

This Economic Development Strategic Plan for the City of Kennewick builds on the partnerships and actions identified in the Angelou Study of 2006. The document clearly identifies a vision, goals, strategies and actions for five focus areas critical to economic development including, *Business Climate, Education & Workforce Development, Quality of Life, Sites & Infrastructure, Business Recruitment, Expansion & Retention and Tourism.*

Much has changed since the 2006 study. The U.S. economy suffered a major recession that began in December of 2007 and lasted through the summer of 2009; and although the Tri-Cities economy remained relatively stable, unemployment rates increased as jobs in construction and manufacturing declined. As the Hanford cleanup nears completion, Hanford has started the layoffs of 2,750 workers: the economic impact is yet to be felt.

City staff and City Council continually seek innovative ways to grow and strengthen the regional economy. The economic development staff used the National League of Cities publication, “The Role of Local Elected Officials in Economic Development: 10 Things You Should Know” as a tool to assess the region’s economic strengths and weaknesses, define the City’s vision, and develop goals and strategies. The Economic Development and Planning Committee were presented items for discussion and the results were included in the strategic plan. The following topics provided in the booklet provided the roadmap, along with the Angelou Study, for the economic development plan:

- Your local economic strengths and weaknesses
- Your community’s place in the broader regional economy
- Your community’s economic development vision and goals
- Your community’s strategy to attain its goals
- Connections between economic development and other city policies
- Your regulatory environment
- Your local economic development stakeholders and partners
- The needs of your local business community
- Your community’s economic development message
- Your economic development staff

Strategic implementation of the Vision and Goals are the next step in the Economic Development Strategic Plan development process. Many local activities are available to assist in meeting the City of Kennewick’s long-term economic vision.

Linking the City of Kennewick’s economic development vision and goals to specific activities, allocating a budget and staff to these activities, and evaluating performance based on specific, measurable, agreed-upon outcomes are critical to meeting the vision and objectives established by the Economic Development/Planning committee and City Council.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan brings together various elements from guiding documents for the purpose directing growth and economic activity in a manner that best supports a vibrant economy and provides high quality of life for its citizens.

City staff and council representatives continually seek innovative ways to grow and strengthen the regional economy. The committee used the National League of Cities publication, “The Role of Local Elected Officials in Economic Development: 10 Things You Should Know” as a tool to assess the region’s economic strengths and weaknesses, define the City’s vision, and develop goals and strategies.

The Economic Development & Planning Committee has reviewed previous studies and has adopted the following vision statement.

*Kennewick is an economic leader in Washington and the Pacific Northwest, building on its excellent quality of life, creating a supportive climate for entrepreneurs and small businesses, attracting high technology target industries, and attracting a young professional workforce to support these new industries.*

City Council has established five key priorities that support the mission and vision for the City of Kennewick.

- **Priority #1) Community Safety**
- **Priority #2) Economic Development**
- **Priority #3) Infrastructure and Growth**
- **Priority #4) Quality of Life**
- **Priority #5) Responsible Government**

## Key Goals

### Goal One: Business Climate

**Business Climate Strategy One:** Expand the efforts of regional business development organizations to support and monitor business development within the Tri-Cities.

**Action:**

1. Continue to serve on boards and committees to continue collaborative efforts with other regional economic development groups.
2. Build upon existing relationships through the creation of regional partnership initiatives linking recruitment efforts to outcomes.

**Business Climate Strategy Two:** Create a single-source online resource tool for business recruitment, expansion, retention and perspective entrepreneurs.

***Actions:***

1. Continue working with SourceLink and the EEB Group to complete the service provider directory.
2. Staff support and follow-up are imperative to the success of the business portal: Continue city staff participation to support business retention and growth. Follow up with connections made through Tri-Cities Business Builder. Respond to needs of clients.
3. Attend regional tradeshow supporting Tri-Cities Business Builder.
4. Attend meetings and continue financial support as founding partner of the Tri-Cities Business Builder.
5. Regional websites of Go2Tri-Cities.com and Go2Tri-Cities.org expansion to be connected to Tri-Cities Business Builder.
6. Launch an awareness and marketing campaign of Tri-Cities Business Builder under the banner of the Tri-Cities.

**Business Climate Strategy Three:** Enhanced customer service delivery through One-Stop permitting and faster response times from City Council and Planning Commission.

***Actions:***

1. Continue to develop and cross-train One-Stop customer service staff.
2. Continue with One-Stop customer service area reconfiguration/remodel.
3. Continue to automate the permitting process to the greatest extent possible so that applicants can apply for and pay for permits online.
4. Continue to increase quality through pre-application meetings and continuation of “time is money” collaborative effort with development community.
5. City Council and Planning Commission to continue working collaboratively to encourage economic development.
6. Continue to work on development and funding of the Uniform Development Code.

**Business Climate Strategy Four:** Intensify lobbying efforts at the state level to improve Washington’s business climate.

***Action:***

1. Continue collaborative efforts with regional legislative staff and representatives to participate in regular lobbying efforts of state senators, state representatives, and the governor on issues that have been identified by the City Council and Mayor as legislative priorities.
2. Take a more active role in Olympia by providing testimony in either written or oral format.
3. Participate in the annual legislative forum held in Olympia.

4. Provide proactive feedback on future legislative items concerning economic development and council priorities.

### **Goal Two: Education & Workforce Development**

**Education & Workforce Development Strategy:** Support and partner with the Delta High School and with regional colleges and universities in educating and developing our regional labor pool.

***Actions:***

1. Continue to support educational programs including the Delta High School and Running Start programs through the provision of career coaches, internships, and outreach efforts.
2. Continue working with legislative delegation from the Tri-Cities to gather support from other legislative leaders, as well as the Governor and other statewide elected officials for continued support of Washington State University Tri-Cities and its expansion.
3. Continue support of WSU Viticulture Center.

### **Goal Three: Quality of Life**

**Quality of Life Strategy One:** Expand upon the Young Professionals of Tri-Cities Network and the Young Professionals in Energy Network efforts to attract and retain young professionals in the Tri-Cities.

***Actions:***

1. Continue to support the efforts of TRIDEC and PNNL as a business partner.
2. Continued financial support of Young Professionals.
3. Continue to partner with Richland to provide leadership on the TCYP board.
4. Support economic development strategies that provide more opportunities for socialization and networking.

**Quality of Life Strategy Two:** Continue efforts to establish a more clearly defined entertainment district in the Vista Field and Convention Center Area.

***Actions:***

1. Work with developers to identify properties in the area for development of additional retail and entertainment venues to complement the business, convention, and tourism activities already in place in the Vista Field area.
2. Actively recruit desired retailers in conjunction with retail property owners.
3. Develop marketing materials and programs to promote the Vista Field area as a place to work and play.
4. Support code amendments that help to enhance the area.

5. Support Port Kennewick's activity in updating the airport master plan, which will guide future development, facilitate additional grants, and help engage private investment consistent with that plan.

**Quality of Life Strategy Three:** Continue development of the Bridge to Bridge, River to Railroad, including Columbia Drive.

**Actions:**

1. Continue to grow and develop strategic partnerships among economic development entities, private and public organizations, and private developers.
2. Continue to partner with the Port of Kennewick on a visioning process for the Bridge to Bridge, River to Rail corridor.
3. Support and contribute to downtown revitalization efforts as determined in the partnership with the Historic Downtown Partnership group, the Port of Kennewick, and other stakeholders.
4. Work for changes in regulatory requirements to support development in this area.
5. Market and outreach to potential developers for available properties in this area.
6. Work with HDKP to create a five-year vision with measurable objectives.

**Quality of Life Strategy Four:** Continue development of the Southridge area.

**Actions:**

1. Continue implementation of Southridge Subarea Plan.
2. Continue to leverage funding for infrastructure improvements.
3. Continue marketing efforts at ICSC.
4. Work with area brokers to market future Southridge development.
5. Develop design competition for City owned land adjacent to the Southridge Sports Complex.
6. Continue development efforts to continue qualifying for the RLF tax increment financing.

**Goal Four: Sites & Infrastructure**

**Sites & Infrastructure Strategy One:** Continue to develop infrastructure to position Kennewick for continued recruitment and expansion of business and residential development and projected population growth.

**Actions:**

1. Continue to upgrade and install infrastructure facilities based on the 6-year CIP Funding/Scheduling Plan
2. Continue working with utilities providers such as Benton PUD and Pocket iNet™ to develop and upgrade utilities and telecommunications systems high-speed and wireless capabilities.

**Sites & Infrastructure Strategy Two:** Create an Infill Ordinance and increase the number of “ready-build project” commercial and industrial sites in Kennewick.

*Actions:*

1. Conduct a complete inventory of vacant parcel of developable land to determine whether it is capable of being connected to basic infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, telecommunications and any other basic services.
2. Work to prepare those vacant parcels so they can be hooked up to services to make them more attractive to potential businesses seeking business locations.
3. Continue updates to zoning to encourage the development of infill parcels.
4. Create and implement “ready-build” program.

**Sites & Infrastructure Strategy Three:** Comprehensive Plan Amendment (including the Southridge Subarea Plan) and Kennewick Municipal code amendments and revisions.

*Action:*

1. Continue making revisions to Comprehensive Plan, Southridge Subarea Plan and Kennewick Municipal Code as necessary to encourage economic development.
2. Continue researching the removal of minimum density requirement.
3. Explore the opportunities and challenges of moving the current annual Comprehensive Plan update cycle to a biennial period.

**Sites & Infrastructure Strategy Four:** Urban Growth Boundary

*Actions:*

1. Pursue the adoption of an amended UGA boundary to support the addition of industrial land necessary to pursue further economic development opportunities.
2. As part of its application to Benton County for the UGA amendment, review and amend as needed the City’s Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) to demonstrate the City is able to provide the required urban services and infrastructure such as water, sewer and other city services to the proposed UGA.

**Sites & Infrastructure Strategy Five:** Commercial Zoning District

*Actions:*

1. Continue to work with the Downtown Economic Restructuring Committee for a Downtown zoning district.
2. Continue to work with the Port of Kennewick to identify the appropriate zoning and design standards for the area noted as the Bridge-to-Bridge, River to Rail corridor.

3. Work with the Port of Kennewick on revision of zoning and land use codes for the implementation of the BBRR plan.

**Goal Five: Business Recruitment, Expansion and Retention**

**Business Recruitment, Expansion and Retention Strategy One:** Continue to focus business recruitment on industries identified as “niche targets”. Diversify from regional dependence on Hanford jobs through strategic partnerships with other economic development, employment and educational institutions.

***Actions:***

1. Continue targeting industries in retail, and through continued involvement in ICSC under the Tri-Cities banner.
2. Continue strategic partnerships to promote economic development throughout the Tri-Cities to leverage infrastructure and capitol.
3. Continue to market and expand the Tri-Cities Business Builder web portal.
4. Identify and build partnerships with financial institutions providing business development and expansion funding.

**Business Recruitment, Expansion and Retention Strategy Two:** Engage current business owners through consistent outreach including business visits, newsletters, and business surveys.

***Actions:***

1. Create a survey to gather basic information regarding the business (e.g. local mailing address, local business contact, phone number, email address, preferred method of contact, etc.) and to collect other pertinent information such as type of business, personnel/labor, plans for business expansion/relocation, awareness of community services/assistance, and perception of business climate.
2. Economic Development staff will go out on weekly visits to meet and greet – staff will set up a longer meeting time in which there is sufficient time to conduct survey and dialogue with business owners/management.
3. Hold annual Business Appreciation Luncheon as a means of business retention and to expose City Council, City Manager and city staff to local business owners/management.

**Business Recruitment, Expansion and Retention Strategy Three:** Explore ways in which local colleges and universities may be leveraged for economic development.

***Actions:***

1. Partner with WSU Tri-Cities and Columbia Basin College to provide customized training to recruit and develop high-tech industries.

2. Promote and market the educated and skilled workforce available through and from regional colleges, universities and technical schools.
3. Partner with institutions to leverage college and university research expertise and assets to support local business creation.
4. Partner with community and educational institutions to provide internships and job-shadowing for students from high school through university graduation.
5. Partner with local educational institutions to provide training to graduating students which includes leadership, innovation and customer service.

### **Goal Six: Tourism**

**Tourism Strategy One:** Promote regional tourism through increased regional and national marketing efforts in collaboration with other tourism entities.

***Action:***

1. Continue partnership with the Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau, Port of Kennewick and Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership for tourism promotion in the Tri-Cities.

**Tourism Strategy Two:** Promote the Southridge Sports and Event Complex through regional and national marketing efforts.

***Actions:***

1. Continue to be an active part of the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau Tri-Cities Sports Council and work regionally to develop tournament and event opportunities in the Tri-Cities.
2. Promote and market the Southridge Sports and Event Complex to event and tournament planners through a variety of mechanisms on a national scale.
3. Retain events and tournaments from year to year in order to develop the ongoing growth and sustainability of tourism in Kennewick.
4. Continue to develop staff that support events and tourism activities to enhance the quality experience offered to visitors, event and tournament planners in the Tri-Cities.
5. Maintain quality facilities and amenities of sports and event locations and develop funding mechanisms to support the ongoing maintenance and support of them.