

Whatcom County CEDS 2022-2026:

Port of Bellingham
+ Team Whatcom Partners
2022-2023 Progress Report



Photo Courtesy of Visit Bellingham | Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism

Prepared for the Port of Bellingham by
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Questions about this report?

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About the Port of Bellingham & the Whatcom County CEDS

As a county-wide special district, the Port of Bellingham (POB) is responsible for economic development in all of Whatcom County. In 2012, the Association Development Organization (ADO) status was transferred to the Port of Bellingham in a collaborative effort between the Port, City of Bellingham, and Whatcom County, to cultivate long-term consistency and generate a more programmatic approach to economic development in Whatcom County. ADOs are local organizations working on economic development on behalf of the Washington State Department of Commerce.

This was a natural fit as the POB, like all Port districts in Washington, is responsible for managing transportation gateways and supporting economic development. With countywide jurisdiction, the Port is a great place to house the ADO. This collaborative model creates more security, allows for long-term planning, and generates economic resiliency for all of Whatcom County.

The Port of Bellingham owns and manages many critical assets to Whatcom County's economy including but not limited to:

- Bellingham International Airport (BLI)
- Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST) for cargo handling and distribution
- Bellingham Cruise Terminal (BCT), which is the southern connection to the Alaska Marine Highway System
- Two full-service marinas (Squalicum and Blaine Harbors)
- 1.4 million square feet of office, commercial, and industrial building space



The Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has been completed and updated two times in the recent past: in 2002 by the Port of Bellingham's Economic Development division and in 2015 by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG). As the economic development ecosystem in the county evolved and the Port's economic development staff grew, the responsibility for updating the CEDS report and project list were transferred from WCOG to the Port's Economic Development division in 2019.

The 2022-2026 report update was led by the Port's economic development staff, overseen by the CEDS External Review Committee, and informed by broad stakeholder engagement within the community throughout the entire process.

Stakeholders included, but were not limited to Whatcom County, other divisions of the Port of Bellingham, the seven incorporated cities, the Lummi Indian Business Council, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, the Public Utility District (PUD) #1 of Whatcom County, WCOG, the Northwest Workforce Council, the Western Washington University Small Business Development Center (WWU SBDC), the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, Whatcom County Business and Commerce Advisory Committee, health and social organizations, and other economic and community development service providers. Team Whatcom, a local county-wide group that forms the core of economic development services in the county, was also solicited and presented to multiple times throughout the process for feedback and input in 2020-2021.

The result was a consensus-based planning document that ideally can and will be aligned with other county-wide plans, such as Comprehensive Plans and the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Message from the Executive Director, Port of Bellingham

The Port of Bellingham works for all of Whatcom County.



The Port of Bellingham's mission is to promote sustainable economic development, optimize transportation gateways, and manage publicly owned land and facilities to benefit Whatcom County.

Dear Stakeholders, Businesses, and Partners,

Since the Whatcom County CEDS 2022-2026 was unanimously approved by County Council in October 2021 and the Economic Development Administration in April 2022, we have seen incredible progress towards achieving our economic development goals.

The Port of Bellingham is committed to implementing the CEDS Action Plan and a major part of that is the revitalization of Bellingham's downtown waterfront. In 2023, Mercy Housing Northwest is making great progress of Phase 1 of their affordable housing project and the waterfront condominiums on Granary Avenue are nearing completion.

We've also seen continued interest and success in recruiting clean energy companies to Whatcom County. Two great examples worth highlighting are the recruitment of Corvus Energy, the world's leading supplier of safe, innovative and reliable energy storage solutions for all segments in the maritime industry, and Vicinity Motor Corp (VCM), a North American supplier of electric vehicles for both public and commercial enterprise use. VCM will generate 300 jobs in Washington and bring a \$20 million investment. Both will bring family wage jobs to Whatcom County.

Additionally, we are making headway on increasing rural broadband access. We recently completed an open-access fiber project in East Nooksack, funded in partnership between the Port, the County, and the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB). The Port and Pogozone have started signing up customers for high-speed internet up to 1 Gig.

I am proud of the hard work and dedication demonstrated by the the Port of Bellingham staff and our many partners.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we work to fulfill the Port's mission.

Thank you,

Rob Fix
Executive Director, Port of Bellingham

CEDS Goals 2022-2026

The economic development division at the Port of Bellingham envisions “a resilient regional economy that has: a dynamic and inclusive business community, a commitment to living wage jobs and equity, and the physical, social, and economic infrastructure to support it.”

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2022-2026 contains a set of six overarching goals to achieve this vision. You can find all of the related sub-goals and the Action Plan in the full document.

	Goal 1: Build upon and strengthen Whatcom County's economic base.
	Goal 2: Develop and enhance critical infrastructure that promotes economic development and resiliency.
	Goal 3: Develop a skilled workforce, expand educational attainment, and align employer needs with education programs and curriculum.
	Goal 4: Create a dynamic relationship between Whatcom County and Lower British Columbia, Skagit, Island, and San Juan Counties.
	Goal 5: Cultivate an economy that values diversity, equity, and inclusion for all.
	Goal 6: Support countywide economic resiliency and recovery efforts.

The remainder of this Progress Report includes:

- Evaluation of the CEDS since approval by the EDA May 2022 - December 2023.
- Port of Bellingham’s contributions.
- Team Whatcom partner contributions.
- Key data points and progress metrics described in the CEDS 2022-2026 report.
- Next steps for 2024.
- Highlights from the 2022-2023 report.

Due to capacity issues in multiple jurisdictions, contributions made by the cities and County are not included in the 2022-2023 report. The Port of Bellingham will continue to work with the cities and County to capture relevant progress and deliverables in 2024-2025. For those interested in City or County activities in 2022-2023, please contact them directly.

Evaluation: Team Whatcom

Consistent evaluation of CEDS goals is important in communicating to stakeholders the commitment to achieving our goals and vision; highlighting necessary actions taken over time; and measuring progress over time.

The Whatcom County CEDS is evaluated in several different ways. The Port's Economic Development team reviews CEDS goals on a weekly basis as part of their team meeting work plan and agendas. As part of the Port's ADO work, the Economic Development and Accounting divisions review and report business and retention targets and financials on a quarterly basis to the Washington State Department of Commerce.

The Port team also uses monthly Team Whatcom meetings with economic development service providers and partners to evaluate progress on specific goals and objectives. Team Whatcom is a consortium of Whatcom County economic development service providers and partners who work on overlapping yet distinct aspects of Whatcom's economic system and business environment.

Team Whatcom partners work together annually to create a schedule of topics for monthly review. Each month there is a discussion on progress and needs related to the specific goals or desired outcomes.

Since the EDA approval of the CEDS in April 2022, or May 2022 - December 2023, Team Whatcom partners have convened 15 times to review the topics or goals shown in **Table 1** to the right.

To learn more about Team Whatcom, visit choosewhatcom.com!



Month/Year	Goal Reviewed
May '22	Resiliency
June '22	Tourism
July '22	Canada/Border
Aug '22	Manufacturing
Sept '22	Infrastructure
Oct '22	Housing
Dec '22	Marine Trades + Entrepreneurs
Jan '23	CEDS Evaluation
Mar '23	Apprenticeships
May '23	Resiliency
June '23	Developing Local Markets
July '23	Housing
Sept '23	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
Oct '23	Downtowns + Main Streets
Dec '23	Economic Development at the Lummi Nation

Table 1. Team Whatcom CEDS Evaluation May 2022-December 2023.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Port of Bellingham

Website: <https://portofbelllingham.com/>

Email: EconDev@portofbelllingham.com

Questions? Contact Rob Fix at rfix@portofbelllingham.com



To promote sustainable economic development, optimize transportation gateways, and manage publicly owned land and facilities to benefit Whatcom County.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: The Aviation Division continues Air Service Development (ASD) initiatives to attract, add, and retain air service to Bellingham International Airport (BLI).
- Goal 1: In April 2023 Southwest Airlines added a Saturday, nonstop flight to Denver.
- Goal 1: In June 2024, Southwest Airlines will add two additional Denver flights (two Saturday, one Sunday).
- Goal 1: In March 2024, Alaska Airlines will add an additional Seattle flight.
- Goal 1: The Aviation and Economic Development Divisions serve on the Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism Board to support developing local markets.
- Goal 1: The Portal Container Village is expanding in 2024 with two new food businesses and a retail space for local artists.
- Goal 1: Continued to work on permitting and design for the Inner Harbor, with efforts to coordinate use of ASB for dredge spoils.
- Goal 1: Continued to work on permitting and design to covert Boathouse #1 to open moorage.
- Goal 1: Purchased Marine Drive Industrial Park for \$6.2 million in February 2023 (5 acres, 8 industrial buildings, one office building).100% occupied by July 2023.
- Goal 1: Supported the Working Waterfront Coalition of Whatcom County by providing seed funding for the growth of their apprenticeship program.
- Goal 1: Supported value-added maritime and marine trade innovation in Whatcom County by partnering with the Northwest Resource Innovation Center and Maritime Blue to host BlueTech/GreenTech entrepreneur cohorts.
- Goal 1: Supported value-added agriculture and innovation among Whatcom County farmers by helping identify funding and partners for an Agricultural Research Center in Whatcom County.

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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Provided business retention and expansion services to 79 businesses in 2022 and the first half of 2023.
- Goal 1: Continued to refer small businesses and clients with technical assistance needs to the WWU SBDC.
- Goal 1: Continued to support economically sustainable and environmentally low-impact economic development via the recruitment and retention of clean energy companies such as Corvus Energy, Tidal Vision, and Vicinity Motor Corporation.
- Goal 1: Worked with two recreation companies on expansion efforts to find new manufacturing and retail space, resulting in one expansion. Outreach conducted to lay the groundwork for future expansions.
- Goal 1: Completed an update and refresh of the Choose Whatcom website by enhancing and improving ADA accessibility, updating outdated photos and videos, and refreshing content.
- Goal 1: Co-facilitated the Small Cities Partnership monthly agendas and meetings, focusing on business and economic development issues that impact the six small cities in Whatcom County (Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas).
- Goal 1: Led monthly Team Whatcom meetings, which are primarily used for Whatcom County CEDS progress evaluation and other pressing issues amongst economic development service providers in the region.
- Goal 1: Continue to provide administrative support to the Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee and Housing sub-committee, including assisting with generating a memo with recommendations to address the ongoing housing crisis and build more units for all income levels.
- Goal 1: Staff continue to be Board Members of key housing organizations in Whatcom County, including Habitat 4 Humanity and the Whatcom Housing Alliance.

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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Co-authored EDI housing grant and loan program for affordable and worker housing throughout Whatcom County.
- Goal 1: Chair the Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA) sub-committee on Workforce Housing, which brings together Associate Development Organizations (ADOs) from across the state on a monthly basis to discuss problems and potential solutions to the housing crisis.
- Goal 1: Continue to support mixed-use zoning efforts County-wide, which has been most successfully implemented by the City of Ferndale.
- Goal 1: Participated in and provided input into the development of vision, mission, and plans for the formation of the Washington State Center for Employee Ownership, led by the Whatcom Community Foundation.
- Goal 1: Provided information and support to four businesses interested in setting up a Foreign Trade Zone in Whatcom County in 2022 and the first half of 2023. One zone has been activated; one is in the activation process. Two are looking into the cost/benefit of setting up their own.
- Goal 1+6: Provided support and input to the Port of Bellingham and Sustainable Connections team who conducted 20 energy audits for rural Whatcom County businesses, resulting in more environmentally sustainable business practices and reducing energy costs for rural businesses via a USDA Rural Energy Audit Grant.
- Goal 1+6: Received 59,527 visitors to date (2022-2023) at the Marine Life Center, educating the public on ocean life and the Salish Sea.
- Goal 1+6: Received 107 class trips in 2022-2023 at the Marine Life Center, educating school children on ocean life and the Salish Sea.
- Goal 1+6: Installed a fresh water tank at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal in December 2022. This tank houses angelfish, rainbow fish, tetras, and a motoro stingray named Hammy.

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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1+6: Installed a fresh water tank at Bellingham International Airport in October 2023. Permanent fish in place by early 2024.
- Goal 1+6: Developed a Brownfields database to identify properties suitable for affordable housing and clean up. Funded by a Department of Ecology grant.
- Goal 2: Continued to collaborate with cities and County on alternative funding sources for infrastructure (i.e. TIF financing, tax-exempt bond financing).
- Goal 2: Continued to work with Whatcom County and the private sector on developing a Cherry Point utility and infrastructure master plan.
- Goal 2: Completed an update and expansion of the I-5 Infrastructure and Utility GIS database to all of Whatcom County, now referred to as the Whatcom County Properties, Utilities, and Resiliency Database.
- Goal 2: Worked intensively with the Cities of Bellingham, Blaine, and Ferndale on business-specific permitting issues to ensure fair and speedy processes for clients.
- Goal 2: In partnership with the EDI board members, worked to update the EDI program and application requirements to align with the Whatcom County CEDS and to ensure funded projects have a regional impact, generating assets and resiliency for as much of the community as possible.
- Goal 2: Worked with the County, Cities, and Tribes to maximize the efficiency of the CEDS Project List, updating it to include information regarding design phase completion and to help jurisdictions prioritize their own infrastructure projects.
- Goal 2: Worked with partners, including two internet service providers (ISPs) to design, build, provide service, and maintain three currently funded broadband fiber to the premises networks. When complete these projects will total 120 miles of middle mile fiber and pass 1,863 homes.
- Goal 2: Continue to participate in the Cascadia Innovation Corridor meetings and advocate for the inclusion of Whatcom County cities in future planning.

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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 2: Officially broke ground with the first broadband route expansion in Nooksack, which will extend service to 729 unserved and underserved homes and businesses.
- Goal 2+5: Completed the Whatcom County Asset and Digital Equity Plan, which was submitted to Washington State's Broadband Office.
- Goal 2: Continued to participate on the Washington Public Ports Association Broadband sub-committee on broadband policies.
- Goal 2: Continued to work with the cities and County on Wetland Mitigation Bank options for Whatcom County.
- Goal 2: BLI Phase 1 of converting terminal lighting to LED has been completed. Phase 2 will occur in 2024.
- Goal 2: BLI Taxiway and Taxiway F relocation construction projects were completed. This entailed replacing incandescent airfield lighting to LEDs.
- Goal 2: Utility additions were made new airfield developments (Alpha Hangar and Snow Removal Equipment building) at BLI.
- Goal 2: The Port was awarded over \$9.5 million in federal grants for airfield construction improvements in 2022-2023 for BLI.
- Goal 2: Continued to align Inner Harbor projects with the Climate Action Strategy to improve energy efficiency of the rebuild.
- Goal 2: Bellingham Shipping Terminal (BST) dredging and pier improvements to maximize cargo operations started in Q4 2023; scheduled to be completed by Q1 2025.
- Goal 2: BST received M-5 Designation through MARAD.
- Goal 2: BST received USMHP Grant to purchase a barge ramp for the movement of cargo from barge to land.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 2: BST power and broadband upgrades are currently underway, to be completed by Q1 2025.
- Goal 2: BST dredging and Pier rehab is underway, partially funded by MARAD/PIDP grant, to be completed by Q1 2025.
- Goal 2+6: BST added power capacity to allow ocean-going vessels to use shore power versus running engines or generators while at the dock.
- Goal 2+6: Conducted a solar feasibility study for BLI's terminal building roof and parking lots.
- Goal 2+6: Marinas conducted a solar feasibility study for the Blaine and Squalicum Webhouses and the Marina Square Building.
- Goal 2+6: Started construction on four new EV charging stations in 2023, with more planned for installation in 2024.
- Goal 3: Continued to attend the Northwest Workforce Council's quarterly board meetings.
- Goal 3: Continued to participate on the Workforce Training and Retraining Advisory Group.
- Goal 3: Continued to work with businesses to identify labor shortages and skills gaps, resulting in information that Whatcom County is short many workers trained in electric, HVAC, plumbing, and other construction skills required to address both the Housing Crisis and the City of Bellingham's Climate Action Plan and the Port of Bellingham's Climate Action Strategy.
- Goal 3: in 2022 and 2023, the Port of Bellingham hosted two Job and Marine Trade Fairs at the Fishermen's Pavilion in Bellingham. A total of 26 businesses participated in the Port's job fair in 2022. Job fair participation grew to 36 businesses in 2023. Over 300 interested job candidates attended in 2023. The job fair in 2023 was held in partnership with Bellingham Technical College, the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, and the Working Waterfront Coalition.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 3: Supported Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and airline recruitment job fair at BLI.
- Goal 3: Support and encourage Port staff to utilize the Port's education and tuition assistance programs.
- Goal 3: Provided hands-on training for Aircraft Rescue Firefighters (ARFF) and maintenance staff.
- Goal 3: The Aviation Division increased staffing from 18 to 23 employees in 2022-2023. Seven Aviation hires (including turnover) were local.
- Goal 3: Continue to support the Whatcom Business Alliance and their programs related to youth development programs and training.
- Goal 3: Provided staff support and coordination for a Whatcom County Skills Center and Whatcom Early Learning Center to address the skills center and childcare deserts in Whatcom County. The purpose of the dual skills and childcare center is to provide a mechanism for economic prosperity for young adults needing entry-level technical skills while also providing a viable option for county residents to access childcare.
- Goal 3: Maintain regular contact and meetings with key representatives from Bellingham Technical College, Whatcom Community College, Northwest Indian College, and Western Washington University to provide connection to local workforce needs.
- Goal 3+6: Hired additional front-line security.
- Goal 4: Sponsored a free Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) Seminar in October 2023. Introduced FTZs to local exporters that could potentially benefit from using an FTZ.
- Goal 4: Continue to support the maintenance and use of Whatcom Prospector.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Port of Bellingham

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Questions? Contact Rob Fix at rfix@portofbellingham.com



To promote sustainable economic development, optimize transportation gateways, and manage publicly owned land and facilities to benefit Whatcom County.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 4: Working with both US and Canadian-based developers and brokerage firms to create professional business parks in Whatcom County. Meeting with both US and Canadian based realtors to support the expansion of Canadian firms' foreign direct investment in Whatcom County.
- Goal 4: Continue to be a Steering Committee Member of the International Trade and Mobility Corridor (IMTC) group. Attended 12 IMTC meetings. Work with stakeholders in both the US and Canada to address cross-border mobility issues.
- Goal 4: Working with Maritime Blue on a Fast Foil Ferry Project.
- Goal 4: Partnered with Southwest Airlines to market and advertise BLI to Lower British Columbia and Skagit County.
- Goal 4: Built relationships between Marine Life Center staff and Gabriel Arts Kids, Max Higbee Center, Wild Whatcom, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA), Bellingham School District, WWU SMATE building.
- Goal 4: Referred Silfab Solar to Skagit County, which resulted in Silfab Solar leasing a building of over 200,000SF facility in Burlington.
- Goal 4: Reestablished connection with EDASC and held a Fall 2023 joint meeting of staff at EDASC's Mount Vernon office.
- Goal 4: Continue to foster a relationship with the Surrey Board of Trade (SBOT), which provides benefits to Whatcom County via the ability to provide input on cross-border issues as well as a very positive relationship with the SBOT member business community.
- Goal 4: Contacted and met with City of Surrey Economic development staff to reconnect and discuss potential cross border initiatives that would be a benefit to both the City of Surrey and Whatcom County.
- Goal 4: Field calls on a regular basis from Canadian firms looking to invest in Whatcom County. Companies are primarily seeking to have a US-based business for public works projects or are looking for more affordable industrial real estate.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

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To promote sustainable economic development, optimize transportation gateways, and manage publicly owned land and facilities to benefit Whatcom County.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 5: Collaborated with business leaders and stakeholders to create and launch the United Professionals of Color (UPC), a monthly workgroup designed to provide technical assistance, access to credit, marketing, and advice for growth opportunities to Businesses of Color.
- Goal 5: Created a United Professionals of Color (UPC) website for businesses and non-profits to post events and relevant information that impact Businesses of Color.
- Goal 5: Staff and directors completed two diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops.
- Goal 5: The Marine Life Center continues to adjust programming to make the space and learning opportunities more accessible, including providing alternatives to beach days, creating a variety of activities and engagement in the Center that will appeal to many different visitors.
- Goal 6: Completed and approved the Port's Climate Action Strategy by Port Resolution.
- Goal 6: Completed a draft update of the Port's Parks and Open Spaces Plan, to be approved by Port resolution in March 2024.
- Goal 6: Active Safety Committee working on many activities such as updating the Accident Prevention Program, CPR training, providing H13 filters for offices, optional training for de-escalation with unstable guests or visitors, and beach cleanups.
- Goal 6: Created division specific Safety Committees.
- Goal 6: Participated in the Cross Border Taskforce until the US-Canada Border was reopened. Continued to participate in IMTC meetings to ensure ongoing commercial and trade openness between the US and Canada.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Port of Bellingham

Website: <https://portofbellingham.com/154/Economic-Development>

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Questions? Contact Rob Fix at rfix@portofbellingham.com



To promote sustainable economic development, optimize transportation gateways, and manage publicly owned land and facilities to benefit Whatcom County.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 6: Provided marketing and outreach assistance to Whatcom County businesses for Working Washington 5.0, Border Closure Grants, Hospitality Grants, and Disaster Grants in Whatcom County, providing millions in recovery relief to small businesses.
- Goal 6: Co-led the Whatcom County Business Recovery Taskforce with the WWU SBDC in the aftermath of the November 2021 Nooksack River Floods.
- Goal 6: Provided research and data analysis assistance for the Whatcom County Business Recovery Taskforce memos to elected officials and partners to call attention to ongoing business losses from the November 2021 Nooksack River Floods.
- Goal 6: Worked with the WWU SBDC, the Whatcom Community Foundation, the Lummi Indian Business Council, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, the Department of Commerce, and FORWARD to market and distribute over \$5.4 million in disaster relief to small businesses impacted by the November 2021 Nooksack River Floods.
- Goal 6: Hosted two FEMA courses for business and household disaster preparedness and financial literacy, facilitated by Columbia University's National Center for Disaster Preparedness.
- Goal 6: Aviation completed its triennial Airport Emergency Plan (AEP) drill in 2023, which included agencies throughout the County to prepare for a mass causality aircraft accident.
- Goal 6: Participated in the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake planning conducted by the Whatcom County Division of Emergency Management. Staff presented on how BLI could be utilized in disasters.
- Goal 6: Completed updates to the Port's Emergency Operations Plan.
- Goal 6: Collaborated with Sustainable Connection's Zero Waste Program to promote composting and transition away from single-use plastics. In 2022, 53% of The Portal's waste was diverted from landfills!

Team Whatcom Contributions:

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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 6: Planned updates to senior staff regarding Incident Command System (ICS) in 2024.
- Goal 6: Purchased two electric trucks for Port-use in Squalicum and Blaine Harbors.
- Goal 6: Completed converting parking lot and dock lighting to LED.
- Goal 6: Partnered with County and state agencies to assist with clean water sampling and invasive species projects in Drayton Harbor, which supports marine stewardship and local marine aquaculture businesses.
- Goal 6: Working with Marina Advisory Committee by educating on Tsunami Awareness for the committee to disseminate information to boating community.
- Goal 6: Supported Emergency Management and Environmental Programs by sharing posts on social media regarding disaster preparedness, tsunami warning programs, etc.
- Goal 6: Rehabilitated and released three giant Pacific octopuses, Hero, Onyx, and Opal.
- Goal 6: Coordinated with the Seattle Aquarium to place two additional Pacific octopuses for rehabilitation.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Bellingham Technical College

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Questions? Contact Anya Milton at amilton@btc.edu



Bellingham Technical College provides student-centered, high-quality professional technical education for today's needs and tomorrow's opportunities.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Collaborated with partners such as Healthy Whatcom and the Bellingham Housing Authority to obtain grant funds for students experiencing homelessness.
- Goal 3: Responded to student and industry demands by launching a part-time, three-year Registered Nursing program in Fall 2022.
- Goal 3: Enabled 100% of BTC's 2022 BTC Surgery Technology graduates to pass their national certification exam.
- Goal 3: Provided a Career Coach Job Posting Tool for industry partners to share employment opportunities for students and graduates.
- Goal 3: Received equipment donations and loans from employers such as PACCAR, Subaru, Freightliner Northwest/Western Star Northwest and Farmers Equipment Co.
- Goal 3: Worked with PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center to provide an opportunity for BTC nursing students to be employed at the hospital as Nursing Technicians.
- Goal 3: Operated the IMPACT! youth reengagement program in partnership with local school districts, helping at-risk youth earn their diplomas, GED, or college credits.
- Goal 3: Hosted over 400 high school students from Whatcom and Skagit counties for annual hands-on Tour Day event.
- Goal 3: Supported enrollment and retention of students in non-traditional fields through the Students Helping build an Inclusive Future for the Trades (SHIFT) committee.
- Goal 6: Expanded student emergency aid for needs such as emergency childcare, food, and housing expenses.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce

Website: <https://bellingham.com/> **Email:** info@bellingham.com

Questions? Contact Guy Occhiogrosso at guy@bellingham.com



BELLINGHAM REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

The chamber advocates for a strong business community and aims to make the Bellingham and Whatcom County area a great place to live, work, shop and play by influencing public policy, aiding in economic development, and helping its members succeed.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Collaborated with partners such as the Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee and the Whatcom Housing Alliance to develop recommendations for available housing for all income levels in Whatcom County and Bellingham.
- Goal 1: Created the Center for Retention & Expansion of Childcare NW with the Opportunity Council, which currently has two full-time staff members and provides retention and expansion of slots for childcare.
- Goal 1: Provided networking, connection, and education opportunities for business via monthly Networking Breakfast events (60-90 attendees), multiple Handshake and Happy Hour casual networking opportunities (30-60 attendees), Chamber Speaker Series educational programs (30-70 attendees), monthly Whatcom Young Professionals evening Socials (30-50 attendees), and Whatcom YP weekly morning Buzz meetings (approximately 12 per location per week).
- Goal 1: Built an Entrepreneurship support program, featuring a Mixer, sponsored by the Port of Bellingham, with 30+ attendees.
- Goal 1: Provided educational and growth opportunities for business and community leaders via the long standing Leadership Whatcom; a community leadership development program.
- Goal 1: Continue to advocate for businesses with regards to public safety concerns and other local policy issues and ballot initiatives that impact business.
- Goal 3: Continue programming to advance leadership, talent, and workforce development opportunities working with employers and educational institutions.
- Goal 3: Provide an opportunity to highlight young talent in Whatcom through the Top 7 Under 40 and Annual Awards Dinner.
- Goal 4 + 6: Continue to organize the Cross Border Advisory Committee, advocating for deepening economic ties and increasing ease with which Canadian consumers can travel to Whatcom County to support tourism and retail sectors.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce

Website: <https://bellingham.com/> **Email:** info@bellingham.com

Questions? Contact Guy Occhiogrosso at guy@bellingham.com



BELLINGHAM REGIONAL
**CHAMBER OF
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CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 5 + 6: Established a DEI Advisory Committee for Intellectual Development Disabilities and an LGBTQ+ Advisory Council.
- Goal 6: Continue to work with local financial partners to increase access to capital for Whatcom County businesses.
- Goal 6: Continue to work on recovery of local events and tourism, including reinvigorating the July 4th Fireworks annual event.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism

Website: <https://www.bellingham.org> / **Email:** info@bellingham.org



Questions? Contact Dylan Deane-Boyle at dylan@bellingham.org

BWCT's purpose is to improve the economy by marketing Bellingham and Whatcom County as premier, year-round, visitor, sports, outdoor recreation, arts, cultural, and meeting destinations; BWCT supports travel, tourism, and hospitality businesses and partners with nonprofits in Whatcom County.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Supported Whatcom County's economic base by mailing 44,937 GO! Guides to potential visitors and serving over 3,500 walk-in visitors at five locations. Fulfilled 91 media requests, circulating 173 press releases, earning media coverage of 198 stories about the region (resulting in \$741,250+ in earned media value). Sent 23 newsletters to over 20K subscribers, curated a dynamic informational website viewed over 1.4 million times, and reached over 2 million users on Tourism social media platforms.
- Goal 1: In partnership with Port of Bellingham, hosted travel media on a featured story about the Portal Container Village and Pump Track.
- Goal 1: Promoted NW Tune-Up via social media, website, and with a three-day booth presence at the Summer 2023 Event.
- Goal 1: Created The Gravel Adventure Guide, which raises awareness of gravel bicycle riding in Whatcom County and premiered the Gravel Adventure Guide at the NW Tune Up Event. BWCT printed and plans to distribute 10,000 copies.
- Goal 1: In cooperation with local partners and recreation guides, attended the Vancouver and Los Angeles Adventure Travel Shows during the spring of 2023 to increase the visibility of Bellingham and Whatcom Country as a hub for recreation for visitors to the area.
- Goal 1: Assisted with developing the local tourism market by expanding our Partners from 157 to 168 in 2022, resulting in over 84K page views of their offerings.
- Goal 1: Worked with Sustainable Connections to host trainings on going Toward Zero Waste for tourism businesses.
- Goal 1: Partnered with local company Intellitonic to offer business partners a co-op package of digital wayfinding services to help ensure search engine visibility for businesses, services and amenities.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism

Website: <https://www.bellingham.org>

Email: info@bellingham.org

Questions? Contact Dylan Deane-Boyle at dylan@bellingham.org



BWCT's purpose is to improve the economy by marketing Bellingham and Whatcom County as premier, year-round, visitor, sports, outdoor recreation, arts, cultural, and meeting destinations; BWCT supports travel, tourism, and hospitality businesses and partners with nonprofits in Whatcom County.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

Goal 4: Worked with regional and state partners in the development of the Washington State Management Plan for the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area.

Goal 5: Hosted virtual training sessions on LGBTQ+ Inclusivity for guests, led by HospitableMe.

Goal 6: Hosted virtual recovery talk to discuss ongoing economic recovery efforts.

Goal 6: Monitored local tourism recovery and annual growth in the industry, visitor spending increased by 30.5% to \$688.3 million, supporting 7,676 tourism jobs and \$285.8 million in labor income.

Goal 6: Continue to work with local tourism businesses to monitor ongoing economic recovery from COVID-19 and US-Canada Border Closures.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Downtown Bellingham Partnership



Website: <https://www.downtownbellingham.com>

Email: info@downtownbellingham.com

Questions? Contact Alice Clark at alice@downtownbellingham.com

The Downtown Bellingham Partnership is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering the vibrancy and growth of our downtown. Everything we do is rooted in the idea that our community — Downtown Bellingham — is a place unlike anywhere else. We work to enhance, promote, and advocate for a vibrant city center through development, promotion, support, and celebration.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Provided grant funding to Downtown Bellingham businesses for storefront improvements through our Storefront Improvement Grant Program.
- Goal 1: Launched the City Block Program to connect business owners, increase engagement, and build comradery.
- Goal 1: Launched the Safety Ambassador Program in partnership with the City of Bellingham.
- Goal 1: Launched the Graffiti Abatement Program in partnership with the City of Bellingham.
- Goal 1: Provided grant funding to Downtown Bellingham businesses to support outside activations with our Summer Activation Grant Program.
- Goal 1: Held the Scepter Awards, Downtown Bellingham's annual celebration of the most notable places and people of the year, which featured the bestowing of 12 awards to recognize those working in and supporting the downtown core.
- Goal 1+6: Produced year-round event programming, including our award-winning music series, Downtown Sounds, driving customer traffic regularly into the downtown core.
- Goal 1+6: Collaborated with the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce collaborated on producing a Town Hall event in September focused on the state laws that were changed in 2021 that related to law enforcement and safety concerns downtown.
- Goal 1+6: Received funding from BECU and the City of Bellingham to create a First Friday Busking Program, which added a live music component to the monthly art walk series during spring and summer months. The program enhanced the overall atmosphere of the event and helped mitigate negative behaviors in the district.
- Goal 1+6: Expanded its marketing and communications of the Downtown Bellingham district in 2022 by incorporating more social media, strengthening its relationship with Whatcom County Tourism, and increasing other communications including newsletters and email blasts to the general public.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Fairhaven Association

Website: <https://enjoyfairhaven.com/>

Email: contact@enjoyfairhaven.com

Questions? Contact Heather Carter at heather@enjoyfairhaven.com



The Fairhaven Association is a group of business owners, non-profit organizations, residents, neighbors, and friends who support the preservation and business success of Fairhaven Village. Through community events, social gatherings, and beautification we celebrate the people and the history that make Fairhaven Village the very special place it is.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Held Winterfest Events and events throughout the holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas, which helped attract approximately 5,000 attendees and foot traffic to the Downtown Fairhaven area in support of local business.
- Goal 1: Managed the Fairhaven Festival, an annual event held in conjunction with Ski to Sea, to support Fairhaven businesses and artisans. An estimated 15,000 attendees visited the festival.
- Goal 1: Run the Summer Outdoor Movie Series for 10 Saturdays June 24 - August 26 on the Fairhaven Green, helping make Bellingham a great place to live, work, and play. Approximately 2,600 attendees participated in the series in 2022.
- Goal 1: Supported the Dirty Dan Murder Mystery Weekend in April, which sold approximately 600 tickets.
- Goal 1: Arranged and managed many other events to inspire foot traffic and customers for Fairhaven businesses, including the Chocolate Walk (325 tickets sold in 2023), Dirty Dan Day, Chicken Fest (700 attendees), the Sidewalk Sale, Art Walks, and Halloween.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Lummi Indian Business Council

Website: <https://www.lummi-nsn.gov/>

Email: TeresaT@lummi-nsn.gov

Questions? Contact Teresa Taylor at TeresaT@lummi-nsn.gov



For thousands of years, the Lummi were an independent and self-sufficient people. Our mission is to sustain that way of life. We continue to invest in our tribal economic development and training our people to use the most modern technologies available- while staying attentive to our tribal values.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects in 2022-2023

The Lummi Nation maintains their own CEDS document and progress reports and many of their economic activities have a regional benefit. The bullets below highlight a very small selection from dozens of projects and recent deliverables from the Lummi Nation. Those highlighted have a regional benefit and are related to Whatcom County CEDS goals.

- Goal 1: Developed the [Lummi Nation CEDS 2023-2027](#) and maintains CEDS Progress Reports.
- Goal 1: Addressed the local housing crisis by successfully funding the Lummi Nation Housing Authority (LNHA) Indian Housing Plan for FY2022, which includes construction of two major projects: Kwina Village Phase 3, which will create 32 low income units and two halfway houses with 16 units.
- Goal 1: Addressed the local housing crisis by identifying partial funding for 20 lots for single family homes at the Olsen Subdivision Phase I.
- Goal 1+6: Contributed to developing local markets and tourism recovery from COVID-19 by securing EDA funding for the Lummi Vendor Market Place.
- Goal 2+6: Procured Gooseberry Point Waste Water Treatment Plant Improvement funding.
- Goal 2+6: Acquired partial funding to improve the Lummi Bay Shellfish Hatchery.
- Goal 2+6: Fully funded a plan to identify and improve telemedicine, virtual teaching and education, and remote workforce broadband and communication needs.
- Goal 2+6: Enhanced resiliency by identifying partial funding to expand the Healing Spirit Wellness & Recovery Campus to include a Care Center, Detox Center, and a Journey to Wellness program.
- Goal 3: Held a Try-a-Trade Day day for high school students and the public to develop a broader understanding of local employment and training opportunities available.
- Goal 3+6: Established a partnership between Northwest Indian College and Sustainable Connections to train paid interning students how to do energy audits.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Nooksack Indian Tribe

Website: <https://nooksacktribe.org/>

Email: info@nooksack-nsn.gov

Questions? Contact Tyler Green at TGreen@nooksack-nsn.gov



The Nooksack Economic Development Department is working towards positive economic growth by assisting the Tribal leadership to make comprehensive decisions in diversifying revenues. Current Nooksack business ventures include the Northwood Casino, the Market Center, and Between the Ferns, the newest business endeavor.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Made local development for the Nooksack Indian Tribe more strategic and programmatic by entering in the CEDS process for the Nooksack Tribe in 2023.
- Goal 1: Strengthened the local economic base by building the Between the Ferns Cannabis Shop, the first tribally owned shop to open in Whatcom County.
- Goal 1+6: Installed a new freezer at the Market Center, ensuring food access to tribal members.
- Goal 1: Facilitated the relocation of the triple wide trailer from the Halverstick property next to the Northwood Casino to the Sulwhanon community.
- Goal 1: Facilitated the Remodel for the Genesis II Program.
- Goal 1: Assisted the remodel of the future Childcare Facility in Deming.
- Goal 1+6: Began planning for the the new Health Clinic project.
- Goal 1+6: Cleaned up of the westside track property, where the maintenance and automotive buildings are located.
- Goal 2: Completed multiple improvements well, tower, and pumphouses, ensuring access to safe, clean water.
- Goal 2: Assisted with future broadband expansion planning.
- Goal 2+6: Created a Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) Warehouse.
- Goal 2+6: Applied for two solar grants for the PPE Warehouse.
- Goal 6: Assisted and assessed remodel of the old River Casino for Tribal programming – Courts, Police Dept., Social Services, Elders Nutrition, and Enrollment.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Northwest Innovation Resource Center

Website: <https://nwirc.com/>

Email: info@nwirc.com



Questions? Contact Diane Kamionka at dkamionka@nwirc.com

NWIRC assists entrepreneurs to create, build and grow innovative businesses that strengthen the economic diversity of NW Washington.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Supported entrepreneurs by hosting two BlueTech/CleanTech cohort sessions, featuring two participants from Whatcom County.
- Goal 1: Continue to support Whatcom County entrepreneurs through the 1-1 entrepreneur mentoring program.
- Goal 1: Strengthened partnerships within the maritime and agriculture industries, as industries in high-need of innovation resources.
- Goal 1+6: Strengthened resources for local businesses by offering a new Data Workshop series that works with small businesses to identify the data they have in order to innovate and create value. There have been a total of three workshops with 22 participants.
- Goal 1+4+5: Worked with Canadian partners to launch an Indigenous Entrepreneur Business Accelerator with 10 participating companies.
- Goal 2: Working to open theLabs, which provide physical work space to entrepreneurs and small business owners for product testing, prototyping, advisory services, and more.
- Goal 3: Created the WA Data Bootcamp to provide workforce training to dislocated workers and fulfill the growing need for data analysis skills at every business.
- Goal 3: Continue to link WA Data Bootcamp graduates to businesses in Northwest WA who are in need of data analysis and coding skills.
- Goal 4: Continue to work with partners in the five Northwest WA counties of Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, and San Juan.
- Goal 5: Supporting immigrants with advisory services. Updated website with information specific to Ukraine immigrants.
- Goal 5: Working with director of WEBC-Pacific for support of women owned businesses.
- Goal 6: Continue to work with partners to identify financial resources for entrepreneurs.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Sustainable Connections

Website: <https://sustainableconnections.org/>

Email: info@sustainableconnection.org

Questions? Contact Derek Long at derekl@sustainableconnection.org



Sustainable Connections mission is to create thriving communities through innovative ideas, collaboration, and action. SC houses programs such as the Whatcom Housing Alliance, Think Local First, Cloud Mountain Farm Center, and Toward Zero Waste.

- Goal 1: Whatcom Housing Alliance (WHA) collaborated with 44 diverse member organizations and partners such as the Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee and the Bellingham Whatcom County Regional Chamber to develop recommendations to increase available and affordable housing for all income levels in Whatcom County and Bellingham.
- Goal 1: WHA worked to make Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) easier to build in Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham.
- Goal 1: WHA provided technical input to state legislators on a variety of housing policies. The 2023 Legislative Session proved to be a transformative year for housing availability and affordability. The WHA will focus on local implementation of state level policies and increase the supply of housing to meet surging demand.
- Goal 1: Participated in Whatcom County's Food Systems Committee and draft plan development.
- Goal 1: Cloud Mountain Farm Center (CMFC) – added flash freezing and freezer storage capacity, along with existing cold and dry storage capacity to help local farms capture more value from production. CMFC is also a distribution hub for the Puget Sound Food Hub and estimates facilitating \$1 million in farm product distribution in 2023.
- Goal 1: Cloud Mountain Farm Center (CMFC) attracted close to 100 farmers to Field Day events that cover how to produce and sell organic fruit in W. WA, a promising market that can help more farms achieve and remain viable and profitable.
- Goal 1: Supported developing local markets throughout Whatcom County with the Eat Local First program and Think Local First gift card program. In total, over 270 local businesses now accept and 1,816 gift cards were sold in 2022 not counting the innovative \$50,000 effort to help Sumas and Everson area businesses and residents recover from flood impacts.
- Goal 1: WHA work on ADUs in Whatcom County and City of Bellingham.
- Goal 1: Held the first in person Farm to Table Trade Meeting since the pandemic began. This event brings together close to 200 farmers, fishers, value added producers and wholesale buyers of all kinds to facilitate more sales.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Sustainable Connections

Website: <https://sustainableconnections.org/>

Email: info@sustainableconnection.org

Questions? Contact Derek Long at derek1@sustainableconnection.org



Sustainable Connections mission is to create thriving communities through innovative ideas, collaboration, and action. SC houses programs such as the Whatcom Housing Alliance, Think Local First, Cloud Mountain Farm Center, and Toward Zero Waste.

- Goal 1: Supported developing local markets through September's Eat Local Month activities that promotes connections and sales for fishers, farmers, restaurants (that source local) and markets/grocers (that source local) through special events and tools like the Farm Tour (2,314 farm visits in 2022) and the launch of the Farm To Table Trail in partnership with Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism.
- Goal 1: Supported local businesses and developed local markets by advertising and marketing member businesses.
- Goal 3: Cloud Mountain Farm Center (CMFC) launched an Agriculture workforce development program in partnership with Career Technical Education programs at Mt. Baker, Ferndale and Nooksack Valley High Schools.
- Goal 3+6: Created a partnership with Northwest Indian College (NWIC) to train paid interns in the field of energy auditing, a promising career track.
- Goal 4: Sustainable Connections programs and services such as the Community Energy Challenge, Cloud Mountain Farm Center and Food & Farming operate in Whatcom and surrounding Counties. www.EatLocalFirst.org is a statewide resource that received 91,276 page views in 2022.
- Goal 6: Toward Zero Waste program efforts have resulted in over 500 businesses reached (waste audit, waste reduction plans established and results measured over time) since the program's launch in 2008.
- Goal 6: Partnered with the Port of Bellingham to focus on waste reduction at The Portal in 2022. All Portal businesses engaged meaningfully to produce a 53% landfill diversion rate.
- Goal 6: Toward Zero Waste (TZW) was the City of Bellingham's lead technical assistance provider to support businesses as they shift to eliminate single use plastics and comply with local laws. TZW's Food Recovery program provided 165k meals to those in need in 2022.
- Goal 6: In 2022 reached a benchmark of 800 commercial buildings receiving energy audits, energy retrofit plans and facilitation of projects including incentives since the Community Energy Challenge (CEC) program began in 2010. 2022 economic impact of energy retrofits attributable to the CEC equaled \$900,000 and the GHG emission reduction equivalent of 726,000 miles not driven by the average vehicle.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

Sustainable Connections

Website: <https://sustainableconnections.org/>

Email: info@sustainableconnection.org

Questions? Contact Derek Long at derekl@sustainableconnection.org



Sustainable Connections mission is to create thriving communities through innovative ideas, collaboration, and action. SC houses programs such as the Whatcom Housing Alliance, Think Local First, Cloud Mountain Farm Center, and Toward Zero Waste.

- Goal 6: Completed 18 energy audits in partnership with the Port of Bellingham and Whatcom County Conservation District, improving resiliency and reducing costs for rural Whatcom businesses.
- Goal 6: June Green Home Tour event attracted 300 attendees to share strategies for green and healthy homes and generate business activity for those that have specialized knowledge and experience. The Green Building SLAM event attracts industry professionals of all kinds for inspiration and technical skill building. This event usually coincides with the City of Bellingham's Climate Action Week.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Whatcom Business Alliance



Website: <https://whatcombusinessalliance.com/>

Email: info@whatcombusinessalliance.com

Questions? Contact Barbara Chase at barbara@whatcombusinessalliance.com

The Whatcom Business Alliance is the ears, eyes, and voice for the Whatcom County business community. We believe business success is the single largest driver of community prosperity, which is why we focus our efforts on facilitating that success through advocacy, research and education and job opportunities. We bring business leaders together to encourage, acknowledge and share the best and most ethical business practices.

CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Creating an open forum of consistency and fairness so businesses can grow and add family-wage jobs in our community.
- Goal 1: Publish Business Pulse magazine on a bimonthly basis. Whatcom County's only source of local business news! Every year, Business Pulse brings stories that highlight local businesses and policy issues facing our community.
- Goal 1: Held the annual Economic Forecast Breakfast with 129 attendees.
- Goal 1: Held the annual Leaders of Industry Forum, focusing on current issues in Whatcom County across all sectors, hosting 130 attendees.
- Goal 1: Held the annual Whatcom Business Awards, celebrating business successes, with 395 attendees.
- Goal 1: Advocate for environmental stewardship that is compatible with economic prosperity.
- Goal 1: Work to build dialog where business leaders can offer expert solutions to others on policy issues.
- Goal 3: Managed the “YES Whatcom” Youth Engagement Initiative to help prepare the emergent workforce and to connect them with local employers. Hosted over 200 students during career fairs.
- Goal 3: Developed the “YES Whatcom” campaign website to raise awareness of career options, hands-on learning experiences, paid internships and apprenticeship programs that are available locally. Provides a free service to employers to post job and apprenticeship opportunities on the website.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Whatcom Community College



Website: <https://www.whatcom.edu/>

Email: info@whatcom.ctc.edu

Questions? Contact Matthew Green at mgreen@whatcom.edu

Whatcom Community College contributes to the vitality of its communities by providing quality education in academic transfer, professional-technical, and lifelong learning, preparing students for active citizenship in a global society.

CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 3: Continued to host the Area Health Education Center for Western Washington (AHECWW) which works to increase diversity and distribution among health professionals, enhance health care quality, and improve health care delivery to rural and underserved areas and populations.
- Goal 3: Prepared Whatcom's massage therapist graduates to pass the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEX) required for licensure, with 100% passing on their first attempt in 2022, compared to 80.5% in the state and 71% nationally.
- Goal 3: Prepared Whatcom's nursing graduates to pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) required for licensure, with 96% passing on their first attempt in 2022, compared to 80% nationally.
- Goal 3: Received approvals from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities to offer a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Social Work, launching fall 2023.
- Goal 3: Continued to host the National Cybersecurity Training and Education Center (NCyTE), an Advanced Technological Education (ATE) National Center, grant-funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), focused on advancing cybersecurity education in the U.S.
- Goal 3: Named the host site of the Washington State Center of Excellence for Cybersecurity.
- Goal 3: Welcomed over 220 student, alumni, and community members to the WCC Job and Internship Fair (May 11, 2023); representing government and private sectors, 36 employers and 93 employer contacts participated to offer employment and internship opportunities.
- Goal 3: Added 19 new members across the college's 15 professional-technical program advisory committees, for a current total of 98 representatives from local industry and the community to advise on their respective industries and skill/knowledge requirements for employees; assist with current issues impacting programs; and provide support and advocacy for quality education and training.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Whatcom Community College



Website: <https://www.whatcom.edu/>

Email: info@whatcom.ctc.edu

Questions? Contact Matthew Green at mgreen@whatcom.edu

Whatcom Community College contributes to the vitality of its communities by providing quality education in academic transfer, professional-technical, and lifelong learning, preparing students for active citizenship in a global society.

CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 3: Continued to implement Whatcom Career Connect, an online tool for employers to post open positions and for students, alumni, and guest users to find job and internship positions, as well as resources to explore educational and career pathways.
- Goal 5: Engaged with 18 middle and high school students for the Digital Download workshop (April 29, 2023) with an emphasis on attracting females to careers in cybersecurity, engineering, and software development.
- Goal 5: Engaged with 22 middle and high school students for the Guys & Guts workshop (June 3, 2023) with an emphasis on attracting males to careers in medical assisting, nursing, and physical therapy assisting.
- Goal 5: Continued to create a culture in which the college's professional-technical programs meet or exceed state targets related to program completion and post college employment or continuing education, including special populations and sub-groups by race and gender.
- Goal 6: As a leader in cybersecurity education, contributed to building the local, regional, and national cybersecurity workforce to help prevent and recover from cyber attacks.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Working Waterfront Coalition of Whatcom

Website: <https://www.whatcomworkingwaterfront.org/>

Email: info@whatcomworkingwaterfront.org

Questions? Contact Dan Tucker at dant@whatcomworkingwaterfront.org



The Working Waterfront Coalition of Whatcom County promotes the vitality and economic benefits of our working waterfronts for the people of Whatcom County.

CEDS Related Activities + Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Worked with Port on the planning of the Aerated Stabilization Basin (ASB) redevelopment, securing 17 new acres of land reserved for working trades along the Waterfront.
- Goal 1: Launched a bi-weekly waterfront newsletter, featuring stories, events and information specifically focused on our Waterfront trades and businesses, which has continued to successfully grow.
- Goal 1: Listened and responded to issues from our Waterfront members.
- Goal 1: Promoted the economic benefits and vitality of a working waterfront for Whatcom County.
- Goal 1+6: Grew participation in our Coalition Health Trust, which offers Coalition members the opportunity to offer their employees competitive insurance to mid- or small-size companies.
- Goal 1+6: Continued advocacy for our trades in both the Bellingham City Council, as well as Blaine City Council.
- Goal 2: Authored letters in support of Port receiving grant funding for improvements of the Bellingham Shipping Terminal, and advocated for the terminal becoming more active.
- Goal 3: Launched a living-wage apprenticeship for marine service technicians, and successfully hosted our first class of apprentices in a 4-year program to Journeyman-level certification.
- Goal 3: Hosted several successful networking events for Waterfront businesses and peers.
- Goal 3: Participated in and helped plan two Maritime Job Fair at Fisherman's Pavilion.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Whatcom Community Foundation

Website: <https://whatcomcf.org/>

Email: wcf@whatcomcf.org

Questions? Contact Mauri Ingram at mingram@whatcomcf.org



The Whatcom Community Foundation manages more than \$75 million in assets in over 350 individualized funds. We work every day to amplify the force of philanthropy –by connecting people, ideas, and resources – so that communities flourish.

CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Invested more than \$3.3 million of philanthropic capital into the local food system.
- Goal 1: Raised \$2.5 million in philanthropic capital to complete the financing package for Phase 1 of the Millworks project, resulting in Mercy Housing NW's groundbreaking on 83 units of permanently affordable workforce housing and a 6-classroom early learning center.
- Goal 1: Increased loan guarantee for Telegraph Townhomes project, a joint venture between Habitat for Humanity of Whatcom County and Kulshan Community Land Trust, to more than \$1.6 million. The guarantee helps to reduce the cost of capital during the construction phase.
- Goal 1: Convened the Foundation's Impact Investing Committee to explore new avenues of affordable housing finance.
- Goal 1: Supported the 2022 Healthy Children's Fund Levy to generate resources to improve the state of Whatcom County's childcare crisis.
- Goal 1+4+5: Hosted three work sessions with the Washington State Center for Employee Ownership planning team, including multiple economic development practitioners at the local and state level with technical assistance from Project Equity. The goal of the group is to finance and launch the Center by the end of 2023.
- Goal 5: Advocated in support of SB 5096, the Employee Ownership Expansion Act, which unanimously passed both chambers of the Washington State Legislature. The Act enables a new tax and other incentives for owners to convert their businesses to employee-owned enterprises.
- Goal 5: In partnership with the WWU SBDC and the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship, provided honoraria to three participants from Whatcom County for the Comadres program, a Latinx women entrepreneur training program designed to assist participants in exploring their business idea and connect with resources with the goal of launching their business.
- Goal 6: Advocated for public sector funding for preparedness, relief, and recovery.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Whatcom Community Foundation

Website: <https://whatcomcf.org/>

Email: wcf@whatcomcf.org

Questions? Contact Mauri Ingram at mingram@whatcomcf.org



The Whatcom Community Foundation manages more than \$75 million in assets in over 350 individualized funds. We work every day to amplify the force of philanthropy –by connecting people, ideas, and resources – so that communities flourish.

CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 6: Raised and distributed more than \$2.6 million in flood relief and recovery funding to various agencies for direct aid, temporary housing, food, recovery expenses and small business assistance in response to the 2021 Nooksack River Flood. Partners included the Whatcom Long-Term Recovery Group (formerly Whatcom Strong), Catholic Community Services, Ferndale Community Resource Center, North Sound Accountable Community of Health, WWU SBDC, Port of Bellingham, Whatcom County Department of Emergency Management, Washington State Department of Commerce, and many others.
- Goal 6: Submitted recommendations for, helped to facilitate and funded digital platform to facilitate flood survivor data collection, benefits access and coordinated case management. The Whatcom Long-Term Recovery Group is the licensee and is in the implementation process.
- Goal 6: Funded Downtown Bellingham Partnership's Alley Activation Program and staff attendance to a conference to cultivate post-pandemic downtown recovery.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Western Washington University

Website: <https://www.wvu.edu/>

Email: Chris.roselli@wvu.edu



Questions? Contact Chris Roselli at Chris.roselli@wvu.edu

Western Washington University is a public comprehensive institution dedicated to serving the people of the state of Washington. Together our students, staff, and faculty are committed to making a positive impact in the state and the world with a shared focus on academic excellence and inclusive achievement.

CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 1+3+5+6: Groundbreaking of the construction of Kaiser Borsari Hall, which will expand WWU's programs in electrical engineering, computer science and energy science. The building will be the first publicly funded zero-energy academic building on a university campus in Washington State.
- Goal 1+6 – Opened Alma Clark Glass Hall, a 400-bed residence facility named in honor of the first Black student who attended Western. The residence hall nets an additional 240 beds on WWU's campus and provides ADA accessibility to the Ridgeway Community on campus.
- Goal 1+6: 100 students served by funds from SHB 1166 that provided funding for students experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Of those students, 39 received temporary housing in on-campus emergency housing rooms while other students received subsidies or referrals to support needed by a new housing support case management team.
- Goal 1+3+6: 33 Whatcom County employers attended WWU's first ever Local Industry Career Fair aimed at encouraging students to build internships and career opportunities in Whatcom County. In 2022, 8.4% of WWU's incoming class came from Whatcom County, yet 17% of Whatcom County's current population consists of WWU alumni.
- Goal 1+2+6: Required that all buildings are LEED certified and currently building the first public building in the region that will be carbon neutral.
- Goal 1+5: Approval of the construction of a Coast-Salish-style longhouse in partnership and close collaboration with Coast Salish tribal nations and the WWU Native American Student Union which will promote educational opportunities for Native students and a community gathering space for all. The groundbreaking of the new building will take place in fall 2023.
- Goal 1+2+4+6: WWU's Border Policy Research Institute partnered with Simon Fraser University on a two-year "Pandemics and Borders" research project studying the impacts of pandemic travel restrictions and is the first of its kind that brings together public health and border policy expertise at the U.S. Canada border.
- Goal 1+5: Increased efforts to contract with local businesses with additional outreach to those that are female and BIPOC-owned. On boarded 16 new local small vendors with an additional 13 vendors in process while hosting OMWBE on campus where a vendor onboarding is planned for spring 2024. A new local vendor web page is being created and will be live by September 2023.

Team Whatcom Contributions: Western Washington University

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Email: Chris.roselli@wwu.edu



Questions? Contact Chris Roselli at Chris.roselli@wwu.edu

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CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 3: Generated \$3.7 million from endowments to support student scholarships, fund research experiences, and provide faculty support and program enhancements.
- Goal 3: State Legislature provided funding to expand critical student support services to mitigate impacts of the pandemic, additional support for the RN-to-BSN in nursing program and funding to establish a master's degree in nursing, in addition to funding for equipment upgrades and technical support for the Cyber Range in Poulsbo.
- Goal 3: Created a financial aid information campaign which resulted in 83.4% of WWU new first-year students completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Washington Application for State Financial Aid. That compares to 58% of students nationally and 42% for Washington State overall.
- Goal 3+6: Created the new Marine and Coastal Sciences Program to address the need for a new generation of adept and well-equipped marine scientists ready to address the urgency of the climate crisis and its ongoing impact on ocean life and marine ecosystems.
- Goal 5: Created the Office of Equity to bring together to complementary functions, compliance and community education and development, and to provide oversight to policies and initiatives that promote a learning and work environment where accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion (ADEI) are valued and integrated in institutional planning and operations.
- Goal 5: WWU became the first university in the Northwest to join the nationwide Okanagan Charter and the US Health Promoting Campuses Network, which embeds health into all aspects of campus culture while leading health-promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.
- Goal 6: Updated WWU Western Alert System, which is tested quarterly, and completed annual earthquake drills, active shooter awareness, and other resiliency efforts to increase campus safety during emergencies.

Team Whatcom Contributions:

WWU Small Business Development Center

Website: <https://sbdc.wwu.edu/>

Email: SBDC@wwu.edu

Questions? Contact CJ Seitz at seitzc@wwu.edu



The WWU SBDC brings a consortium of business development resources to your community. These assets are delivered through one-on-one counseling with certified business advisors, our popular and proven training events and our best-in-class small business market and strategy research.

CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 1: Counseled 788 small businesses.
- Goal 1: Sponsored 110 training participants, most through the Washington State SBDC webinar (46% pre-venture, 4% early startup, 50% established businesses).
- Goal 1: Completed 9 student or research projects related to specific business client work.
- Goal 1: Fulfilled 521 information requests from businesses, nonprofits, small businesses, and community organizations and members.
- Goal 1: Supported \$22.7 million in capital formation for business clients.
- Goal 1: Supported 48 new business starts.
- Goal 1: Supported 1,049 jobs retained or created.
- Goal 1: Supported 2,855 jobs in total through small business counseling.
- Goal 1: Provided assistance to 349 start-up clients.
- Goal 1: The WWU SBDC is teaming with Project Equity, the Whatcom Community Foundation, Sustainable Connections, and the Washington Department of Commerce to create a statewide Employee Ownership Center in Bellingham.
- Goal 1: Working with a consortium of CBOs to hold Cascade Cooperatives meeting and will serve as a resource for co-ops throughout the region.
- Goal 1: The WWU SBDC partnered with Cara Buckingham of the Washington APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC) to host several events, including a Cybersecurity workshop, a joint open-house, and an ongoing monthly drop-in clinic.
- Goal 1+6: Working with partners to create additional avenues for business capital.
- Goal 5: Staff completed multiple professional development trainings related to equity and cultural awareness.
- Goal 5: Expanded SBDC multilingual advising and outreach by hiring Dr. Liliana Deck, increasing culturally competent Spanish-language advising and improving relational connections in the community with more than 20 community partner organizations.

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CEDS Related Activities and Projects 2022-2023

- Goal 5: Developed an inclusive marketing effort, led by Dr. Deck, and includes Mobile-friendly technology (QR code on brochures, banners, and business cards, bilingual resources, website and marketing (English/ Spanish), and WhatsApp phone capabilities for advising clients with limited access to computers.
- Goal 5: Developing model for tracking success beyond traditional metrics (clients, advising hours, jobs created) with the goal of being inclusive while capturing the scope of providing services for underrepresented communities.
- Goal 5: Ongoing collaboration with WA state network of “Asesores Latinos” (bilingual advisors).
- Goal 6: Lead technical assistance provider for COVID-19, with 3,500 visitors to Resources page, 976 individuals attending resource trainings, Bill Analysis & Summary information.
- Goal 6: Lead the Business Recovery Taskforce along with WCF and the POB for the November 2021 Nooksack River Flood.
- Goal 6: Advocated for \$10 million in business recovery from the WA State Legislature, resulting in 78 grants to Whatcom County and Lummi Nation businesses, totaling approximately \$5.4 million dollars.
- Goal 6: Provided outreach and technical assistance for the NW Disaster Grant program, 42 of 78 of the businesses that received the grant received SBDC application assistance.

Evaluation: Key Data Points

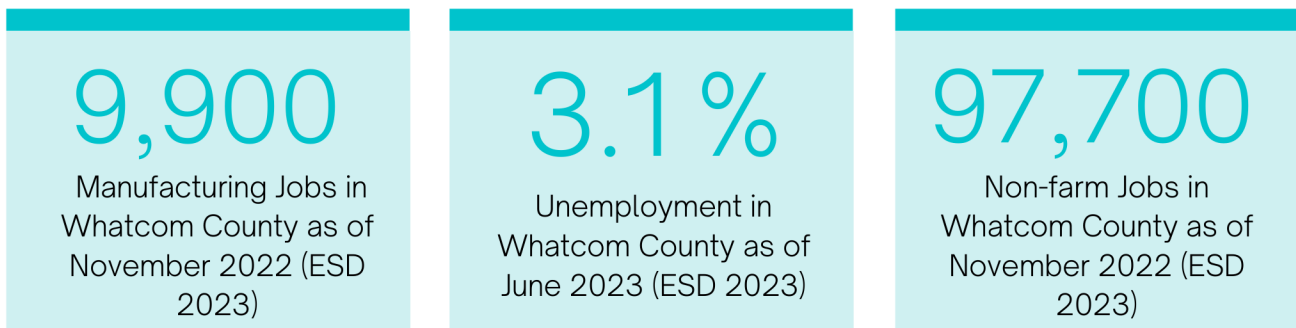
Evaluation metrics are a key part of a progress report. In the 2022-2026 CEDS, it was noted that the following metrics would be reviewed on an annual basis:

- Number of jobs created by sector (Employment Security Department) (ESD)
- Per capita personal income / average hourly and annual wages (ESD)
- Housing units built, housing stock volume, housing prices, permits issued by unit type (Office of Financial Management (OFM), city, County, and Tribal planning departments)
- Childcare slots needed versus available (service providers, State Department of Commerce)

Evaluation: Jobs

When the Whatcom County CEDS 2022-2026 document was written and approved, ESD (2021) reported that there were 91,000 non-farm jobs in June 2021 in Whatcom County. This number remained below the high of 97,300 non-farm jobs in June 2019 prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and related closures. As of November 2022, which is the most recent data available from ESD, Whatcom County has finally returned to pre-pandemic employment levels, with 97,700 non-farm jobs.

Similarly, the unemployment has not only rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, but has hit a historic low of 3.1% as of June 2023.



While some may interpret this data as indicating that Whatcom County's economy and businesses have fully recovered, qualitative data and information gathered through business retention and expansion (BR+E) activities conducted by the Port and partners indicate that many sectors are still experiencing labor shortages. This could certainly be due, at least in part, to the very low unemployment rate.

The sectors that have reported labor shortages include most service sectors, in particular hospitality, retail, and restaurants. However, other sectors including construction and related sub-sectors, such as HVAC, electricians, and plumbers, have also reported major shortages and long wait times for those seeking their services.

Evaluation: Key Data Points

Evaluation: Income

Wages and income are growing in Whatcom County, with both being higher than the national averages but lower than Washington State averages. In terms of per capita income, in 2020 Whatcom County increased to an average of \$59,510, which was lower than the Washington State average of \$67,126 but higher than the national average of \$52,787.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic Whatcom County's average annual wage was \$49,662 in 2019, which is below the statewide annual average wage of \$69,195. In 2020, the average annual wage increased to \$53,325. This continues to be below the state average, which was \$73,504 in 2020, but above the national average of \$50,834 (ESD 2021 and 2023). While wages are growing, the gap between Whatcom County and the state average points to the fact that lower than average wages, high housing costs, and childcare costs may be contributing to the labor shortage in several industries.

Evaluation: Housing

During 2020-2022, the housing crisis in Whatcom County, as well as nationwide, deepened. Whatcom County increased its Total Housing Units by 3,414 units for a total of 104,657 units, for an increase of 3.37% (WA OFM 2023). Despite this increase in units, the majority of units remain unaffordable and unavailable to many. Prior to the pandemic in January 2020, the median sale price for a home was \$375,000. By June 2022, the median sale price hit an all time high of \$635,000 in Whatcom County (Redfin Market Insights 2023).

104,657

Total Housing Units in
Whatcom County
(Postcensal Estimate from
WA OFM 2023)

+3.37 %

Increase in Total
Housing Units Between
2021 and 2023

3,414

Total Housing Units Added
to Whatcom County since
2021 (Postcensal Estimate
from WA OFM 2023)

As for time on the market, between March 2020 and August 2022, the median number of days a home was on the market was under 19 days. For the majority of 2021, homes were on the market less than 10 days and some months as few as four days (Redfin Market Insights 2023). In August 2023, median prices have dropped to \$560,000 and time on the market is up to 14 days.

In terms of permitting, according to the [City of Bellingham's Development Dashboard](#), in 2020 residential permits hit a low of 638 applications. In 2021, the number rebounded significantly to 1,286 residential permits, and in 2022 that number fell back down to 853 residential permits, which is close to the 2019 number of 935 residential permits. There are currently 1,137 units under construction, of which 966 are multifamily and 171 are single family.

Evaluation: Key Data Points

Evaluation: Housing Continued

While progress is being made and units are being built, during the same time period, Whatcom County's Point in Time Count Report found that there was an approximately 27% increase in houseless residents, from 832 people counted in 2022 to 1,059 counted in 2023. Many Team Whatcom members are taking action in response to this ongoing crisis.

For example, the Downtown Bellingham Partnership launched the Safety Ambassador Program in partnership with the City of Bellingham. The DBP also collaborated with the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce on producing a Town Hall event in September that focused on the state laws that were changed in 2021 that related to law enforcement and safety concerns downtown. Whatcom Community Foundation increased loan guarantee for Telegraph Townhomes project to more than \$1.6 million. The guarantee helps to reduce the cost of capital during the construction phase. Additionally, the Port of Bellingham's Economic Development Team sits on the Board of Whatcom's Habitat for Humanity as well as the Whatcom Housing Alliance, and initiated the WEDA Workforce Housing Workgroup. Many Team Whatcom members also supported the Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee's Housing Recommendations for Housing for All Income Levels to Whatcom County Council and City of Bellingham.

Evaluation: Childcare

Like housing, the childcare problem is a nationwide crisis. In 2021, WWU's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) conducted a childcare demand analysis. This



analysis showed that Whatcom County needs up to 12,068 slots to fulfill growing childcare demand by 2025. Specifically, given population growth and current demand, they found that 0-5 child care capacity would need to increase by 5,817 slots and school-age capacity by 6,252 slots to meet the Total Demand scenario.

It is important to note that demand is based upon many factors, some of which may be shifting locally and nationally. These include labor force participation rate changes post-COVID, forecasted population growth, and child care preferences. As some families decide that they may not want their children in childcare or parents begin to exit the labor force, demand could drop. Alternatively, if some decide to return to the labor market as quality affordable childcare slots become available, this could further increase demand. As with housing, many Team Whatcom partners are actively working on addressing this issue.

Next Steps

The critical priorities identified in the Whatcom County CEDS 2022-2026 remain the same:

Social and economic infrastructure

- Housing availability and affordability
- Childcare availability and affordability
- Labor shortage
- Wages inconsistent with cost of living

Physical infrastructure

- Lack of or insufficient utilities, including electric, sewer, water, broadband
- Substantial wetlands and critical areas with limited wetland mitigation bank credit

These priorities were identified as key to economic development in Whatcom County because all of these issues are making it difficult for many existing and new businesses to expand and stay in Whatcom County. This also prevents Whatcom County from recruiting new businesses, as those businesses will struggle to find workers, housing, and childcare. Likewise, the lack of physical infrastructure increases both the amount of time and cost of many potential residential housing projects that are needed to allay the housing crisis.

2024

Continue to support Whatcom County's economic base through business retention and expansion outreach, increasing business resource availability and accessibility, and connecting employer needs with talent supply pipelines.

2024

Continue to support Whatcom County's economic base through advocating for affordable, accessible housing for all income levels as well as affordable, accessible, quality childcare for all income levels.

2024

Continue to work with cities, County, and Tribes in order to improve and address infrastructure needs throughout the County, especially those that will have a regional impact.

2024

Continue to work with Team Whatcom partners on the fulfillment of Whatcom County CEDS Goals for 2022-2026.

Highlights

While there is always more work to be done, Whatcom County's economic development service providers, known as Team Whatcom, are making serious progress on Whatcom County's 2022-2026 CEDS Goals.

Below are some highlights of activities in 2022-2023 found in this report.



Green Energy

Whatcom County is becoming a hub for companies that make green energy or products and products that help the environment. Companies such as:

- Corvus Energy
- Vicinity Motor Corp
- Tidal Vision

Broadband Expansion

Many exciting parts of the Whatcom County Broadband Feasibility Study (October 2022) are coming to fruition.

- Broke ground on E. Nooksack Project: passing 729 homes and businesses
- Plans for 120 miles of middle mile fiber to pass 1,863 homes



Business Support

In 2022-2023, the Port, WWU SBDC, and partners supported:

- Over 900 businesses with business counseling, retention and expansion services
- Developing resources for unserved and underserved businesses and entrepreneurs

Acknowledgements

Leadership and collaboration are key ingredients to economic resiliency. Whatcom County contributes to its own resiliency by having incredibly strong linkages and partnerships between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.



Team Whatcom at The Portal Container Village, August 2023.

We thank our Team Whatcom partners for their many contributions to the Whatcom County CEDS in 2022-2023. It is important to note that the vast majority of Team Whatcom members are nonprofits ((501 (c)(6) or 501 (c)(3)) and public entities supported by taxpayer dollars. We therefore also thank the public for their ongoing support in achieving the Whatcom County CEDS Goals!

In addition to Team Whatcom, this work would not be possible without the support and partnership of many other jurisdictions, agencies, and organizations, including but not limited to Whatcom County, the Cities of Bellingham, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas, the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, Whatcom County PUD #1, Whatcom Council of Governments, and the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to achieve the Whatcom County 2022-2026 CEDS Goals.

Contact Us!

Curious about doing business in Whatcom County? Visit **choosewhatcom.com** and get connected to business resources and opportunities today!



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