



City Council

Economic Development Focus for 2015 - 2016

Agenda Date: 2/24/2015
Agenda Item Number: 2.B
File Number: 15-0168

Type: study session **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Economic Development Focus for 2015 - 2016

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Provide staff with feedback and direction regarding the City Council's economic development focus areas for the next two years.

Report

Issue:

City Council included money in the 2015 budget to hire and Economic Development professional. The City Manager and Community Planning and Development Director have been working to develop a job description and key success factors and desired outcomes. As part of this work, staff seeks council review and feedback on a list of key focus areas for the next two years.

Staff Contact:

Keith Stahley, Director, Community Planning and Development, 360.753.8227

Presenter(s):

Steve Hall, City Manager

Keith Stahley, Director, Community Planning and Development

Background and Analysis:

As part of the 2015 budget, City Council included \$125,000 to hire and Economic Development Professional. Staff seeks City Council feedback on key focus areas for the next two years. In order to achieve results, it is critical that the new person stay focused on strategic initiatives of the City and not get bogged down on minutia. The City Manager CPD Director and Councilmember Cooper met with the executive directors of the Thurston County Economic Development Council, the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce and the Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater Visitor and Convention Bureau to review focus areas list for this position. The list below reflects their input and feedback:

Economic Development Focus 2015-2016

- Retain and Expand Major Employers and Retailers -- focus on Medical Services, Regional Mall, Auto Mall and State Government.
- Recruitment Efforts -- support regional partners in strategic recruitment efforts.
- Municipal Landfill - complete environmental assessment and strategically pursue sale of the site for high quality development.
- CRA and Opportunity Sites - work with owners and investors to advance the recommendations of the Investment Strategy Report prepared by ECONorthwest.
- Port Real Estate Development Plan - actively engage with the Port in the completion of the plan.
- Downtown Retail Strategy - support the work of the consulting team in completion of this element of the Downtown Strategy and focus on implementing the key findings of this work.
- Leverage our Limited Resources - strategically deploy the Grow Olympia Fund, Section 108 Loan Program and other tools to grow Olympia's business and tax base.
- Stay Out of the Weeds - be a catalytic force in Olympia's economic environment and maintain a high level perspective on achieving beneficial growth and development in our community.
- Implement New Comprehensive Plan - work to maintain Olympia's position as a regional center for commerce, government, medicine, arts and entertainment and to grow our economy in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Successful Economic Development is about building relationships and understanding the community's strengths and targeting opportunities that take advantage of them. This list of focus areas will help to make sure that the City's new Economic Development Professional is focused on the right things. We will also use this list to finalize the job description for the position and will be used it to gauge the overall performance and effectiveness of the new Economic Development Professional. Staff anticipates initiating a recruitment process immediately to find the most qualified and best fit for the City of Olympia's first Economic Development Professional and hopes to have a person on board by the middle of the year.

Options:

Provide feedback and direction on the focus area list.

Financial Impact:

A total of \$125,000 has been included in the 2015 budget for salary and benefits for this position.