BURIEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Recommendations to the Burien City Council

From the Burien Business and Economic Development Partnership

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Prepared for City of Burien

By ECONorthwest with BDS Planning

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Acknowledgements

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Summary

When adopted by the Burien City Council, this document will become the Economic Development Strategy for the City of Burien. It will guide public actions and influence private actions aimed at improving Burien's economy.

VISION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Burien's citizens enjoy the benefits of both a small-town setting and quick connections to regional and international business centers.
- Burien has a thriving downtown whose international offerings of food and arts reflect its diverse population. Its downtown and neighborhood centers are social, walkable, and safe. It has small-town sense of community while offering urban attractions typically only available in cities several times its size.
- Burien is a hub and a jumping-out point. Its central location in the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area and at the crossing of the region's major highways gives its citizens unsurpassed access to business, recreation, cultural, and shopping opportunities. Many of its residents work in its several business clusters: in logistics, high-tech, wellness services, creative services, and international commerce. With SeaTac airport only five minutes away, others are able to work around the world without giving up the beauty of the environment and lifestyle in the Northwest.

Burien's view for an economic development strategy is broad. It is a process of improving a community's well-being through not only job creation, business growth, and income growth, but also through improvements to the wider social and natural environment that strengthen the economy. These latter "quality of life" factors are important not only to the well-being of residents and workers, but also to businesses. Thus, maintaining and improving these factors can legitimately be considered a strategy for business retention and attraction.

An economic development strategy has both a vision and actions: where should the City be headed on economic development policy (vision and direction); and what actions should the City and its partners take (actions and policies)? The vision is typically long run (10 to 20 years); the actions are typically short and intermediate run (one to five years).

The box at left is the vision of Burien's economic development strategy. In the context of economic development, it describes the Burien that its citizens hope to see in 10 years. The strategy implements the vision through *actions* (investments, policies) organized in three categories:

Category 1: Basic Actions. Actions to get the City set up to be successful at economic development.

Category 2: Preliminary Actions. Actions to improve the value of City facilities and services that most businesses rely on to operate and grow. These actions are the ones common to many economic development strategies.

Category 3: Advanced Actions. Actions specific to Burien's broader vision of what it wants to become. These actions are longer-run, more speculative, and generally require more research and community discussion before implementation.

Summary of Actions

Preliminary Actions

Set the budget, staffing, and work plan for economic development

ED.1 Decide on budget, staffing, and work plan

The Advisory Committee recommends adding a full-time technical position to support the division manager and a full-time public information specialist (now part-time).

ED.2 Gather information about best practices

This action requires: (1) a matching of the highest ranked and most fundamental actions to the available resources; and (2) an investigation of best practices for the most important actions.

Basic: Actions

Land and buildings

LB.1 Tune up the permitting process

The biggest connection of any new or expanding business with local government and public policy is usually through the land use planning and permitting process. Burien can have strong regulations to protect public health, safety, and welfare, if it can show that they are efficient.

LB.2 Inventory buildable land supply

A buildable lands inventory would (1) classify land into mutually exclusive categories, including City owned property; (2) net out development constraints; (3) create maps with tabular summaries of lands by attribute and plan designation, and (4) estimating land capacity.

LB.3 Assess the City's Comprehensive Plan and update as necessary

Burien should review its land use and zoning in conjunction with available lands, and make adjustments for consistency.

LB.4 Assess housing supply, policy, and partnerships

In concept, the City would describe (1) existing housing supply, (2) current and expected housing need, and (3) policy to guide future housing development.

LB.5 Create information packets for businesses and developers

The City should package the revised permitting process guidelines, buildable lands inventory, and revised planning and development policies for an audience of developers, businesses, and other economic development interests.

LB.6 Provide cost-efficient infrastructure for development

Infrastructure for future development must be available, funded, and fairly priced.

Infrastructure

I.1 Monitor state and regional investments in highways and transit around Burien

City staff should continue coordinating capital improvement planning and funding with regional land use, transportation, and other infrastructure planning.

I.4 Improve broadband internet capacity and service levels

Burien can (1) invest in the latest technologies to benefit high-tech businesses that may be attracted to the area, or (2) provide a baseline capacity that benefits all residents and businesses within the City.

I.2 Evaluate parking in downtown

The City should initiate a parking study that identifies current on-and-off street parking supply and demand, core parking challenges, and strategies and tools to reduce parking barriers to revitalization. Explore establishing a Parking and Business Improvement District.

I.3 Support the development of walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented neighborhoods

These modes address issues of diversity, small-town atmosphere, quality of life, environmental quality, and neighborhood business development as well.

I.5 Develop a detailed and consistent Capital Improvement Plan

The City will need to tie infrastructure investment decisions to the goals and objectives of the economic development plan using a Capital Improvement Plan.

Education and Labor force

LF.1 Coordinate with local providers of services relating to job matching, training, and education

City staff should help coordinate with organizations that provide job matching and workforce training.

LF.2 Work directly with education districts to improve the quality of education

Burien should partner with Highline School District, Puget Sound Skills Center, and Highline Community College to accomplish key actions to support educational outcomes.

Basic: Quality of life: facilities and services

QL.1 Evaluate City facility and service investments

There are probably more desired City facilities than there will be available money, certainly in the next several years. In short, choices have to be made.

QL.2 Adopt policies that support quality of life

City staff will continue to review City policies and procedures to evaluate whether there are actions that the City should take to maintain and enhance the quality of life, including public private partnerships.

Basic: Business services

BS.1 Describe business attributes and impacts that support the Vision

The City would benefit from drafting a description of the attributes <u>any</u> business would need to have to be compatible with the Vision.

BS.2 Evaluate and make explicit policy decisions about incentives

Being clear about when incentives are acceptable will allow staff to respond more efficiently when opportunities for economic development arise.

Basic: Funding, resources (taxes, fees, and incentives)

FR.1 Evaluate and help create (if appropriate) business improvement districts (BID)

To form a BID, the City would probably convene a task force consisting of City staff and local business owners to investigate the feasibility of a BID in Burien.

FR.2 Assist in finding funding for business development

The City can help identify and match businesses with both public capital (municipal, state, and federal grant and loan programs) and private, venture capital.

Basic: Communication and coordination

CC.1 Develop a marketing and branding plan

The City can better meet its economic development goals if it has a strategic marketing and branding plan that describes the City's positive business climate and available amenities for residents.

CC.2 Form partnerships: communicate and coordinate

To achieve its goals, this plan will require all stakeholders to work together, sharing responsibility for achievement of the objectives.

CC.3 Reach out to districts of the City

The City plays a key role in the revitalization of its diverse districts. The City's role in area revitalization includes (1) strategically investing in infrastructure improvements, such as roadways, streetscape improvements, and property acquisition; (2) making necessary or desired regulatory adjustments, such as zoning changes; and (3) creating partnerships with developers and property owners to generate development returns that remain sensitive to market demand.

Advanced: Actions

International City

IC.1 Develop sister-city relationships

Exchanges can be for cultural, educational, or business purposes. The connection may create direct benefits for some local business, or they may be more indirect in that the sister-city connection furthers Burien's interest in and claims for being an International City.

IC.2 Create relationships at the state level and with other partners

Burien could explore greater international connections by getting involved with trade and economic development oriented State agencies or organizations.

IC.3 Identify and evaluate ways to exploit Burien's proximity to the Port or Airport

An important component of Burien's claim of International City, and probably its most tangible and marketable one, is the proximity of SeaTac Airport. To be the International City it aspires to be, it has to continue to strengthen ties to the airport.

IC.4 Help develop a program for international tourism

Many types of facilities and institutions would be consistent with that: hotels, a performing arts center, a restaurant association, branding, and more.

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1 Background

The quality of life and diversity of lifestyles in Burien have increased steadily in the 20 years since the City's incorporation. Burien's citizens and City Council recently agreed on a vision of what growth and benefits the *next* 20 years should bring: "A vibrant and creative community, where the residents embrace diversity, celebrate arts and culture, promote vitality, and treasure the environment."[1]

That vision both helps create economic development as it is achieved, and needs economic development for its achievement. Vibrancy and creativity are difficult without jobs and income. The citizens that contributed to this document generally acknowledged that relationship. They believed that Burien could increase economic prosperity by supporting the growth of businesses (especially locally-grown businesses), and that promoting the arts, culture, and heritage was an important way to support desired businesses.

Efficient action toward this vision is much more likely if the City has an agreement with its public and private partners on the vision, the actions most likely to be cost effective in achieving it, and the roles that different entities should play.

This document, an Economic Development Strategy of the City of Burien, is a step in that direction.

1.1 What is an Economic Development Strategy?

Economic information, on its own, is not an economic strategy. An economic *strategy* for a city or region is typically a document with both a vision and actions: where should the City be headed on economic development policy (vision and direction) and what actions should the City and its partners take (actions and policies)? The vision is typically long run (10 to 20 years); the actions are typically short and intermediate run (one to five years).

Such a strategy builds from an understanding of past, current, and potential future economic conditions, but goes farther. It considers, among other things: (1) existing legal requirements and policies; (2) values that different decision-makers, interest groups, and other stakeholders place on different possible policy

[1] *Vision for Burien: Our Future, Our Choices.* 2011.

outcomes; and (3) other aspects of City policy regarding quality of life, including land use, infrastructure, environmental quality, equity, and more.

Another way to describe the typical process and product for an economic development strategy: it is about getting people to agree on the contents of a document that can guide actions aimed at improving the local economy.

> **People**. Getting City decision-makers (ultimately, members of the City Council), private-sector representatives of economic development and business interests, and other community and neighborhood groups to agree on the contents of a **product,** which is:
>
> An Economic Development Strategy that can:
>
> > **Guide Actions**. City investments and regulations, and private supporting efforts…
> >
> > **…Aimed at** improving the efficiency of the City's efforts in recruiting, retaining, and expanding businesses within the City, in both the short- and the long-run.

1.2 How was Burien's Strategy developed?

The actions in an economic development strategy are typically based on an assessment of current and likely future conditions, and of the challenges and opportunities they present. It is not uncommon to spend 6 - 12 months on gathering and evaluating data, and then two to three months on writing, rewriting, and ultimately approving a strategy document.

Burien, however, wanted a less expensive and quicker process. It believed such a process was feasible because (1) it had recently completed a citywide visioning process that covered much of what might be covered in the development of an economic-development vision, and (2) it had other planning studies done by the City and others that could provide some of technical information typically found in an assessment.

Thus, City staff and its consultants decided to do a relatively high-level and quick synopsis of economic conditions, and to spend more time talking with local stakeholders, writing a draft strategy, and helping the City with the process of getting to agreement on the strategy. That process, in summary:

- Summer 2013. Assembled and reviewed prior studies; summarized the results in a technical memorandum. That memorandum is Appendix B to this strategy: *Economic Context for the Burien Economic Development Strategy.*

- Fall 2013. Met with stakeholders and citizens to get opinions about economic development issues and actions. The City created an Advisory Committee (members of the Burien Business and Economic Development Partnership) as a primary source of stakeholder opinion. Other outreach (focus groups, a public workshop) occurred in October. Appendix D, *Stakeholder and Public Process and Opinions,* summarizes.
- Winter 2013-14. Created a draft of the strategy for review by the Advisory Committee; will present a final draft to City Council.

1.3 How is this document organized?

This document is Burien's Economic Development Strategy. It has three additional sections and four appendices:

- **Chapter 2, Context for Economic Development Planning in Burien**. What does an economic development strategy hope to achieve, and what factors are important to current and future economic activity in Burien?
- **Chapter 3, Vision and Principles**. The vision and principles that are the basis for proposed actions, and how actions in this strategy are organized.
- **Chapter 4, Actions**. What policies and investments will the City make to increase its probability of achieving its vision for economic development?
- **Appendix A, How to Think about Economic Development**. Background on what economic development is, and the implications for creating an economic development strategy.
- **Appendix B, Economic Context for Burien**. More of the information that is summarized in Chapter 2.
- **Appendix C, District-by-District Assessment**. Focus groups and public workshops led to the identification of six districts within Burien whose attributes vary slightly or significantly from the City average. This appendix describes those characteristics.
- **Appendix D, Stakeholder and Public Opinion.** In October 2013, the City held several focus groups and public workshops. This appendix describes what was done and what was learned.

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2 Context for Economic Development Planning in Burien

2.1 What does a local economic development strategy hope to achieve, and how?

The United States has a market-based economy. The private sector (businesses) produces the majority of goods and services that consumers (households and other businesses) want. When the process works well, goods and services get produced and distributed efficiently, and people have jobs that give income to be able to buy those goods and services. Good economic conditions, which have typically been correlated with the growth (development) of an economy, are an important component of quality of life.

But the public sector (federal, state, and local government) also provides goods and services. Some of those are critical to the success of the private sector (e.g., national security, a system of property rights and adjudication, interstate and international transportation facilities, and much more). Among the services that some citizens and stakeholder groups have come to look toward government for is *economic development* policy and investment. In other words, they want government to protect and stimulate the private-sector economic activity.

The *traditional view* of government activity related to economic development is that it is about helping to retain and create jobs that offer competitive wages, meaningful and secure labor, and opportunity for advancement. The *emerging view* of economic development is that it is a process of improving a community's well-being through not only job creation, business growth, and income growth, but also through improvements to the wider social and natural environment that strengthen the economy. These latter "quality of life" factors are important not only to the well-being of residents and workers; they also contribute to attractiveness of a place for businesses. In that sense, maintaining and improving these factors can legitimately be considered a strategy for business retention and attraction.

Burien's view for an economic development strategy embraces this broader concept of economic development. It ties back to the multiple goals and objectives stated in the *Vision for Burien* (2011). It considers factors relating to quality of life for residents and employees that affect Burien's ability to retain and expand existing businesses and attract new businesses.

Though an economic development strategy should be sensitive to its impacts on other aspects of community well-being, it is not appropriate to burden an economic development strategy with the obligation to focus on, much less achieve, all the many goals a city may have for other facilities and programs (e.g., transit, recreation, arts, education, and so on). Every economic development strategy, including the one for Burien described in this document, has at its core the traditional focus on jobs and income.

Thus, though economic development could be defined broadly to consider most activities of local government (e.g., including the provision of quality infrastructure, education, and recreation facilities and programs), *job growth and business growth are generally the primary objective of local government economic development efforts*. This growth comes from the creation of new firms, the expansion of existing firms, and the attraction of new firms.[2]

If economic development is about accommodating, creating, and expanding *businesses* (and the employment and income they generate), then it makes sense that local economic development policies would focus on *factors that matter to business decisions about location and expansion*.[2] In the jargon of economics, any policy or action must affect a factor of production that influences business locations and expansion.[3] The typical *direct factors of production* are:

- Natural resources and supplies
- Labor
- Local infrastructure
- Land and built space
- Access to markets and materials
- Business clusters

Businesses locate in a city or region not only because of the quality and cost of these direct factors of production, but also because of the presence of factors that can have indirect but important effects on the costs and profitability of doing business:

- Quality of life
- Government policies

Not all factors are equally important to businesses in general, and their importance differs by type of business. The *location* decisions of businesses are primarily based on the availability and cost of labor, transportation, raw materials, and capital. In the words of professional site selectors, businesses typically do a *regional* screening first ("Which are the two or three best regions

[2] The reductions in the losses or contractions of existing firms is also a typical economic objective, though it does not create growth.

[3] The information in this section is summarized from the American Planning Association's Planning Advisory Service Report by Terry Moore "An Economic Development Toolbox: Strategies and Methods,"2006.

for our business?") and then work down to sites in the region as part of the final selection process. The availability and cost of these production factors are broadly similar across locations within a region. Most economic development strategies available to local governments affect the cost and quality of these primary location factors only indirectly.

Local governments can most directly affect the other factors in the list above—for example, tax rates, land supply and permitting, the quality of public facilities and services and their costs to businesses and their employees, and workforce training. Thus, *a local economic development strategy should be addressing ways that the public sector can cost-effectively (1) increase the markets for products or services local businesses produce, or (2) reduce the costs or increase the quality of local factors of production that matter to businesses making location and expansion decisions.*

2.2 What factors are important to current and future economic activity in Burien?

An economic development strategy for Burien should be based on an understanding of its comparative advantages and disadvantages in the context of the larger regional economy. This section provides an overview.[4]

Burien's most important advantages derive from its **location and access**. Burien is centrally located in the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area. Downtown Burien has adjacent access to freeways that take one, in just minutes, to one of the most important intersections in the Northwest: I-5 (north-south on the west coast and I-405 (with connection to I-90, the major route east). It is 4 miles and 7 minutes from the SeaTac International Airport (the largest west coast US airport north of San Francisco) and Southcenter Mall (the largest shopping center in Washington, and recently renovated), 10 miles and 15 minutes from downtown Seattle, and 25 miles and 30 minutes from the growing transshipment center in Tacoma.

[4] This project did not include the collection, analysis, and reporting of economic data or a formal environmental scan of Burien's economy. The overview of important economic factors in this section derives from input from stakeholders in Burien (see Appendix D), staff and Committee knowledge of the economy in the Burien and the Seattle metropolitan region, and a review of recent economic studies done for or relevant to Burien (see Appendix B).

Other advantages noted in reports or by stakeholders: (1) possibilities to capitalize on business growth directly or indirectly related to SeaTac Airport; (2) areas downtown with good "bones" that could serve as a structure for future development; (3) the start of new downtown development with the City Hall, Library, and adjacent commercial and residential development; (4) diverse neighborhoods with interesting small businesses; and (5) potential for sub-center theme development (e.g., arts and culture, diversity, community wellness).

Regarding the City's business climate, public opinion is mixed. The City has a small economic development staff and program, but it is generally well regarded, and the City is not viewed as anti-business or anti-development. But the entitlement process (the steps for a business, developer, or property owner to get from an idea for a building to approval to build from the City) was noted by some stakeholders as time-consuming. The City has responded to that criticism. It recently implemented an online application and permitting process for most development services applications, and has evaluated problems with and proposed changes to some development regulations and to its land-use permitting (entitlement) process.

As is true with all places, Burien has some characteristics that some businesses will find unattractive. Some of Burien's advantages have offsetting effects. Proximity to the airport, for example, means more noise; a central location means proximity to more congestion. Burien's diversity of cultures and languages is, fairly or unfairly, correlated with lower average incomes and education levels: its more "affordable" housing is both a reason for and a result of the average economic means of its citizens. Burien's central location, surrounding cities and waterfront location means that it has a relatively small supply of large parcels of vacant land available for large industrial development. Parking in the downtown is perceived by some to be a barrier to economic development.[5]

Finally, stakeholders identified inadequate leadership and coordination among economic development stakeholders as a barrier to economic development in Burien. A strategic plan for economic development should help address that problem and many of the previous ones.

[5] It is common for parking to be a perceived problem for downtown business. But the reality is always more complicated and requires an analysis of parking supply and pricing by type (on-street / off-street) and ownership (public / private). A current study of that type was not available for this analysis. The City is considering conducting such a study.

3 Vision and Principles

3.1 Burien's Economic Development Vision

A vision is a broad statement about a desired future, usually expressed in a few sentences. The vision is made more specific with goals, though they are still relatively broad statements about desired outcomes. A broad vision for the future development of Burien could address many topics: not just jobs and land for employment, but also transportation and infrastructure development, district development, and quality of life (e.g., a high-quality K-12 education system or great parks).

It is common for a city to have to create a vision for economic development from scratch because it has no specific vision statement for the city as a whole. But *Burien already has a recent, adopted vision that has implications for land use and economic development*. In 2011, the Burien City Council adopted the Vision for Burien. Burien should be:

> *A vibrant and creative community, where residents embrace diversity, celebrate arts and culture, promote vitality, and treasure the environment.*

The vision document lists core values of Community; Diversity; Environment; Prosperity; Education and Youth; Health and Safety; and Governance.

In Fall 2013, City staff and consultants working on this economic development strategy asked stakeholders and the public to build from the City's broad vision to create a vision for economic development. Some of the ideas that resulted from those discussions:

- The core value in Burien's Vision of "Prosperity" implies the importance of the kinds of things an economic development strategy would address: economic activity, jobs, and income.
- Many stakeholders believed that the core value of diversity applied to economic development. They saw diversity as both an economic asset and an economic objective.
- Burien has the economic advantages of location, access to regional amenities, and diversity of residents and businesses. These assets—combined with Burien's community values, creative nature, and natural amenities—make Burien an attractive place for investment if local land use and economic development policies support such investment.
- Burien should expand its economic vision beyond the downtown and the Northeast Redevelopment Area (NERA): it should cultivate a multi-centered and thriving array of business and community centers.

Based on these considerations, City staff and consultants created a vision statement for economic development in Burien. It is written in the present tense about a desired future state: about what the City hopes the Burien economy will look like in 10 to 20 years. The Advisory Committee for the Burien Economic Development Strategy reviewed and amended that vision statement, and ultimately approved forwarding the following to the City Council for its consideration:

> Burien: connect locally; connect globally
>
> In the context of economic development, the Burien that its citizens hope to see in 10 years looks like this:
>
> > Burien's citizens enjoy the benefits of both a small-town setting and quick connections to regional and international business centers.
> >
> > Burien has a thriving downtown whose international offerings of food and arts reflect its diverse population. Its downtown and neighborhood centers are social, walkable, and safe. It has small-town sense of community while offering urban attractions typically only available in cities several times its size.
> >
> > Burien is a hub and a jumping-out point. Its central location In the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area and at the crossing of the region's major highways gives its citizens unsurpassed access to business, recreation, cultural, and shopping opportunities. Many of its residents work in its several business clusters: in logistics, high-tech, wellness services, creative services, and international commerce. With SeaTac airport only five minutes away, others are able to work around the world without giving up the beauty of the environment and lifestyle in the Northwest.

3.2 Principles for the Economic Development Strategy

Most organizations recognize that some actions are more likely to achieve the vision than others, and that because visions are aspirational it is unlikely that they will be achieved without *some* action. Thus, a strategy usually has a vision to get people to some consensus, broadly, about a desirable future, and then has principles, goals and objectives, and actions that get more specific about steps to be taken to move toward that vision.

In the context of *ends* and *means*, a vision is an end: where people would like to end up. But the question, *Do the ends justify the means?* is relevant. Some cities have achieved some measure of overall economic success at the expense of certain classes of households or neighborhoods. Thus, Burien needs to define the principles it will use to evaluate whether certain policies are unacceptable, even though they might increase the economic development the City wants.

Based on stakeholder meetings and reviews of other economic development strategies, City staff and the consultants created a draft of such principles, and the Advisory Committee reviewed and amended them:

The economic development strategy will help the City achieve its vision for economic development through goals and actions that:

- ***Are appropriate** for Burien's existing conditions and build on Burien's economic development advantages. Appropriateness includes some consideration of reasonableness, which includes both budgetary and political considerations.*
- ***Address problems or deficiencies** (including perceived deficiencies) that create barriers to economic development.*
- ***Address district opportunities and issues**. All parts of Burien should enjoy some of the benefits of investments in economic development. The economic development strategy includes actions for each of Burien's six districts that focus on their specific economic opportunities.*
- ***Assess ripeness** for action. The strategies and actions must consider the timing of actions or investment, with the understanding that some actions need to be completed sequentially or at a time when conditions are favorable for the action.*

3.3 Organization of Burien's Economic Development Strategy

The economic development strategy implements the vision through *actions* (investments, policies) consistent with the principles and the broad goals the vision implies.

The focus groups, public meeting, Advisory Committee meetings, and consultant research identified dozens of potential actions. When a list goes beyond five items, it gets hard to comprehend unless it gets subdivided into categories. There are many different dimensions of economic development actions around which those actions could be logically organized. Appendix A (pages A-3 to A-5) describes several options. Actions could be organized by (1) implementing organization, (2) source of funding, (3) policy type, (4) timing, (5) expected ease of implementation, (6) geographic area, (7) development theme, (8) desired type of outcome, or (9) factor that the actions are trying to influence.

The City chose the organization for actions Chapter 4 based on several considerations:

- **Several categories are probably correlated.** For example, timing and ease of implementation: actions classified as more immediate are often ones that have already been discussed, been agreed to as necessary, are smaller, and have funding (or reasonable prospects of funding)—all of which makes them easier to implement.

- **Many categories can be dealt with as sub-categories in a description of an action**. For example, whatever the top level of categorization, for each action within a given category one might describe: who (the implementing organization; partner organizations), how (sources of funding), where (geographic location), when (timing), or what (policy type).
- **The top-level organization should be the one that makes most sense to the particular jurisdiction for explaining and implementing the action.** In this case, the City of Burien is the implementing jurisdiction.
- **Burien, relative to other cities, has adopted a broad view of economic development.** The previous section on "vision" noted Burien's explicit emphasis on diversity and the arts—attributes rarely central to economic development plans.
- **To get to its long-run vision, Burien probably has to address some basic structural issues in the short run.** It would be a mistake for Burien to put all of its resources for economic development into just a few investments, especially ones that are less fundamental to economic development. There are some basic investments that are necessary to bring certain facilities and services in Burien up to the place where other types of investments (e.g., in international business development, social and cultural programs) can have significant impacts on economic development.

These considerations, especially the last one, led to the City's decision to organize the actions in Chapter 4 into three categories (explained more in Chapter 4):

1. **Actions to get the City set up to be successful at economic development**. There are some preliminary things the City should do before going too deeply into the next two categories of actions.
2. **Actions to improve the value of City facilities and services that most businesses rely on to operate and grow.** These actions are the ones common to many economic development strategies.
3. **Actions specific to Burien's broader vision of what it wants to become.** These actions are longer-run, more speculative, and generally require more research and community discussion before they can be effectively implemented.

4 Actions

4.1 How actions are organized in this strategy

To increase the probabilities of making its vision for economic development a reality, the City must take some actions. Chapter 3 suggested organizing those actions into three categories (which are further divided into sub-categories):

- Category 1: Actions to get the City set up to be successful at economic development (*preliminary* actions)
- Category 2: Actions to improve the value of City facilities and services that most businesses rely on to operate and grow (*basic* actions)
- Category 3: Actions specific to Burien's broader vision of what it wants to become (*advanced* actions)

The discussion of each category of actions starts with a description of the sub-categories of actions it includes, and then describes each action (labeled with initials that identify its sub-category) as follows:

- **Overview** of the action: what, why, and how?
- **Implementation** of the action: when, who, what resources?
- **Evaluation** of the action: what is the measure of completion / success?

4.2 Context for choosing actions

Once this strategy is adopted by the City Council, the actions it recommends are, in essence, the ones that the City Council judges to be appropriate for the City. But in developing this strategy, City staff, members of the Advisory Committee, and their consultants considered dozens of possible actions, only a small part of which made it to the City Council for its consideration. That point suggests the question, What assumptions did the study team use to reduce the large number of potential policies to the smaller number that follow in this chapter?

Chapters 2 and 3 summarize a large part of the answer. In broad terms, the actions recommended had to pass through several screens. They had to be consistent with (1) the Vision and Principles (Chapter 3); (2) the existing and likely future conditions in the Burien area (Chapter 2), (3) the consultants' opinions about the state of the practice for economic development and their own experience with economic development strategies, and (4) the opinions of the Advisory Committee (and the City Council at its October work session) about points 1, 2, and 3. Some of the ideas (from various sources) that shaped the recommended actions:

- Actions should be practical and financially feasible, but they should also stretch hard toward the vision.
- Financial feasibility means that the actions are constrained by the budget available to implement them, but if the actions can be shown likely to move cost-effectively toward the benefits that achieving the vision is expected to deliver, the City has an ability to expand budgets to some degree.
- Consider more than a passing grade—try to make Burien the best.
- Be careful of actions relating to target industries. It is difficult to pick winners and losers, and trying to do so may be not only inefficient, but also unfair.
- Burien can pursue both basic and advanced actions simultaneously but (1) it needs to take some preliminary actions that lay out the parameters for pursuing either; (2) any advanced strategies will not work if basic strategies have not increased the quality and efficiency of basic facilities and services; and (3) advanced strategies are longer run, less well defined, and more speculative: in the short run, the necessary action to move toward their achievement is usually more study (definition and evaluation), public discussion, and buy-in.
- It is common and often justifiable for citizens and policymakers to say, "Not another study…Let's get something done." But investment without thought is risky, not only economically, but also politically. Progress will be incremental. It is inevitable that some first actions for any new type of activity or new location will be "conduct a feasibility study." When appropriate, that action should be taken, not dismissed. Sometimes more information is necessary, more people need to be heard, and more time is needed for the community to work out differences.

Though there are many possible actions, they should be connected by some broader considerations. They should be part of a long-run strategy for thoughtful public investment and coordinated actions by the City and its partners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. They should couple more traditional techniques for economic development with high quality services, good design, safe and walkable neighborhoods, and focused public investments on facilities that deliver both economic and livability benefits to create a community that is idyllic and dynamic, unified and diverse, and unique among the small cities of the Seattle-Tacoma region.

4.3 Implementation roles

Burien has a tradition of collaboration among various sectors and institutions. Successful realization of the City's economic development goals will require the participation, collaboration, and commitment of a variety of partners. Table 1 summarizes the roles:

Table 1. Implementation roles for the economic development plan

Implementing Partner	Key Roles
City of Burien Economic Development Staff	• Develop and update EDS and other related plans. • Convene stakeholders for strategic meetings. • Manage and scope economic development projects, including the management of consultants. • Consider economic development goals when making investments. • Develop and/or reconfigure internal processes to support economic development goals. • Develop partnerships with organizations that can help implement the EDS.
City Council	• Provide guidance and direction on economic development goals. • Designate budget to support economic development activities.
Burien Business and Economic Development Partnership and Subcommittees	• Provide guidance to the City Council on Burien's future economic development through review of and recommendations for related plans. • Advise the City Council on economic development programs and priorities, including an evaluation of how to incorporate business incentives and funding tools to support the economic development strategy.
Community and Business Partners	• Support the economic development plan through complementary initiatives and private investments.

4.4 Category 1, *Preliminary*: Actions to get the City set up to be successful at economic development

This category of actions covers ones that would occur immediately after this strategy is adopted by the City Council. The Council understands that approving this plan is a direction to City staff to take these actions. These actions are labeled *preliminary* both because (1) they occur immediately and can be completed within 6 to 12 months, and (2) making effective progress on the other two categories of actions will be difficult unless the preliminary actions are taken.

During various meetings with groups in October, the study team heard from different sources that (1) the City had many economic development initiatives in play, (2) there was much more that it could do, (3) the staff of the economic development department was doing a good job, but (4) that staff was one person. The consultants' scope of work did not include evaluating personnel, but that assessment seems correct. The City has a senior level employee with very little support. One person can barely monitor, much less complete alone, the many actions in Categories 2 and 3.

The options, broadly, are (1) more City staff for economic development (either by moving or sharing existing personnel, or new hires), (2) more budget for consulting services or temporary staffing, (3) cut back on the number of actions, or the expectations about how quickly they can be accomplished, or (4) some combination.

Preliminary: Set the budget, staffing, and work plan for economic development

ED.1 Decide on budget, staffing, and work plan

Overview. The City needs more staffing to implement the actions proposed in this strategy on the schedule suggested. The Advisory Committee recommends adding a full-time technical position to support the division manager and a full-time public information specialist (now part-time). Budgeting and staffing should be addressed simultaneously. If economic development is a priority, City Council and management should be able to find a way to get additional support for the program.

The development of one- and three-year work plans should probably occur simultaneously with the evaluation and decision about budget and staffing. The expanded work plan is what the City gets for the cost of the additional staffing. Whatever decisions City management and the Council make about budget, staffing, and resources should be reflected in the new program work plan.

Implementation. No new staff or resources are needed to evaluate budget, staffing, and workload. This item could be completed in three months, if it were a priority, six months at the outside. If there are known reasons that new support staff cannot be available until the next fiscal cycle (or beyond), the decision should be made quickly and the scope of work that implements this strategy should adjust accordingly.

Evaluation. Was a decision on budget, staffing, and scope made within three to six months? Did the division manager, City Manager, and City Council agree that the program's scope of work was achievable given its resources?

ED.2 Gather information about best practices and benchmarks

Overview. In developing this strategy, the study team spent most of its limited research time on developing a framework for the strategy and on canvassing professional sources to identify a full range of possible economic development actions. Advisory Committee members expressed a desire that Burien not just be adequate or good at economic development activities, but that it should be the best. Moving toward that goal requires, as first steps (1) a ranking of the actions in Categories 1 and 2, and a matching of the highest ranked and most fundamental actions to the available resources (that is what action ED.1 should do); and (2) an investigation, consistent with the resources in point "1," of best practices and benchmarks for the actions (and their objectives) that are going to happen first or are otherwise more important.

Implementation. City staff would scope this research. It probably includes a web-based review of the literature. Much is available on case-studies and best practices. Original research is not required: a compilation of existing studies and compilations would be sufficient. A summary of practices at surrounding cities in King County would be helpful (e.g., permitting time, programs, incentives, and fees). The research could be done by City staff (if the division staffing is increased), by consultants, by students (e.g., by establishing a relationship with the appropriate department at the

University of Washington), or (potentially but less likely) by local volunteers. This work could take as little as a month; if consultants were used, something useful could be produced for a budget in the range of $6,000 – $12,000.

Evaluation. Did a report get done on best practices and benchmarks for a subset of actions in this strategy considered most important or immediate?

4.5 Category 2, *Basic*: Actions to improve the value of City facilities and services that most businesses rely on to operate and grow

This category of actions covers activities that are logically and typically included in economic development plans. These activities have a more or less direct connection to business activity, and thus to the desired jobs, incomes, and tax revenues that are correlated with that activity. They are also more likely to be shorter run and trying to solve some immediate problems relatively quickly. In the context of the framework for economic development described in Section 2.1, these policies are likely to be addressing costs (and *factors of production*) that are important to businesses: of land assembly, purchase, and entitlement; of infrastructure (especially transportation) and development; of environmental regulation; of labor (and its education and training); of housing and other amenities for labor (quality of life), and so on. In this document, those actions are referred to as *actions to improve the value of City facilities and services that most businesses rely on to operate and grow (basic actions).*

The actions in this category are further divided based on how they can either decrease the costs of businesses (predominantly) or increase the markets and revenues of businesses (in some cases).

Factors of production that are big cost categories for business are labor, land and buildings, transportation and other infrastructure, and material (cost of goods and services).

- **Cost of goods.** It is hard for a local government to do much about a business's cost of goods. Local governments produce few, if any, of those goods, and their regulations do not affect those costs in any significant way. Local policies may affect the cost of transportation, which would, in turn, affect the costs of goods, but transportation is a relatively small part of the cost of most materials, and the local component of total transportation cost is small.
- **Transportation.** This cost category can be high at the local level for several reasons. First, a lack of access (the equivalent of very high travel time) can make certain types of business unlikely to locate or expand in a jurisdiction. For example, warehousing wants quick access to limited-access highways. In general, Burien has good access and does not have special problems here. Second, congestion can increase labor costs because businesses may have to pay more in

wages to offset those costs so that it can attract qualified labor. This also does not seem to be a significant current problem in Burien. Third, parking may be a problem for customers of retail and commercial businesses. Some businesses believe that parking is a problem in parts of Burien.

- **Business space.** For businesses to grow, they must have space for their workers. They have to rent, buy, or construct buildings, and those buildings require land in the right location and with services. Local governments have a lot of influence over all aspects of the development process: planning, zoning, permitting, design review, infrastructure requirements and fees, environmental regulations, and more. All of the regulation process has associated staff and public process that takes time for businesses. Having an efficient system for land development is critical to economic development of a particular city, especially in a metropolitan area where business have options of locating or expanding in competing cities.
- **Labor costs.** For many businesses—especially ones in services (like ones in finance, banking, high-tech) that have low cost of goods and expensive labor—labor is their biggest cost category. Local governments generally cannot and probably should not take actions to try to directly reduce prevailing wages.[6] They can, however, potentially affect wages indirectly by increasing productivity (through actions in education and training) or by increasing the non-wage benefits that workers get by living and working in a place with high quality of life (which allows employers, in theory, to offer lower wages).
- **Business taxes and fees.** Local governments can also reduce costs to business by lowering taxes and fees or providing incentives.
- **Coordination.** An overarching role of local government in reducing costs to businesses and furthering economic development is to help coordinate the activities of government, businesses, and non-government organizations. Ultimately, that may mean development projects (e.g., public-private partnerships), but well before development has to occur jointly and in a coordinated way. Individual businesses are typically not the coordinators; they might work through business groups that represent their interests, but local government is usually the coordinator.

Regarding the demand side (increasing demand for business products) there is less that local government can do effectively by itself. It can (1) buy local products and services, (2) try to encourage local businesses or agencies to buy local products and

[6] Next door to Burien (January 2014), Seattle Mayor Ed Murray is pushing in the other direction: he hopes to raise the minimum wage for city workers to $15 an hour. Another illustration of the difference between the broad and narrow definition of economic development, between short-run and long-run consequences, and how policies outside of a city (e.g., Burien) can have effects on its economic opportunities.

services (import substitution), or (3) otherwise subsidize the promotion of local services or products (e.g., promotional brochures, advertising, trade missions, local events).

The main way that a local government can have an impact on economic development is by doing an efficient job of what businesses expect local government to be doing: preparing land for development (by planning, zoning, permitting, and infrastructure development), protecting health and safety (by providing police, fire, and environmental facilities and services), enhancing quality of life (by providing schools and recreational facilities and services), and communicating clearly and coordinating efficiently on these activities with the businesses and households. Market forces are the primary determinants of local economic development—local governments should do what is necessary to be able to respond quickly and efficiently to the market opportunities that come their way.

Actions in this category are organized in seven areas where it is common for local governments to have activities that directly affect the costs of business operation and development:

- Land and Buildings
- Infrastructure
- Education and Labor force
- Quality of Life: Facilities and Services
- Business Services
- Funding, Resources
- Communication and Coordination

Basic: Land and buildings

LB.1 Tune up the permitting process

Overview. The biggest connection of any new or expanding business with local government and public policy is usually through the land use planning and permitting process. In other cities around the country, some businesses complain about unnecessary regulation and fees; the more frequent complaint is about uncertainty and lack of transparency. Burien can have strong regulations to protect public health, safety, and welfare, if it can show that they are efficient. It can have relatively high fees, if it can show that they are needed to cover cost. But, if it has either strong regulations or high fees, then the steps for compliance should be clear, simple, and definitive if they are followed. It is the City's job to make sure that its citizens, Planning Commission, and City Council understand and support the requirements.

The City has recently taken some actions to fine tune its process, and has done a recent report on how to address obstacles. That should be the basis for specific recommendations for any other improvements to the process.

The regulations and fees of permitting are necessary (not just to protect citizen quality of life, but to maintain a physical environment and municipal fiscal stability that creates a strong foundation for economic activity), but they should occur in a "business friendly" environment. Some cities go as far as to create a city position of ombudsman to help businesses through the permitting process. Short of that, a lot can change by strong Council and management leadership. It can further shift the attitude in a permitting department from "these are the rules" to "what are we trying to achieve, and how can we do that in a way that will simplify things for this business or economic activity?"

Implementation. This action illustrates why this Strategy suggests preliminary task ED.2. The City will be more efficient and productive, if it adjusts its permitting process with some knowledge of best practices and of what its neighbors are doing. As for LB.1, this action is best completed by City staff or consultants. The range of analysis is large: it can be cursory (20 – 40 hours ending in a 10-page technical memoranda) or in-depth (time-and-motion studies, software evaluation, extensive interviews, consultant assistance). Something in between is probably what is needed: if possible, a Task Force of businesses (or interviews with some businesses) that have recent experience with the development process in Burien or elsewhere would be desirable. Staff would make a recommendation on the appropriate level, given its assessment of the extent of the needs and the available time or budget.

Evaluation. Did the City finish the study before the end of 2014? Did the Council act on it in ways that require and allow staff to implement its recommendations?

LB.2 Inventory buildable land supply

Overview. "Buildable Land" means both vacant and developed land likely to be redeveloped, that is suitable, available, and necessary for residential or commercial uses. A buildable lands inventory is intended to identify what vacant or redevelopable land is available where, and in what state of readiness. The inventory may prioritize specific types of parcels, such as vacant greenfields, redevelopment sites, vacant buildings, or vacant offices in existing buildings.

The inventory is sometimes characterized as *supply* of land to accommodate growth. Population and employment growth drive *demand* for land. The amount of land needed depends on the density of development.

ECONorthwest conducted a very preliminary buildable land inventory analysis for Burien as part of this strategy (Appendix B). The analysis indicated that Burien has limited buildable land, concentrated in parcels smaller than one acre. But a little more work could get to a simple map atlas of City land, by attributes, that would be helpful to the City, developers, and businesses. That work would (1) classify land into mutually exclusive categories, including City owned property; (2) net out development constraints; (3) create maps with tabular summaries of lands by attribute (e.g., vacant, partially vacant, constrained, buildable) and plan designation, and (4) estimating land capacity.

Implementation. This is not a task for the economic development division; it would typically be done through a land-use department. It may be done by City staff alone, by consultants, or (probably most efficient) by a combination. Once started the task could take three to six months (2014 -15).

Evaluation. Did the City complete a buildable lands analysis? Is a summary atlas (hard copy or electronic) used by staff to inform planning and development decisions?

LB.3 Assess the City's Comprehensive Plan and update as necessary

Overview. A city's comprehensive plan is, ideally, the physical manifestation of its vision. It should be consistent with that vision and forward looking. For example, if Burien wants some of its neighborhoods to develop as mixed-use subcenters, the plan should say that now. The City amends the plan on an annual basis. It should review its land use (and implementing zoning) in conjunction with available lands (LB.2) and make adjustments to make everything consistent with its vision and strategies (including the ones in this document).

Implementation. City staff, along with the Planning Commission and BEDP, may complete this action during the annual review of the Comprehensive Plan (2015).

Evaluation. Did the City review and, if necessary, amend the Comprehensive Plan after completing the buildable lands inventory?

LB.4 Assess housing supply, policy, and partnerships

Overview. Burien offers some unique advantages to its residents. Its location near SeaTac makes it a desirable place to live for consultants or other professionals that need to travel a lot. It is close to the Sound, which offers many recreation opportunities. It has a mix of housing for all income levels. As part of this action, the City should seek to protect, complement, and advertise these benefits.

This action involves several components. Like many other actions, it can be done simply and inexpensively, or more thoroughly with more expense. In concept, the City would describe (1) existing housing supply (the location, mix, and density of housing in the City), (2) current and expected housing need (based on population forecasts, demographic and economic trends, and the existing supply of housing), and (3) policy to guide future housing development.

Implementation. Depending on the level of detail desired, the City could do the work in house or with the assistance of a consultant. This action logically ties to actions LB.2 and LB.3 and should be linked to them.

Evaluation. Did the City complete the housing supply and needs analyses. Did the Council use the results of these analyses to enact policies to guide future development?

LB.5 Create information packets for businesses and developers

Overview. The clearer a city can be internally about what it wants to achieve and how it wants to achieve development, the better it can communicate its requirements to developers and businesses trying to work in the city. But that information needs to get packaged in a clear and easy-to-use format. The City should package the revised permitting process guidelines (LB.1), buildable lands inventory (LB.2), and revised planning and development policies (LB.3 and LB.4) for an audience of developers, businesses, and other economic development interests.

Implementation. This is an important task that should not wait until all actions LB.1 – LB.4 are complete. Think of it as a rough start with incremental polishing. City staff will package the revised permitting process guidelines (LB.1), buildable lands inventory analysis results (LB.2), and its revised planning and development policies (LB.3 and LB.4) for developers and other industry professionals.

Evaluation. Did City staff produce a preliminary package by July 2014? Did it complete a revised (expanded and more polished) package in 2015 to incorporate the results of LB.1 – LB.4? Can City staff provide evidence that (1) they are using the package, and (2) that it has been favorably reviewed by the target audience?

LB.6 Provide cost-efficient infrastructure for development

Infrastructure for future development must be available, funded, and fairly priced. Infrastructure actions are described in the next section.

Basic: Infrastructure

I.1 Monitor state and regional investments in highways and transit around Burien

Overview. Transportation is probably the biggest and most important type of infrastructure that the City can control. The City should work to maintain and improve access and travel times throughout the City, especially to SeaTac, Seattle, and Southcenter. Working within a regional framework, City staff should continue coordinating capital improvement planning and funding with regional land use and infrastructure planning to ensure that infrastructure is available for employment land, especially areas identified as having a high priority for development.

Implementation. City staff (in Community Development or Public Works) should have a simple system (tied to a capital improvements plan: I.5) for monitoring the status of state and regional transportation projects in and around Burien. What is being talked about, planned, in design, under construction? City staff in transportation should be responsible for getting Burien's interests (including its general vision and its EDS) incorporated into these projects.

Evaluation. Does City staff have a current list of regional and state transportation projects are being talked about, planned, in design, or under construction? Can they show how Burien's concerns are (or are not) being incorporated in these projects?

I.2 Evaluate parking in downtown

Overview. Downtown Burien needs a balanced system of access that the City and property owners manage to ensure a vital business district. The downtown's parking system benefits a mix of users, including employees, retail patrons, and residents. Increasing growth in business and residential development will add to the existing demand on the parking supply. There is an ongoing perception within downtown Burien that the existing parking supply is too constrained to allow for expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new business and residential growth. That perception is typical for many downtowns: whether it is accurate depends heavily on how one defines a parking problem. That perception can and should be addressed empirically.

Implementation. The City should initiate a parking study that identifies current on-and-off street parking supply and demand, core parking challenges, and strategies and tools that the City and private property owners can use to reduce the existing barriers to revitalization created by inadequate parking. The study should explore how to maintain adequate short-term parking. This study would probably require consulting help (6 – 9 months, $40 – 80,000, done in 2015).

Evaluation. Has the City developed a parking study that provides an actionable plan for addressing parking in the downtown?

I.3 Use transportation to support the development of walkable, bikeable, and transit-oriented neighborhoods

Overview. This action is consistent with many ideas in the City's Vision and the vision in Chapter 3 of this document. These modes address diversity (of income and travel styles), small-town atmosphere, quality of life, environmental quality, and neighborhood business development as well as transportation.

Implementation. This action has to get connected to action LB.3 regarding comprehensive planning: planning for land development and transportation must be integrated. There is not an immediate need for a study. The action can be implemented by City policy that directs staff to pay special (more) attention to these modes in other, ongoing planning efforts, and in the development review and approval process. Adjusting City fees and budgets to give more funding to improvements for these modes is a complementary action.

Evaluation. Short run: Has the City adopted a policy to encourage this type of development? Medium run: Has the City adjusted fees or budget to incentivize this type of development? Longer run: Can the City show evidence that more of this type of development is getting built?

I.4 Improve broadband internet capacity and service levels

Overview. Many cities have considered the provision of broadband internet capacity in unserved and underserved communities to be part of their program to stimulate economic development. Given Burien's proximity to technology-based businesses, the City should assess its current broadband provision and ensure that service levels can serve future workers and residents. A study on the economic effects of broadband expansion in California found that increases in broadband capacity or geographic reach can contribute to decisions about business activity, in turn, causing the redistribution of economic activity toward that area. It also found that broadband expansion had no effect on average pay per employee, telecommuting rates, or the employment rate.[7]

Implementation. To improve internet capacity, the City has several choices for how it invests. It can (1) invest in the latest technologies to benefit high-tech businesses that may be attracted to the area, or (2) provide a baseline capacity that benefits all businesses within the City. Making a preliminary decision would be helped by some analysis of potential and likely costs and benefits of the investment; a final decision would require a full feasibility analysis. Potential providers may be able to provide some of that analysis. (2015-16).

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[7] Kolko, Jed. "Does Broadband Boost Local Economic Development?" Public Policy Institute of California. www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=866.

Evaluation. Has the City identified possible investments or partnerships to expand broadband access? Has it made an investment decision?

I.5 Develop a detailed and consistent Capital Improvement Plan

Overview. To ensure implementation of the economic development strategy, the City will need to tie infrastructure investment decisions in land development and community amenities to the goals and objectives of the economic development strategy. The logical way to do that is through a Capital Improvement Plan.

Implementation. Some cities have a formal process for evaluating whether capital investments meet their broad goals. More often, various departments (e.g., public works, community development, economic development, parks) independently create their own list of infrastructure and facility investments and then petition for budgets to support them. At a minimum, the economic development department should have a well-documented description of its infrastructure and facility priorities, and should be working with other departments to coordinate investment. Going farther, the requests of individual departments could be formally reviewed and resolved by the adoption of a citywide Capital Improvement Plan.

Evaluation. Has the City's economic development staff documented its priorities for capital improvements (e.g., what, where, why [connections with the EDS and broader City goals], when, and how much)? Has City Council approved and funded these improvements? Are they incorporated in the City's Capital Improvement Plan?

Basic: Education and Labor force

Burien cannot create and capture a local labor force. What it can do is provide:

1. Housing and services that allow people to live near jobs in Burien (which helps businesses, but is really more a Land action [above] than a Labor action),
2. Good value services that households in the labor pool want (which helps businesses, but is really more a Quality of Life action [below] than a Labor action),
3. Information about job opportunities, and
4. Education and training.

Activities 3 and 4 are primarily handled now by agencies that are not the City. Thus, the City's policies are more likely to be about advocacy and coordination, than about direct service delivery.

LF.1 Coordinate with local providers of services relating to job matching, training, and education

Overview. The City recognizes the importance of workforce training and education in having a skilled workforce that can meet the needs of businesses. To that end, City staff should help coordinate with organizations that provide job matching, workforce training, and education services to: (1) ensure that these services are accessible, publicized, and compatible with economic development goals; and (2) help businesses make connections with these organizations to facilitate job matching.

Implementation. City staff should develop an inventory of local workforce training services for publication on the City's economic development website. Staff should build relationships with local service providers to assist in making their services accessible and known to both the labor force and businesses.

Evaluation. Did the City inventory local providers of services relating to job matching, training, and education? Has the City promoted the use of these providers' services to the workforce and local businesses?

LF.2 Work directly with education districts to improve the quality of education

Overview. This action would require meeting with the Highline School District, Puget Sound Skills Center, and Highline Community College to discuss the City's economic development goals and see how these two entities can act as partners to accomplish key actions to support educational outcomes. For example, if they embrace the City's vision for cultural diversity, the City, Highline School District, and Highline Community College might work together to increase language skills, education, and training at all levels.

Implementation. City staff would schedule a meeting with District and College officials and develop, if possible, a comprehensive education strategy that identifies opportunities to increase collaboration and coordinated investments.

Evaluation. Did the City meet with District and College officials? Did the group develop and implement an education strategy?

Basic: Quality of life: facilities and services

Many items that could go here found in other areas: (1) quality housing for labor force (LB.4), (2) quality education for K-12 (LF.2), and (3) investments in neighborhood mixed-use centers.

QL.1 Evaluate investments in facilities and services

Overview. Burien has noted in its overall vision and in its economic vision the importance of the downtown, arts and culture, parks and waterfront, neighborhood mixed-use centers, and more. There are probably more desired facilities than there will be available money, certainly in the next several years. In short, choices have to be made.[8]

Consider, for example, Arts and Culture facilities (A&C). In some cities in the U.S., the economic activity in arts and culture is a relatively big part of the economy (e.g., Ashland, OR; Santa Fe, NM). In other places, arts and culture support a tourism sector that may be driven primarily by natural amenity (e.g., certain coastal towns in the Northwest).

In the context of this document, which is an economic development plan, "arts and culture" is an industry sector and a central question is, Are the primary objectives of economic development best served by investing in the A&C sector or in some other sector? There is no doubt that public investments in A&C can create jobs in construction and the subsequent operation of the businesses in the sector, but that is true for many sectors. Cities invest in sports facilities, performing arts centers, conference centers, education facilities, and transportation facilities. Which of these investments gives the best return is not a question addressed in this study.

That point does suggest, however, the need to evaluate carefully, and from an economic development perspective, any major investment in facilities or services of any type.[9]

Implementation. The analysis and discussion associated with this Strategy got to the conclusion that Burien wanted to emphasize various investments in facilities as part of its economic development strategy, but it did not get into any evaluation of how and at what cost. The City should do some type of evaluation. City staff, with help from community members (and possibly consultants), could do such a study. ($10,000 - $80,000; six to nine months; 2014 -2015).

Evaluation. Has a study been done? Are actions underway to specify the design, funding, and feasibility of specific facilities?

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[8] It would have been equally appropriate to have located this action related to facilities in Category 3, Advanced, because it requires some longer-run decisions about City direction and initiatives before it can be completed.

[9] As a rough standard, this document considers investments of over $10,000 to $20,000 as significant, relative to the resources of the City of Burien, and worthy of some evaluation and comparison to other competing investments.

QL.2 Evaluate and adopt policies that support quality of life

Overview. This action builds on work completed in ED.2 and LB.1. City staff will continue to review building and development policies and procedures to (1) ensure that regulations that guide economic development will lead to a better quality of life in a cost-effective manner, and (2) evaluate whether there are actions that the City should take to maintain and enhance the quality of life.

Implementation. This action will require City staff to (1) identify policies that directly affect quality of life, (2) review these policies to identify potential changes that would improve quality of life, (3) evaluate options for policy changes, and (4) decide what changes (if any) to recommend to decision-makers.

In doing these evaluations, staff should cross-reference findings and recommendations from ED.2 and LB.1. Streamlining regulations to make them faster or less expensive for businesses to comply with may have impacts on quality of life. Decision-makers should consider these trade-offs when making policy changes.

Evaluation. Did City staff evaluate policies and make recommendations to the Council? Did the Council act on it in ways that require and allow staff to implement its recommendations?

Basic: Business services

Many items that could go here found in other areas: (1) quality housing for labor force (LB.3), (2) quality education for K-12 (LF.2), and (3) actions to support economic development in districts of the City (CC.3). This sub-category of actions addresses key decisions the City should make about the characteristics of business that it wants to attract, the conditions under which it might offer attractive businesses some incentives, and the kinds of programs that are available to offer incentives. The Advisory Committee felt that particular attention should be paid to locally-based businesses.

BS.1 Describe business attributes and impacts that support the Vision

Overview. The Advisory Committee concluded that the City should not pick specific industry sectors or clusters for special treatment. The Committee recognized, however, that the City would occasionally need to make decisions about land use designation, infrastructure investment, or fees and incentives that might support some types of development over others. Thus, to help facilitate these decisions, the City would benefit from drafting a description of the attributes <u>any</u> business would need to have to be compatible with the Vision.

The City would convene a task force (which could be the BEDP) to consider these attributes, make recommendations, and deliver a report to City officials and staff on the desired community impacts of businesses, without singling out the specific types of businesses that the City should try to attract.

Implementation. City staff and Council members will work with stakeholder groups to identify membership for the task force. The task force will identify and prioritize the kinds of attributes and impacts that businesses would have if they were to fit well into the economic and community development objectives of the City. The task force should coordinate with the work of the task force in BS.2 (the two task forces could be combined into one).

Evaluation. Did the City form the task force? Did this task force deliver a report to the City Council?

BS.2 Evaluate and make explicit policy decisions about the use of incentives

Overview. City staff and decision-makers recognize the importance of having clear policies to guide the use of incentives to attract or retain businesses. If the City develops policies that describe when incentives are acceptable and not acceptable, staff can respond more efficiently to the opportunities for economic development that arise.

Implementation. Building on the work completed for ED.2, the City should form a task force to recommend a policy framework for the use of incentives to attract or retain businesses. The framework should describe (1) where incentives would be used, (2) the criteria for which businesses would qualify for incentives and under what conditions, (3) what types of incentives would be available to businesses, (4) the funding sources to the support the incentives, and (5) expectations of businesses that receive incentives. City staff and Council members will work with stakeholder groups to identify membership for the task force. The task force should coordinate with the work of the task force in BS.1 (the two task forces could be combined into one). The City Council will review the recommended criteria and make a decision about adopting the criteria.

Evaluation. Did the City form the task force? Did this task force deliver a report to the City Council?

Basic: Funding, resources (taxes, fees, and incentives)

FR.1 Evaluate and help create (if appropriate) business improvement districts

Overview. A business improvement district (BID) is a defined area in which businesses pay a special tax or levy to fund improvements within district boundaries. Improvements may include cleanup and maintenance, streetscape beautification, security, joint marketing, and parking. A ratepayers board governs the district, developing both its program and budget.

To form a BID, the City would probably convene a task force consisting of City staff and local business owners to investigate the feasibility of a BID in Burien. The task force should consider several important questions:

(1) What would be an appropriate boundary area for a BID?

(2) Are there specific improvements local business owners would like to implement in the area of the proposed district?

(3) What would be the duration and cost of these improvements?

(4) What fee would the district need to levy in order to pay for these improvements?

(5) Do the majority of property owners in the proposed district boundaries support the district?

To answer these questions, the task force would have to contact each business in the proposed district boundaries and obtain approval from the majority.

Implementation. City staff (probably with support from BEDP) would work with local businesses to identify membership for a task force that should investigate the feasibility of a BID in Burien. If there is sufficient demand for this district, the task force would create a formal petition to City Council for the creation of the district.

Evaluation. Did the City form a task force? Did this task force evaluate the feasibility of a BID? If the task force found in favor of the creation of a district, did the Council review the petition?

FR.2 Assist in finding funding for business development

Overview. There are many ways Burien can help. For example, many cities have programs that make small loans to businesses for improvements (e.g., a revolving loan program for façade improvements in a commercial district). Cities can also help businesses find state or national loan or (more rarely) grant programs (e.g., US Citizenship and Immigration Services administers the Immigrant Investor Program, also known as "EB-5," which matches foreign capital to approved local development projects).

Some cities also assist with finding private funding. Venture capital provides the investment resources required for high-potential small- and medium-sized businesses to grow. Regionally based networks of venture capitalists or "angel investors" (investors that provide financial backing for small startups or entrepreneurs) support regional economic development by concentrating capital investments in a geographic area.

The City could assist in the creation of a local network that brings together capital (and other business support resources) and entrepreneurs from the City and the surrounding area. One model for this type of initiative is the Oregon Entrepreneurs Network, a nonprofit organization that educates, supports, and advocates for the entrepreneurial community in Oregon and southwest Washington. The Oregon program connects capital investors, business support services, and entrepreneurs, to help grow local businesses and facilitate regional economic development. In this model, the City should not itself form a venture capital network; it would lead the effort in creating a task force composed of elected officials, City staff, local business owners, and other stakeholders that could undertake this action.

Implementation. City staff and Council members would work to form a task force (or this could be the BEDP) with local businesses to research the formation of a local venture capital network. This process would involve (1) researching best practices of other regionally-based networks, (2) identifying and connecting individually with potential capital investors and entrepreneurs, (3) developing a business plan and marketing strategy, and (4) implementing the plan.

Evaluation. Did the City form a task force? Did this task force investigate the feasibility of a regional venture capital network? Did the task force start a regional network?

Basic: Communication and coordination

The City should support business development through open communication, coordinating among stakeholders, and fostering a positive business climate. Some of these actions are already covered under other actions that have outreach to businesses.

CC.1 Develop a marketing and branding plan

Overview. The City can better meet its economic development goals if it has a strategic marketing and branding plan that describes the City's positive business climate and available amenities for residents. City staff should work with local partners in economic development and outside consultants to develop a plan, including materials that document the City's advantages and amenities that are attractive to businesses and residents.

Implementation. City staff should develop the marketing and branding plan with the assistance of local organizations and, if desired, an outside consultant. The plan should include materials that document Burien's advantages and amenities that are attractive to businesses. The City will need to identify a funding source to support the development and implementation of this plan.

Evaluation. Did the City develop and implement a marketing and branding plan?

CC.2 Form partnerships: communicate and coordinate

Overview. Burien is fortunate to have a tradition of collaboration among various sectors and institutions. To achieve its goals, this plan will require all stakeholders to work together, sharing responsibility for achievement of the objectives. The City should seek to develop formal partnerships with a variety of organizations, including Discover Burien, the Chamber of Commerce, and many others. The plan also relies on scores of other partners including educational institutions, community development organizations, ethnic business groups, business associations, and more.

Implementation. The City's role in fostering new collaboration should be to convene partners on a regular basis to communicate the City's progress on meeting its goals, gather new ideas for implementation, and develop partnerships for plan implementation.

Evaluation. Has the City developed a communications strategy to communicate with key partners about economic development initiatives? Has the City carried out its strategy?

CC.3 Reach out to districts of the City

Overview. The City plays a key role in the revitalization of its diverse districts. The public sector, and cities in particular, can influence real estate markets and redevelopment potential using a variety of tools, including community renewal, development regulations, incentives, infrastructure investments, and, in some cases, partnering with the private sector to improve development feasibility. The City's role in area revitalization includes (1) strategically investing in infrastructure improvements, such as roadways, streetscape improvements, and property acquisition; (2) making necessary or desired regulatory adjustments, such as zoning changes; and (3) creating partnerships with developers and property owners to generate development returns that remain sensitive to market demand.

Focus group and citizen meetings in October 2013 led to the identification of six business districts and recommendations about the kinds of actions to consider in each:

- **Downtown:** Mixed uses and potential redevelopment; fun, funky & functional character; eclectic and diverse; arts and culture; restaurants; and a hotel.
- **N.E.R.A.:** Auto mall, light industrial, flexible spaces, warehouses, and logistics operations.
- **Ambaum:** Wellness related business, ethic businesses, population diversity, mixed-use development, and senior living.
- **Boulevard Park:** Unique, rich, and diverse business and population base; increased focus on economic development; potential connection to the golf course; and potential for a major institution to come and have a large presence.
- **First Avenue:** Infill and potential redevelopment, especially related to businesses that can capitalize on high traffic volumes; lower cost alternative to downtown; and proximity to airport for office and other uses.
- **Manhattan:** Facelift, identity and branding opportunities; attract private investment; bridge gap with Normandy Park; lower priority but remain open to opportunities.

Implementation. To guide development outcomes in a market-responsive way, the City would work with neighborhoods and business districts to develop small area plans that are consistent with but expand on the City's comprehensive plan (LB.3). These plans would include:

- An updated vision for the district's future,
- Potential investments the City and other partners could make to support that vision,

- Appropriate phasing and roles for implementation, and
- Tools available to the public sector (including incentives, regulations, facilitation of planning exercises and community conversations, and interactions with property owners) that are most appropriate to specific areas within the City.

Related to this, the City will need to determine how to best develop the internal capacity for an ongoing process to support implementing priority investments in redevelopment projects, and to support ongoing community conversations about a development vision and strategy on a city-wide basis.

Evaluation. Has the City done outreach with local districts to develop a timeline for small area plans? Has the City identified a funding source for these plans? Did the City work with business districts to complete small area plans?

4.6 Category 3, *Advanced*: Actions specific to Burien's broader vision of what it wants to become

This category of actions covers ones that are less about baseline services and more about creating new initiatives and directions. They tend to be about some theme for economic development. They also tend to be longer run, more specialized, and more speculative.

For example, some large metropolitan areas have invested in trying to make their region a center for a target industry like biotechnology or electronics. Others have organized around themes of sustainability or urban amenity. Others have invested large portions of their disposal public funds into sports, conference, or performing arts centers. In Burien's case, its vision goes beyond basic economic development considerations to mention diversity, arts, and wellness. In this document those actions are referred to as *actions specific to Burien's broader vision of what it wants to become* (*advanced actions).*

The broad visions for the City in general and for economic development in particular emphasize diversity, the arts, and culture. In addition, the economic development vision mentions restaurants, tourism, and technology. There is more than one theme that could be consistent, more or less, with these vision elements. During the development of this strategy, however, the theme that seemed to (1) capture the vision elements, (2) be long-run and citywide, and (3) have a reasonable chance of being implementable and productive was *International City.*

The Seattle region has an international reputation, and strong connections along the Pacific Rim by virtue of its ports (water and air). Burien is close to both. Burien is a melting pot of languages and cultures: minorities compose almost 40% of its population (20% Hispanic; 10% Asian), and more than 50 different languages are spoken in the homes of Burien area students.[10] The downtown has a core of restaurants from different ethnic groups, the seed of an international district with quick access to SeaTac airport.

Focus and citizens groups convened in Burien in October 2013 talked about the importance of creating sub-districts of economic activity in Burien, many of which have culturally diverse populations and businesses. An international theme can easily be shaped to be compatible with the vision for arts and for tourism.

Some of the actions consistent with a theme of International City could be pursued outside of that theme. For example, Burien could focus on tourism (lodging, restaurants, arts) in the downtown, whether it is themed as international or not.

Possible actions consistent with a theme of International City follow.

Advanced: International City

IC.1 Develop sister-city relationships

Overview. Stronger connections with other cities outside the U.S. is certainly a step toward internationalism. Exchanges can be for cultural, educational, or business purposes. The connection may create direct benefits for some local business, or they may be more indirect in that the sister-city connection furthers Burien's interest in and claims for being an international city.

Implementation. There are several ways to make sister-city connections, but one place to start is with Sister Cities International, a nonprofit membership association that provides information on and assistance with all aspects of developing and maintaining sister-city relationships. Given the cultural diversity among businesses in Burien, it would make sense to get advice from them about cities where connections already exist and could be expanded at relatively low cost. If the City decides to move in this direction, among its first steps should be a preliminary evaluation of the costs of a sister-city program, and who would pay those costs.

Evaluation. Did the City make a decision on whether to include a sister-city program in its strategy (2014)? Did the City conduct or otherwise review and preliminary evaluation of the costs and benefits of, and local business interest in, a sister-city program (2014)? Has the City made contacts with potential sister-city candidates (2015)? Does the City have at least one formal sister-city relationship (2016)?

[10] Burien web site: http://www.burienwa.gov/index.aspx?NID=908 accessed 8 December 2013.

IC.2 Create relationships at the state level and with other partners

Overview. State agencies and other statewide organizations have programs that reach out to an international audience. Burien could explore greater international connections by getting involved with some of these agencies or organizations.

Implementation. This action can be started by department staff without additional support in 2014. The effort would be incremental over a couple years.

Evaluation. Does the City staff have a list of partner organizations people, and programs? Does it have a plan for how to expand and use that list? Can it show evidence of any tangible benefits that have come from these relationships?

IC.3 Identify and evaluate ways to exploit Burien's proximity to the Port or Airport

Overview. An important component of Burien's claim of International City, and probably its most tangible and marketable one, is its proximity to SeaTac Airport. To be the international city it aspires to be, it has to continue to strengthen ties to the airport. The Advisory Committee and focus groups listed broad possibilities (logistics and warehousing, back-office operations for the airport, incubator and joint offices for businesses with big travel schedules), but no evaluation of the feasibility of these uses has been undertaken.

Such an evaluation, like many suggested in this strategy, could be small or big. It may be sufficient, for example, to determine that most of the uses of interest could be accommodated into a few building types that collectively require only a few different things from the City in terms of land use and infrastructure. In other words, the City would not have to know or care about exactly what business might come—it just has to know that it has land and infrastructure that can accommodate a large percentage to the sectors it desires. Or, if the City hopes to market to target industries, the evaluation could drill further into their characteristics and the kinds of locations and buildings they gravitate toward.

Implementation. A simple evaluation could be started soon and completed by City staff, perhaps with some consulting help. The expanded version is probably a consultant-led project, and would take six months and $30,000 to $60,000.

Evaluation. Did the City conduct the study? Did the study suggest actions that the City is pursuing?

IC.4 Help develop a program for international tourism

Overview. The concept of International City clearly includes visits by people from other countries. That could all be business travel, but it would be more favorable for the City to have a tourism component. Many types of facilities and institutions would be consistent with that: hotels, a performing arts center, a restaurant association, branding, and more.

What happens here depends on what happens with the other actions in Category 2, and what happens in Category 2 actions depends in part on what the City wants to happen here. For example, if the City believes that a performing arts center is critical to its efforts to become the kind of international city it wants to be, then that will affect its evaluation of facilities in QL.1. Similarly, CC.1, marketing and branding, needs to work in concert with a program for international tourism.

Implementation. Specific decisions and detailed activities for this action can probably wait awhile. The City will be making some progress on this topic as part of several preceding actions it will be taking in Category 2 in 2014 and 2015. The City, with its public and private partners, could do a simple plan this year for how to increase tourism, and then move to a more specific set of actions a year or two later that reflects decisions the City will have then made about business districts, facilities, and international outreach.

Evaluation. Short run: Does the City have simple plan for how to increase tourism over the next few years? Longer-run: Does the City have the branding, marketing material, and connections (IC.1 and IC.2) that are needed to have a significant amount of tourism, especially by international tourists?