support for “MV” planters at Kincaid exit
 - North 9th Street mini park upgrade
 - Street tree initial review of Riverside Drive. Will review ordinance and plan for maintenance in 2014
 - Lighting improvements to MV signs at I-5 College Way underway with materials purchased and work to be completed by City crews
 - MV sign on SR 536 concept and fabrication underway and installation to follow by City crews
 - Welcome signage completed on McLean Road, at City entrance
- **Website** – continue to take advantage of website upgrades and additional services such as Parks & Recreation module for web sign-ups
 - Website committee met to review analytics and upgrade possibilities
 - Added special alert feature – for use during emergencies
- **Library/City Hall** – support of volunteer landscaping project at Library
 - Completed with core support from Ms. Ani Gurnee & volunteers
- **Printed material** – review our printed material for accuracy and style
 - Not completed, added to 2014 work plan
- **TV10** – utilize more! Special productions highlighting the Waterfront Project, and Mayors ‘Around Town’ show
 - Produced roundtable of Mount Vernon Leadership Group
 - Utilized for public information during Skagit River I5 Bridge collapse

- Taped Skagit TEDx event
 - Utilized for public information regarding Skagit County Jail siting process
- **“Create a Great Life”** – ongoing participation in community marketing campaign
- **Front line staff** – conduct ‘roundtable’ with front line staff, working on customer service skills, ideas to assist customers.
 - Training completed
- **Light pole banners:** secure permissions in strategic locations on College Way and Kincaid Street for installation of banners
 - Street banner policy completed, banners installed along First Street and Kincaid Streets
 - Banners installed on Riverside Drive
 - Banners and seasonal features (snowflakes and shooting stars) installed in downtown
- **Customer Service**
 - Continuous improvement to ensure consistency & responsive assistance
 - Lean management, performance measures, logic models, staffing models, and managing data training completed through State Auditor’s Office, Local Government Performance Center for September 18 and October 10, 2013