

Comments – Chapter 2, Economic Development – GENERAL COMMENTS

In October, Visit Kitsap Peninsula (VKP) submitted comments for consideration and inclusion in the 2016-2036 Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan Update. The comments covered specific Goals and Policies related to Chapter 2 - Economic Development, as well as other sections in the Comprehensive Plan, directly related to addressing Kitsap Tourism industry.

At present, Kitsap County looks to the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance (KEDA) for guidance as noted in KEDA's contract (2015 Budget Document – Outside Agency) with Kitsap County, and as described on page 37 of the 2006 Comp Plan draft. Under Strategy 1 – 3, KEDA is listed as the primary agency to provide economic development for all jurisdictions and to “partner with other agencies and organizations to update, revise and create policies and programs as warranted to support target industry sectors.”

Tourism is “target industry sector’ and cluster recognized by Kitsap County, KEDA and the Puget Sound Regional Council (see attached PSRC Tourism and Visitor Cluster Profile). As stated on page 31 of the Comprehensive Plan draft, Economic Development Goal 2 will support “...economic opportunities consistent with local and regional plans”.

While KEDA does include a reference to the tourism sector in its sales brochures, website, power point presentations and 2015 Work Plan (page 5, Lead Initiatives – Focus on Business) there is no other references to reflect the contribution and potential of the tourism sector to achieve County goals.

In a recent Email to the VKP, KEDA staff acknowledged the agency is not directly involved in Kitsap's tourism sector and affirmed that the County should look to the VKP for guidance related to the 2036 Comprehensive Plan update. The VKP appreciates KEDA's willingness to acknowledge that the VKP has the expertise to provide Kitsap County with the necessary guidance to “create policies and programs as warranted to support target industry sectors”, which includes tourism.

Based on this input, the VKP would like the opportunity to submit a Work Plan for Kitsap's tourism industry that can be included in the 2036 Comprehensive Plan as a point of reference.

Based on input from a wide range of stakeholders, including Russell Steele, CEO, Port Madison Enterprises, the VKP would also like to request Kitsap County's 2036 Comprehensive Plan Update include over arching Goals and Policies related to Kitsap tourism sector that would broadly cover all sections of the 2036 Comp Plan and jurisdictions. This would be in addition to individual references such as in Chapter 8 – Sub Area Plans/Kingston Goals and Policies; on page 93, Kingston Economic Development Goal 3, “Support tourism to enhance the local economy”, and on page 108, Silverdale Sub-Area Plan/Goal 3/Policy 11 “Encourage and support tourism activity as a significant contributor to the Silverdale economy.” We appreciate there may be other references as well.

While we appreciate that the current Comprehensive Plan Update, does include additional mentions of tourism, it still does not provide it the status; i.e. specific and dedicated Goals and Policies as afforded other targeted industry sectors.

Following is a dedicated Tourism Goal and Policies submitted in October (via Email) for inclusion in the Economic Development section. As requested, we are re-submitting using the online portal for general comments. We will use the general Email to provide additional comments and support documents.

Submitted by Visit Kitsap Peninsula, Board of Director
Patricia Graf-Hoke, Director

Email from KEDA: On Oct 30, 2015, at 11:10 AM, Kathy Cocus wrote:

See comments below. KEDA focuses on all primary business with the exclusion of tourism and I'm happy to review Patty's additions for the comp plan. And ... it has been proven that CEOs and business owners visiting an area often leave considering it as a new business location. Attention to tourism is a vital part of a business recruitment plan. Kathy

2035 KITSAP COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – AMENDMENT/ADDITION CONSIDERATIONS.

Economic Development Goal 1. Promote a healthy and diverse economy that provides for a strong and diverse tax base, encourages business formation, retention, and expansion; creates industrial and professional business and employment opportunities to attract new business to the County.

Economic Development Policy #. Kitsap County will work to allocate funding for long-term economic development. Kitsap County recommends a cooperative partnership among the County, cities, tribal governments, port and local districts, the Kitsap Economic Development Alliance (KEDA), and the private sector, to share in the costs relating to industrial, commercial, technology, tourism, business retention, expansion, startup and recruitment activities. Kitsap County recommends that each agency increase and prioritize its business retention, expansion, startup and recruitment activities. (of course – good catch!)

NEW TOURISM SPECIFIC GOAL and POLICIES - CONSIDERATIONS

Economic Development Goal # (TBD). Support Kitsap's growing tourism industry to facilitate economic diversity, development and employment that value, preserve and promote Kitsap County's natural, cultural, historic and recreation assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Economic Development Policy #. Consider, Identify and support county-wide tourism development, growth and opportunities consistent with Kitsap County goals and policies.

Economic Development Policy #. Work with the official county tourism agency, Visit Kitsap Peninsula, port districts, private

sector, other qualified tourism related entities and user groups to identify current and potential visitor and event amenities and services.

Economic Development Policy #. Support development and funding of tourism/visitor programs to stimulate access, utilization and sustainable economic benefit for county owned parks and event facilities.

Economic Development Policy #. Develop partnerships to facilitate collaboration among government, private, nonprofit and individual entities to finance and support tourism development, strategies and programs.

Economic Development Policy #. Encourage department and staff to work with local tourism resources to identify potential visitor amenities, partnerships and economic benefits during planning process.