

November 12, 2010

**Commission Retreat
North Cascades Institute
11/8/10 – 11/9/10**

Attendees: Commissioner Kaufman
Commissioner Shuler
Commissioner Ware
Patsy Martin
Scott Peterson
Sara Young
Kristin Garcia
Carl Molesworth
Walt Meagher
Brad Furlong
Duane Knapp
Absent: Wayne Carpenter

Conclusions:

1. New Language:
 - Economic Opportunity = implementing ideas, infrastructure and connections to help businesses generate sustainable community wage jobs
 - Smart Growth = pragmatic economic opportunity growth with environmental readiness while living the Port's Promise
 - Environmental readiness = major place-based, forward thinking environmental infrastructure, ideas and permits in place. Examples include the use of preserved wetlands for stormwater cleaning and the use of existing trails for pedestrian connections as opposed to the need for sidewalks, curbs and gutters.
 - Repurposing = making use of everything in a practical way, updating and reusing existing infrastructure and facilities in ways that support economic opportunity growth and environmental readiness. Examples include the Port's update/remodel of the old Methow building to be the new home for FedEx Air, and the Town of La Conner's use of waste from their sewer treatment plant as marketable compost material.

2. Examples of businesses or places we wish to emulate parts of include:
 - Starbucks
 - Nordstrom
 - Costco
 - Port of Walla Walla

- Washington Alder
 - The Irvine Company
3. Examples of local public agencies or places with a private sector mindset we wish to emulate parts of include:
 - Skagit Valley Hospital
 - McIntyre Hall
 4. New Concepts:
 - We do this economic opportunity work because we desire long term prosperity for the Skagit Valley. This includes helping businesses generate sustainable community wage jobs and preserving those qualities of life that make this valley an amazing place to work live and play.
 - We desire to turn each of our enterprises (Skagit Regional Airport, Bayview Business Park and La Conner Marina) into places people want to come to. This will give us a competitive advantage.
 - We wish to be the guide in the Skagit Valley and in the Port world of how to do business in a new way, in a non-traditional port way. This will give us a competitive advantage.
 - Environmental Readiness is an important part of what we have to offer. It gives us a competitive advantage.
 - The natural attributes in the Skagit Valley are an important part of what we have to offer. They give us a competitive advantage.
 - The Skagit Valley is part of the Innovation Corridor between Vancouver, B.C. and Portland, Oregon. This area is known as Cascadia. This location gives us a competitive advantage.
 - Visions and master plans are different. Visions lay out the place we want to become in words and pictures. Master plans describe where we are now and lay out the steps to become the place we want to be.
 5. Opportunities:
 - Value added agriculture – spirits center (distilleries, breweries, wineries)
 - Exports of value added products via Skagit Regional Airport, marine (Anacortes, La Conner) or land (truck, rail) to Canada, Asia, Cascadia

Next Steps (Pilot):

1. Make lists with commission and management team for the Skagit Regional Airport, Bayview Business Park and La Conner Marina of what to do and what not to do to become the place we want to be. (The new La Conner Marina building, landscaping and walkway are an example of the place to begin). The lists will include:
 - Steps that will enhance the success and experiences of our customers and guests

- Steps to develop better perceptions by customers and guests
 - Environmental readiness steps
 - Image improvement steps (e.g. attractive and desirable landscaping, building design standards)
 - Sense of arrival steps (better first impressions)
2. Study examples of places who demonstrate attributes of what we wish to become.
 3. Lay out the vision of the place we want to become in both words and pictures.
 4. Develop cost estimates to implement the vision of the place we want to become and input into each enterprise's business plan.
 5. Develop marketing plans for each enterprise that emphasize our competitive advantages, and target businesses from sectors and clusters included in our economic opportunity plan.
 6. Develop a schedule to accomplish our vision.
 7. Implement in a way that will enhance our customers' success and our guests' experiences.

Promise:

1. The Port's promise is: "We promise excellence in public service and leadership within a business landscape that inspires success and enhances the quality of life in Skagit County.
2. It is important that each of us examine or develop our individual personal and professional promises to ensure that it aligns with the Port's organizational promise.
3. Duane Knapp distributed a self-directed worksheet to help each person evaluate his or her Promise. He also offered to meet with each person individually.