

**COMBINED 2010 ANNUAL REPORTS
FROM THE
CITY OF EDMONDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
AND
PLANNING BOARD**

The City of Edmonds Economic Development Commission and Planning Board, in response to their charge to prepare and submit an annual report, respectfully submit this combined report to the Edmonds City Council and Mayor Cooper for review and consideration.

The Citizens Economic Development Commission

On April 21, 2009, the Edmonds City Council passed Resolution 1198 which directed City of Edmonds staff to create an Ordinance, that would, if approved, create a Citizens Economic Development Commission. On June 2, 2009, the Edmonds City Council passed Ordinance 3735, which amended the Edmonds City Code, Title 10, adding a new Chapter 10.75 Citizens Economic Development Commission.

The Citizens Economic Development Commission, consisting of 17 members, is empowered to advise and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, and as appropriate to the Planning Board, Architectural Design Board or other Boards or Commissions of the City on such matters as may be specifically referred to the Commission by the Mayor or City Council including but not limited to 1) determining new strategies for economic development within the City of Edmonds, and 2) identifying new sources of revenue for consideration by the City Council, and other strategies for improving commercial viability and tourism development.

Background

The Edmonds Economic Development Commission (EDC) has been meeting on a monthly basis since the commission was formed in June of 2009. During year 2010, much was accomplished by the Commission; the following highlights some of the more significant Economic Development Commission activities related to economic development efforts.

Major Economic Development Commission (EDC) Activities for 2010

- January 6, 2010 – A joint meeting between the Economic Development Commission and the Planning Board took place in the Brackett meeting room. The main topic discussed was the Edmonds Economic Development Commission and Planning Board report.
- January 19, 2010 – A Combined Economic Development Commission and the Planning Board 2009 Annual Report was submitted to the City Council and presentations were given by the Edmonds Economic Development Commission and Planning Board Chairs during the City Council meeting. The Edmonds EDC and Planning Board submitted and recommended the following six higher priority proposals and requested support from the Edmonds City Council to allow work to begin in 2010:
 1. *Ensure that the City's economic development position can devote full time to economic development activities and adequately fund proposed programs and activities. A focus of this role is to continue to define and promote Edmonds' brand.*
 2. *Commit to developing/reviewing/updating a strategic plan every year, ideally corresponding to the City Council's annual retreat; this includes setting goals and continually assessing progress metrics.*
 3. *Initiate Neighborhood Business Center plans for Five Corners (Neighborhood Center) and Westgate (Neighborhood Community Center) in order to position these areas to attract redevelopment.*
 4. *Support the process to redevelop Harbor Square with public involvement that ensures a balance between generating revenue and addressing environmental concerns. .*
 5. *Initiate and fund a business/marketing plan for the City-owned fiber optic network.*
 6. *Develop a community vision that addresses a balance between quality of life and growth objectives while furthering Edmonds' "green" initiatives.*
- February 17, 2010 – A joint meeting between the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and City Council members took place in the Brackett meeting room. Each Council member shared their thoughts about economic development and whether they supported the

Edmonds EDC's proposed six higher priority recommendations contained within the Combined Edmonds EDC and Planning Board Economic Development Report presented to the City Council on January 19, 2010.

- March 16, 2010 – The Edmonds City Council approved Resolution 1224 which expressed support for the Edmonds EDC Commission to move forward with its six higher priority recommendations referenced above, albeit slightly modified, and one was added by the City Council.
 1. *Ensure that the City's economic development position can devote full time to economic development activities and adequately fund proposed programs and activities.*
 2. *Develop a strategic plan and commit to reviewing/updating this plan every year. This includes setting goals and continually assessing progress metrics.*
 3. *Initiate Neighborhood Business Center plans for Five Corners (Neighborhood Center), Perrinville, and Westgate (Neighborhood Community Center) in order to position these areas to attract redevelopment.*
 4. *Support the process to redevelop Harbor Square with public involvement that recognizes the need to generate revenue while emphasizing environmental/community needs and concerns.*
 5. *Initiate a business/marketing plan for the City-owned fiber optic network.*
 6. *Initiate a business/marketing plan for tourism development.*
 7. *Develop a community vision that addresses quality of life and growth objectives while furthering Edmonds' "green" initiatives.*
- August 3, 2010 – The City Council voted 6-1 to authorize City staff to initiate necessary professional services agreements with the University of Washington in order to proceed with implementing special district plans for the Five Corners and Westgate Neighborhood Centers (initially recommended by the Edmonds Economic Development Commission and subsequently supported by City Council Resolution 1224). Although necessary funding was authorized for most of the study, the City Council requested additional information be provided at a later City Council meeting regarding how much it might cost to perform a market analysis for each commercial area.
- August 24, 2010 – The City Council voted 6-1 to allocate \$10,000 from the salary savings of the vacant Development Services Director position to pay for a market study tied to special district plans for the Five Corners Neighborhood and Westgate Commercial centers.

- September, 2010 – Phase 1 of the special district planning efforts related to the Five Corners and Westgate Neighborhood Centers began.
- October 5, 2011 – The Edmonds City Council approved Ordinance 3808 which extends the sunset date for the Economic Development Commission from December 31, 2010 to December 31, 2011.
- October 20, 2010 – The Edmonds Economic Development Commission was provided an update from the Port of Edmonds Executive Director regarding the Harbor Square Master Planning Process; and an update from Jill Sterrett, Affiliate Instructor with the UW Dept. of Urban Design & Planning, and University of Washington students, about special district planning efforts related to the Five Corners and Westgate Neighborhood Centers.
- November 17, 2010 – The Planning Board and Edmonds EDC co-hosted a three person panel with experience on business-friendly green initiatives. The Edmonds Economic Development Commission and Planning Board were involved in putting together this presentation while Sustainable Edmonds endorsed it with their support and presence. The presentations were open to the public and were also advertised via the City’s website and Government Channel. The City of Bellingham is doing remarkable things and was featured on a PBS special about green initiatives and businesses working together. Many of the programs are incentive based; for example in Bellingham, LEED certified buildings are guaranteed a one week turnaround on their building permit application. Nick Hartrich of Sustainable Connections in Bellingham has offered his assistance to the City of Edmonds should it choose to go down a similar path.
- December 15, 2010 - Jill Sterrett, Affiliate Instructor with the UW Dept. of Urban Design & Planning, and University of Washington students provided an update on initial findings of the Phase 1 special district planning efforts related to the Five Corners and Westgate Neighborhood Centers. A citizen survey and Phase 1 Special District report can be found on the City’s website at <http://www.ci.edmonds.wa.us/CitEconDevCommDocs.stm> under Five Corners and Westgate Neighborhood Commercial Areas.
- December 22, 2010 – The Edmonds City Council approved the 2011 City Budget which contains an amount of \$100,000 to fund the Edmonds EDC’s recommendation to develop a city-wide strategic plan.

In March of 2010, the Edmonds Economic Development Commission discussed the seven recommended higher priority items and agreed that the recommendations generally fall within four categories: Strategic Planning and Visioning; Technology; Land Use; and Tourism. A subgroup was formed for each category and Commission Chair requested that each subgroup meet regularly to address each category. During each monthly Edmonds EDC meeting, each subgroup presents updates on progress made towards developing recommendations or implementing tasks/goals related to each subgroup below.

- Land Use: This revolves around how to best utilize what land we have, since the city is 96% built out, our best options for improvement will come from redesign of our existing areas and the key here is doing something that not only will enhance the community economically, but also conducting a public process that results in future development that enhances the City. The City's Development Services Department has been a great driver of this and helped to develop a collaborative effort between the City, Economic Development Commission, UW Urban Design / Planning & Green Futures Lab, and Cascade Land Conservancy, herein referred to as the project team.
 - Phase 1 took place last fall with the University of Washington conducting an inventory of amenities, buildings, uses, etc., and assessment of the areas. A web survey was also conducted and is underway until the end of February. A citizen survey and Phase 1 Special District report can be found on the City's website at <http://www.ci.edmonds.wa.us/CitEconDevCommDocs.stm> under Five Corners and Westgate Neighborhood Commercial Areas - Planning Process.
 - Phase 2 is currently underway. The special district project team is hosting several meetings to solicit citizen and business/property owner input. As mentioned during community meetings, the special district project team considers the citizens and business/property owners to be a fifth member of the project team. By engaging now in this process, they have the opportunity to shape possible concepts related to development regulations.
 - During the 3rd Phase, which is scheduled to take place during the second quarter of this year, recommendations will be submitted to the Economic Development Commission and Planning Board which will consider and discuss recommendations from the project team during public meetings. The Planning Board will then forward recommendations to the City Council for their consideration and potential action.
- Strategic Planning: This is probably the one the most important pieces to the future of the City. Strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next few years or more and how it's going to get there. A Strategic Plan is intended to help the City direct its efforts and resources toward a clearly defined vision for its future. The plan should include benchmarks or milestones that measure the City's progress along the way. A key element of the strategic planning process is that it will be established proactively and transparently with community acceptance. The process is expected to allow for both active and passive involvement ensuring diverse and extensive community participation. The City is preparing to issue to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The purpose of a RFQ is to seek proposals from qualified consultants to assist in the development of a Strategic Plan for the City. The City's Community Services/Economic Development Director has completed a draft RFQ and sent it to the Edmonds EDC, City Council, Planning Board and Department Directors asking for input prior to submitting a draft RFQ to the Edmonds City Council for their review.

- **Technology:** The Edmonds EDC has determined that its focus would be on the City’s existing fiber optics network and opportunities that exist related to making it readily available to other organizations and businesses that may have a need for high speed broadband. Along with the Citizens Technology Advisory Committee (CTAC) which has been working in this area for several years, the Edmonds EDC and CTAC are at the doorstep of creating significant and immediate additional revenue source for the City.
- **Tourism:** The City of Edmonds, the Chamber and the Downtown Edmonds Merchants Association have always promoted Edmonds through its events and marketing. This being said, the potential could be much greater. The Edmonds EDC sub-committee is reviewing and discussing potential opportunities to create new tourist attractions in the area. One of these is in the area of “sports tourism”. The Edmonds EDC Tourism sub group is also in the process of identifying assets, programs, events, and various attractions that might be attractive to tourists, including those participating in active sports or recreation. On a broader level, what the City has in its favor is the city itself, i.e., a beautiful place to visit and enjoy, waterfront accessible to the public, walkable pedestrian friendly downtown/waterfront, an arts community, a full calendar of year round community events and public marina. Shopping and dining opportunities exists within the Downtown/Waterfront activity area and can also be found along Highway 99 and the neighborhood commercial districts of Westgate, Perrinville, Firdale Village, and Five Corners

The Citizens Economic Development Commission continues to fulfill its charge to secure and seek new revenue streams and find ways in which to improve a much needed revenue base, either directly or indirectly. Where the Commission is headed is to continue exploring, working on, and implementing, initiatives related to the four categories above. Additionally, during the February, 2011 Edmonds EDC meeting, the Commission discussed additional topics/studies they are interested in participating in, implementing, learning about and/or discussing. These include:

1. Undertaking a comprehensive approach to studying downtown design and its effects on existing and future development; there is an opportunity here to engage EDC, Planning Board, ADB, and the Arts Commission on such topics as streetscapes, buildings design, public spaces, 4th Ave. etc.
2. Snohomish County Tourism Plan and what it means for the City of Edmonds and Edmonds Center for the Arts.
3. Existing post office site and future development plans.
4. City Website and future use to promote Edmonds.
5. Port of Edmonds Master Planning process - where are they in the process and what concepts are being considered.
6. Public and private partnerships, e.g., tourism, land use; grants, property acquisition, etc.
7. Strategic Planning process.
8. Development agreements – What is involved and what do they allow?
9. Possible educational series for the Edmonds EDC to help the Commission become more knowledgeable about development regulations.

The Commission will also proactively seek new ideas not only from EDC members, but from Edmonds’ citizens, business owners, property owners, the City Council, Mayor, City staff and various organizations. The Harbor Square master planning effort, existing Post Office site, Highway 99, and existing development related regulations, are important areas of focus. Working with other

boards and commissions has been, and continues to be, a priority to maintain communication and to coordinate efforts. A Planning Board member now serves as a liaison to the Edmonds EDC to insure that is accomplished. Key City staff continue to be a tremendous help to the Commission in all regards.

Lastly, as noted earlier in the report, the Edmonds EDC was to sunset Dec 31, 2010, but the council voted to extend the sunset date for an additional year, understanding that the process to review, consider and implement economic development related initiatives not only takes time, but we are on the right track to insure we accomplish our goals.

Edmonds Planning Board's Activities and Efforts Over the Course of 2010 in Context of Economic Development within the City of Edmonds

1. The Planning Board's Report to Council for 2010 contains a complete listing of the year's studies, actions, and recommendations to Council for further action primarily in the areas of amendments to both the city's Comprehensive Plan and governing Codes. From a broad perspective the Planning Board's goal with regard to economic development is to study and support efforts to create long term sustainability of our city for our citizens and visiting public from environmental, economic, and livability standpoints while at the same time respecting the historical, residential, and other characteristics of Edmonds that attract citizens and visitors.

2. Areas in which the Board has worked to support economic development in supplement to efforts being undertaken by the Economic Development Commission [EDC]:
 - Comprehensive Plan—updates to provisions and plans towards support of long-term viability of our environment, infrastructure, and public facilities to the benefit of Edmonds citizenry both now and into the future

 - Code Revisions—a 3-pronged approach:
 - A] *Simplify language* so that both public and staff can both understand and implement provisions free of such hindrances as redundancy, conflicting and/or inconsistent language, incongruity of chapters/sections, and outdated provisions.

B] Where appropriate introduce flexibility within certain sections to better enable Development Services staff and other enforcing departments to process work within the intent of identified provisions rather than being bogged down by either incomplete or lacking written language within the regulations.

C] Where appropriate recommend code revisions be modified to relieve permitting and/or application fees/costs to the benefit of applicants with an eye towards encouraging economic growth from resultant undertakings.

 - Longer-term studies:
 - i] Potential revisions to downtown business area in order to enable more adaptable project(s) development supportive of economic growth within the city .
 - ii] Participate with EDC in development of strategic plan being undertaken with help from outside consultant team towards a long-range workable program for the city.
 - iii] Undertake specific area-focused studies for the hospital district and highway 99 [in concert with the latter's task force] with the goal of enhancing and enabling appropriate economic and potential project development within those areas of the city.

iv] Content/context study of ‘form based zoning’ principles and practices with the potential of applying same towards facilitating future development of certain areas/neighborhoods of the city, including, but not necessarily limited to Westgate, 5 Corners, and the downtown waterfront areas.

[Form Base Zoning emphasizes regulation of building “form” (versus just “use”) to assure a building’s general shape, massing, height and orientation positively contribute to the existing or desired neighborhood context.]

- Tracking of potential master plan efforts being currently undertaken and/or contemplated [such efforts being undertaken with primary goal of enhancing project opportunities within the city in support of economic development]:

4th Avenue Arts Corridor

5 Corners neighborhood

Westgate neighborhood

Port of Edmonds Harbor Square redevelopment/revitalization

Spee/USPS development—both phases

Downtown/Waterfront Activity Center