



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Purpose and Intent

This Economic Development Element outlines the policies for economic development that would improve the tax base and create local jobs that support city goals and are compatible with the character of the city. The [Economic Development Appendix Economic Baseline Analysis \(Appendix II\)](#) provides further information which provides the basis for these polices, describing the city's profile and the city's competitive position, including its retail, office, and industrial market potential.

The City of Orting is including this Element as part of the current comprehensive plan update process, following Goal 5 of the Washington Growth Management Act to:

“Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.” (RCW.36.70A.070(7))¹

This Economic Development Element provides a roadmap for enhancing the economic vitality of Orting, aiming to bolster both economic stability and quality of life. This Element addresses how the community can encourage the growth of new businesses; balance and diversify commercial and residential activities; and promote the revitalization and sustainability of existing businesses. Through collaborative efforts and strategic goals and policies, the city can attract and retain residents and businesses thereby, promoting economic development and a high quality of life focused on shared prosperity. This Element details various goals and policies designed to ensure vibrant economic future for Orting, supporting the cultivation of a robust and



¹ Washington State laws set limits on the actions cities can take to support economic development, impacting the content of an economic development comprehensive plan element. Typically, cities are prohibited from directly using public funds to incentivize private development. Instead, they target policies that facilitate economic growth through land use regulations, infrastructure improvements, tourism initiatives, marketing campaigns, and partnerships with nonprofit community-based organizations. RCW 35.21.703 does allow cities to contract with nonprofit corporations to advance economic development. Article 8, Section 7 of the state constitution specifies that “No county, city, town or other municipal corporation shall hereafter give any money, property, or loan its money, or credit to or in aid of any individual, association, company or corporation, except for the necessary support of the poor and infirm.”

diverse local economy across multiple sectors, and fostering citywide economic growth across the city and in the Downtown.

This Element includes:

- a) A profile of the local economy such as population, employment, payroll, sectors, businesses, sales, and other data;
- b) An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the local economy defined as the commercial and industrial sectors and supporting factors such as land use, transportation, utilities, education, work force, housing, and natural/cultural resources; and
- c) Identification of policies, programs, and projects to foster economic growth and development and to address future needs.

Competitive Position

Local economic development strategies typically work to build on strengths, address weaknesses and threats, and pursue opportunities. The City’s competitive position is summarized according to these themes in **Table ED-1**. In short, the City’s competitive position is that of a small community offering an alternative to urban settings with scarce land, higher prices, and limited natural amenities.



Table ED-1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Matrix

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive physical setting and nearby farms appeal to agritourism. • Utility service capacity can serve some new development. • Underdeveloped land can accommodate residential or commercial/industrial growth targets, capacity for residential and commercial growth. • Established Downtown with a clear town center. • Strategic investments in transportation infrastructure. • Pedestrian scale shopping districts support communities with established downtowns. • High quality of life with many amenities, including outdoor activities, recreation, and community events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural barriers that serve to isolate the City, specifically rivers and plateaus. • Transportation access and capacity is limited to a two-lane arterial road through the center of the City, and a two-lane arterial road serving the area to the west. Long commute times and traffic back-ups negatively affect the City. • Few publicized destinations to attract visitors to the City. The City has a wonderful view of Mt. Rainier, but is not located on any of the main routes to Mt. Rainier National Park entrances. Additionally, there are no agritourism attractions located within City limits. • Shortage of higher-paying jobs. • Market not big enough to support larger-scale retail. • Low office vacancy rates limit opportunities for new businesses to establish themselves.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City supports select gaps in its mix of businesses, especially to recapture lost retail sales. • City can enhance its stature as a visitor destination, as small towns tend to attract visitors from urban areas. • Future development will strengthen the city’s tax base and ability to fund desired public services and facilities. • Tehaleh, the master planned community on the plateau to the east, will gain increasing attention, and provide a higher profile for Orting. • The development of additional commercial uses will be needed to support future residential growth. These uses may co-locate in mixed use developments, providing attractive pedestrian-oriented settings. • Capitalize on existing strengths of Downtown to balance availability of commercial space, create a more diverse mix of businesses, and support vibrancy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established retail centers in Bonney Lake, Puyallup, and South Hill will continue to attract spending activity outside of the City. • Tehaleh may attract some of the employers that might otherwise consider Orting. • Small tax base of the city limits the ability to fund desired public services and facilities. • Lahar hazard threat may discourage investment. • Increasingly scarce funding poses challenges to necessary infrastructure improvements.

Goals & Policies

Goal ED 1 Support economic growth through core business retention, expansion, and formation consistent with the Comprehensive Plan vision and the other Elements.

- ED 1.1 Every two years, the city will update the ~~Prepare and maintain as~~ assessment of Orting’s business strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) provided as a part of the 2024 Comprehensive Plan update and use the findings to inform the implementation of Economic Development strategies.
- ED 1.2 Coordinate City investment in capital facilities projects with related business, employment, and economic development opportunities.
- ED 1.3 Promote local shopping with a particular focus on ways to foster the prosperity of business startups, small businesses, and women- and minority-owned businesses.
- ED 1.4 Coordinate with state, county and adjoining local government bodies to promote economic development. Support high-quality training programs and education systems throughout the region to build and maintain a competitive edge in the regional and global economy.

Goal ED 2 Promote the creation of family-wage jobs that will serve the residents of Orting.

- ED 2.1 Promote the retention, expansion, redevelopment, and infill development of moderate business structures that compel the “small-town” feel of Orting, particularly those providing living-wage jobs to Orting residents.² Prioritize the creative reuse and vertical expansion of commercially zoned properties to create more space for businesses and family-wage jobs in Orting, ~~corporate and medical-office space.~~
- ED 2.2 Encourage ~~Ensure~~ continued zoning of commercial space for light industrial uses for their increase in capital of goods or energy production management, while ensuring their scale and proliferation is compatible with adjacent uses, ~~applications and office space.~~

² A living-wage job is one that pays an income sufficient to cover basic living expenses without financial hardship, allowing an individual or family to afford essential needs such as housing, food, healthcare, transportation, childcare, and other necessities without relying on public assistance. For Orting, a living-wage for a family of four would (with one parent working) would be approximately \$45.19 an hour or \$93,995 annually (in 2024). A living-wage for a family of four (with two parents working) would be about \$29.87 an hour or \$62,129 annually for both parents (in 2024). Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT, 2024). MIT Living wage calculation for Pierce County, Washington. Retrieved from <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/53053>

~~Goal ED 3 — Promote the installation of telecommunications and power capacity technology throughout the City in order to provide universal access to citizens, businesses, and institutions that is secure, reliable, and affordable.~~

~~ED 3.1 — Participate in seeking grant funding for improvement of infrastructure to support economic development.~~

~~ED 3.2 — Identify long term infrastructure needs that support economic sustainability.~~

~~ED 3.3 — Ensure providers of telecommunication and power are aware of City commercial needs and have plans to meet that need.~~

Goal ED 3 — Create public-private partnerships that will nurture entrepreneurship, innovation, and business growth.

ED 3.1 Encourage economic sectors that:

- a. Pay higher-than-average wages;
- b. Bring new capital into the local economy;
- c. Can be sustained in the City;
- d. Maintain sound environmental practices;
- e. Diversify the economic base; and
- f. Encourage new business models.

ED 3.2 Ensure that City licensing and permitting practices and procedures are coherent, fair and expeditious. Where specialized industry requirements call for the inspection by government agencies, coordinate with those agencies to streamline review~~eliminate duplication of efforts~~.

ED 3.3 Promote the infill and redevelopment of the Downtown to enhance the sense of community, encourage pedestrian/bicycle mobility, and reduce the number and length of motorized shopping trips by working with property and business owners to market Orting, and provide parking solutions.

ED 3.4 Create anchor projects with that include public gathering places (such as the Main Park Master Plan) and support ~~the development of~~ mixed use retail, office and residential development projects.

ED 3.5 — Coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to identify underused lands such as surplus public lands or environmentally contaminated lands and:

- Promote infill or redevelopment in growth centers and existing neighborhoods in a manner that supports the Regional Growth Strategy.
- Develop strategies for cleaning up brownfield and contaminated sites when necessary.

ED 3.6 Support regional economic competitive interests by promoting local trade and commerce and by promoting regional partnerships toward infrastructural improvements that serve the efficient movement of trade goods.

ED 3.7 Promote innovation, including among businesses that promote environmental sustainability through emerging technologies, industry practices, professional services, and climate resilience.

Goal ED 4 Encourage diverse job options and entrepreneurial opportunities for people interested in full-time and part-time employment or desiring to own their own business.

ED 4.1 Accommodate and/or encourage home-based businesses that are compatible with the character of adjoining properties and neighborhoods ~~will be accommodated.~~

ED 4.2 Address and prevent potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement of existing businesses that may result from redevelopment and market pressure.

Goal ED 5 Promote business practices that protect the City’s natural beauty and environmental health.

ED 5.1 Encourage the use of green materials and techniques in all types of construction, and encourage the retrofitting of existing buildings ~~to enhance sustainability.~~

ED 5.2 Encourage public sector solid waste reduction and recycling, such as through continued participation in the Pierce County Solid Waste Plan.

~~*Goal ED 7 Encourage a variety of affordable housing choices so that people who work in Orting can live here.*~~

~~ED 7.1 Continue to monitor the progress in implementing the Housing Element and evaluate new ways of providing affordable housing to support the City’s jobs-housing balance.~~

~~ED 7.2 Ensure permitting and utility facility charges are equitable.~~

Goal ED 6 Promote regional tourism focused on eco-tourism and agritourism.

ED 6.1 Promote the Foothills Trail as an opportunity for multiple forms of recreation, including a source of biking, running, walking, and overall healthy living.

ED 6.2 Promote road related scenic tours that include travel routes through Orting.

ED 6.3 Promote Orting as the gateway to camping, hiking and rock climbing through the Carbon River entrance to Mt. Rainier. Further promote Orting as a destination for fishing and a gateway for hunting.

ED 6.4 Coordinate with other cities and communities in east Pierce County to ~~develop~~ identify opportunities for increasing tourism opportunities and strategies for promotion of these efforts.

ED 6.5 Evaluate tourism infrastructure (e.g., accommodations, food establishments, recreational facilities, eco-tourism businesses) and work with partners, to enhance tourism and wayfinding in Orting. ~~Promote Orting as a destination for fishing.~~

~~ED 8.6 Promote Orting as a gateway for hunting.~~

~~ED 8.7 Promote agricultural tourism in the Orting Valley.~~

Goal ED 79 Promote and support agriculture in Pierce County.

ED 79.1 Support the establishment of a public market, focused on where locally-produced food and agricultural products can be purchased by local and/or small vendors food-hub in City limits. ~~to p~~Promote agricultural tourism in the Orting Valley.

~~ED 79.2 Work with Pierce County government and the farming community to brand Orting as the urban service center for agriculture.~~

ED 79.23 Support the local farmer's market such as through prioritized strategic infrastructure and maintenance investments and c~~Continue to support local provide city wide-~~ events that support farming.

Goal ED 8 Create a vibrant and stable downtown that hosts a variety of businesses that support both Orting residents and visitors.

ED 8.1 ~~Update the~~Prepare and administer a vision for Orting's Downtown Revitalization and Economic Development Vision Plan.

~~ED 8.2 Explore a broad array of solutions the City can adopt to relieve the burden of off-~~ street parking requirements on developments or changes of use within the downtown core.