**Purpose Statement**

To enhance the economic health of Whitman County through the development and execution of this economic development plan (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”). The desired outcome of the Plan is to retain and create living-wage jobs, foster private sector capital investment, and improve the quality of life for all residents of Whitman County.

The Plan shall be implemented countywide and for the benefit of all communities within the county. The Plan is a guide to the Port’s economic development efforts as Whitman County’s Associate Development Organization (ADO) and not a mandate for a specific implementation.

 **Collaboration and Communication of the Plan**The Port hostsbi-monthly Economic Development Informational Meetings (EDIMs) for elected officials, public agencies, and all others interested in economic development to review the implementation of this Plan and discuss current economic development issues. The Port provides additional presentations to the County, town/city councils, and/or service clubs as requested on an as-needed-basis.

**Quarterly and Annual Reporting**The Port submits quarterly reports on local economic development efforts and metrics to the Washington State Department of Commerce, sharing copies of these reports with the Port and County Commissioners during public Joint Commission Meetings.

Additionally, the Port publishes an annual *ADO Report Card* detailing the Port’s economic development efforts in the past year, including relevant metrics. Past annual report cards can be found online at [www.portwhitman.com/port-planning/](http://www.portwhitman.com/port-planning/), with limited paper copies available at the Port office.

**Core Elements of Work\***

1. Small Business Development
2. Economic Profiling
3. Existing Business Retention & Expansion
4. Business Recruitment, Marketing & Advertising
5. Site and Infrastructure Development
6. Economic Development Advocacy

**\***Elements of work are not listed in any order of importance. Each element is important in this Plan.

**1. Small Business Development**

* Promote the utilization of the regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC).
* Share virtual and in-person workshops with area business professionals.
* Support relevant training for businesses spanning a variety of topics, including Business Blend and SBDC workshops.
* Assist eligible businesses with obtaining certifications for minority, women, socially or economically disadvantaged, veteran, and/or small businesses.
* Meet one-on-one with businesses to express appreciation for their business, obtain information on their future business needs, and identify issues that impede their business growth.

**2. Economic Profiling**

* Maintain and promote the Whitman County Trends website.
* Work with Eastern Washington University on the Whitman County quarterly trends newsletter.
* Ensure updated economic data is available on the Port’s website.
* Share Whitman County economic data at Economic Development Informational Meetings.

**3. Existing Business Retention & Expansion**

* Support business retention and expansion projects that provide a target wage at or above Whitman County’s median wage.
* Meet with Port tenants to express appreciation for their business, obtain information on their future business needs, and identify issues that impede their business growth.
* Support existing businesses that express interest in expanding operations in Whitman County.
* As relevant, profile local businesses at Economic Development Informational Meetings.
* Develop partnerships with workforce development organizations.
* Support regional efforts to establish workforce skills and training programs.

**4. Business Recruitment, Marketing, & Advertising**

* Utilize the Washington State Department of Commerce and other business recruitment sources in obtaining appropriate business leads for Whitman County.
* Continue industrial site planning for Port-owned sites, identifying key industries and potential businesses to recruit.
* Explore opportunities in the value-added agriculture and bioengineering sectors, with an emphasis on technology transfer.
* Identify and market to emerging and expanding businesses and industries.
* Work with local municipalities on recruitment and site selection efforts.
* Market Whitman County as a place to relocate or expand businesses.

**5. Site & Infrastructure Development**

* Identify existing underutilized, vacant, or brownfields properties to conduct community-wide brownfields assessments through an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded project.
* Maintain an existing inventory of ready-to-go industrial and service-related buildings and land in Whitman County on the Port website through the Choose Whitman property search tool.
* Work to improve critical infrastructure required for businesses county-wide.
* Advocate for public infrastructure funding in Whitman County.
* Secure suitable sites and/or buildings for development.
* Administer Economic Development & Tourism Agreements with local economic development organizations and municipalities to support economic development and promote tourism activity within the Port district.
* Collaborate with Whitman County on the Economic Development (.09) Funds process.

 **6. Economic Development Advocacy**

* Develop and communicate positions on economic development issues important to the economic health of the region.
* Work with municipalities, chambers of commerce, and downtown associations on projects of common interest.
* Participate in regional tourism efforts, including the Palouse Scenic Byway.
* Partner with regional ports for the annual M-84 Marine Highway Corridor workshop.
* Support Clearwater Economic Development Association’s (CEDA) annual Dream It Do It conference supporting youth workforce development.
* Develop a proactive profile by communicating economic development efforts and economic development success stories.
* Support Southeast Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA) in regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan.
* Meet regularly with Whitman County economic development entities to share information, coordinate planning to maximize each entity’s efforts, and identify gaps and areas for improvement.
* Meet with regional Associate Development Organizations (ADOs) to support economic development projects in eastern Washington.

**2025 – 2027 Site & Infrastructure Development Projects in Whitman County**

**Port of Whitman County Site & Infrastructure Projects**

* Tekoa Site Development
* Technology Transfer Scaling & Commercialization Facility
* Port of Whitman Business Air Center Improvements
* Oakesdale Mill Site Planning
* St. John Site Clean-Up

**County-Wide Site & Infrastructure Projects**

* Public Service Building Repairs
* Developmental Services Roof Repairs, Parking Lot Design & Engineering, Doors
* Pullman Health Department Remodel
* Facilities Department Remodel
* Courthouse Parking Lot Repairs
* Palouse Empire Fair Well Pump
* Fairbanks Road, Sand Road, and Endicott Road Chip Seal
* Hume Road Reconstruction
* Pullman Airport Road Design & Construction
* Green Hollow Road
* Ewan Bridge Rehabilitation Design & Construction

**Regional Transportation Projects**

* US 195 Colfax North Fork Palouse River Bridge Replacements
* US 195 Paving Between Babbit Road and SR 27
* Port of Almota Bridge Repair

**Community-Specific Site & Infrastructure Projects\***\*Listed in alphabetical order.

Albion

Colfax

* Water Infrastructure Improvements

Colton

Endicott

Farmington

* Whitman Street Improvements

Garfield

* Wastewater Treatment Facility
* Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) Investigation

LaCrosse

Lamont

Malden

Oakesdale

Palouse

* Wastewater Treatment Facility

Pullman

* Police & Fire Station Improvements
* Park Improvements – Lawson Gardens, City Cemetery, McGee Park, Veterans Park, Military Hill, Skate Park, RV Park
* Streets Improvements
* Water Infrastructure Improvements

Rosalia

St. John

* Water Infrastructure Improvements
* Waste Water Treatment Plant
* Streets Improvements
* Fire Hydrant Replacement & Upgrades

Tekoa

* Willard Field Runway Rehabilitation
* Wastewater Treatment Facility

Uniontown

* Park Improvements

**Definition of Roles**

**Port of Whitman County**

* Maintains primary responsibility for coordinating and executing this plan and conducting Economic Development Informational Meetings (EDIMs).

**County, Cities, and Towns**

* Participate in EDIMs as able.
* Formulate and adopt economic policies within their jurisdictions to guide public investment.
* Provide guidance concerning the Port’s implementation of this Plan.
* Invest in specific economic development infrastructure projects within its jurisdiction.
* Work together on-site visits, retention, and targeted economic development initiatives.
* Provide technical assistance (GMA planning support).
* Support public policy decisions that promote economic development.

**Private Sector**

* Participate in EDIMs as relevant.
* Provide strategic guidance concerning the Port’s implementation of this Plan.
* Invest in specific identifiable economic development opportunities, when appropriate.
* Serve as advocates for public policy decisions that promote economic development.
* Assist with site visitations, retention efforts, and targeted economic development initiatives.

**Regional Higher Education Institutions**

* Participate in EDIMs as able.
* Support regional workforce development.

**Workforce Development Organizations**

* Participate in EDIMs as able.
* Respond to business and industry needs for employee recruitment and training.
* Partner in local initiatives that link employment services and resources to community needs.
* Provide labor force & labor market data in support of economic development and business recruitment efforts.

**Chambers of Commerce, Downtown Associations, and Community Development Organizations**

* Participate in EDIMs as able.
* Provide input concerning the Port’s implementation of this Plan.
* Serve as advocates for public policy decisions that promote economic development.
* Support regional business needs.