

# COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2023-2027



Asotin | Columbia | Garfield | Whitman



SEWEDA

Southeast Washington Economic Development Association

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
What is a CEDS?	1
Why is the CEDS Important?	1
How Do We Measure Progress?	1
<b>SUMMARY BACKGROUND</b>	<b>2</b>
District Profile	2
Population and Demographics	3
Real Estate and Households	5
Education and Schools	6
Employment and Income	7
Business and Economy	8
Industry and Occupation	9
Transportation	10
Natural Resources and Environment	12
Tourism and Recreation	14
<b>SWOT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>15</b>
Overview	15
Eight Forms of Community Capital	15
Strengths	16
Weaknesses	17
Opportunities	18
Threats	19
<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTION &amp; ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>20</b>
Overview	20
Vision Statement	20
Goals and Objectives	20
Goal 1: Quality of Life	21
Goal 2: Talent and Workforce	23
Goal 3: Small Business Support	25
Goal 4: Economic Growth and Diversification	27
Goal 5: Collaboration and Partnerships	29
Goal 6: Infrastructure and Development	30
<b>EVALUATION FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>32</b>
Overview	32
Performance Measures	33
Evaluation Process	33

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS A CEDS?

Preparation of a comprehensive economic development strategy, or CEDS, is a cornerstone of the US Economic Development Administration's (EDA) grant program. At its most fundamental level, a CEDS is an implementation-focused plan designed to identify and prioritize economic development opportunities in a community or region and contributes to effective economic development in America's communities and regions through a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process. The CEDS provides the capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic actors (individuals, firms, industries), creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.

The CEDS must contain these four essential planning elements:

- A summary background of the economic development conditions of the region;
- A SWOT analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats;
- A Strategic Direction & Action plan with an implementation plan derived from the SWOT process;
- Evaluation Framework to develop and monitor performance measures incorporated in the plan.

Guiding principles for the development of this CEDS follow the National Association of Development Associations (NADO) Seven Principles of CEDS Standards of Excellence:

- Build resilient economies and communities by focusing and targeting strategies on the existing and potential competitive advantages;
- Foster a collaborative framework to strategically align public and private sector investments;
- Use modern scenarios, data and analysis tools, and planning techniques that provide policy makers, stakeholders, and the public with evidence-based and factual information;
- Transform the CEDS into a strategy-driven planning process focused on regional visioning, priorities setting, and performance outcomes;
- Promote and support peer reviews and exchanges across EDD boundaries, enhancing organizational resources and positioning the CEDS as a building block for local and state strategies;
- Communicate in a compelling and modern communication style, including use of online media; and,
- Engage the public, private, nonprofit, and educational sectors, along with the general public, in the development and implementation of the CEDS.

## WHY IS THE CEDS IMPORTANT?

This framework allows economic development stakeholders to better leverage limited regional capacity and attract outside resources to build a resilient economy. Once certified by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), the 2023 Five Year CEDS will maintain the region's Economic Development District designation, the associated planning funds and regionwide eligibility for federal funding to accomplish projects identified within the plan.

## HOW DO WE MEASURE PROGRESS?

SEWEDA staff, along with the CEDS Committee, will regularly compare performance against goals, adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities, and draft annual reports that outline any action plan changes. A detailed explanation of the evaluation process can be found in the Evaluation Framework section.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## DISTRICT PROFILE

The planning region for the Southeast Washington Economic Development District is the four-county area of Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties. The region is located in the southeastern corner of Washington, which borders Idaho to the east and Oregon to the south.



### ASOTIN COUNTY

Population: 22,285  
Land Area: 636 sq. miles  
People Per Sq. Mile: 35.0  
Largest City: Clarkston (7,491)  
County Seat: Asotin (1,220)  
Incorporated: October 27, 1883



[www.co.asotin.wa.us](http://www.co.asotin.wa.us)

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

Population: 3,969  
Land Area: 869 sq. miles  
People Per Sq. Mile: 4.6  
Largest City: Dayton (2,414)  
County Seat: Dayton (2,414)  
Incorporated: November 11, 1875



[www.columbiaco.com](http://www.columbiaco.com)

### GARFIELD COUNTY

Population: 2,278  
Land Area: 710 sq. miles  
People Per Sq. Mile: 3.2  
Largest City: Pomeroy (1,345)  
County Seat: Pomeroy (1,345)  
Incorporated: November 29, 1881



[www.co.garfield.wa.us](http://www.co.garfield.wa.us)

### WHITMAN COUNTY

Population: 48,197  
Land Area: 2,159 sq. miles  
People Per Sq. Mile: 22.3  
Largest City: Pullman (34,277)  
County Seat: Colfax (2,874)  
Incorporated: January 2, 1872

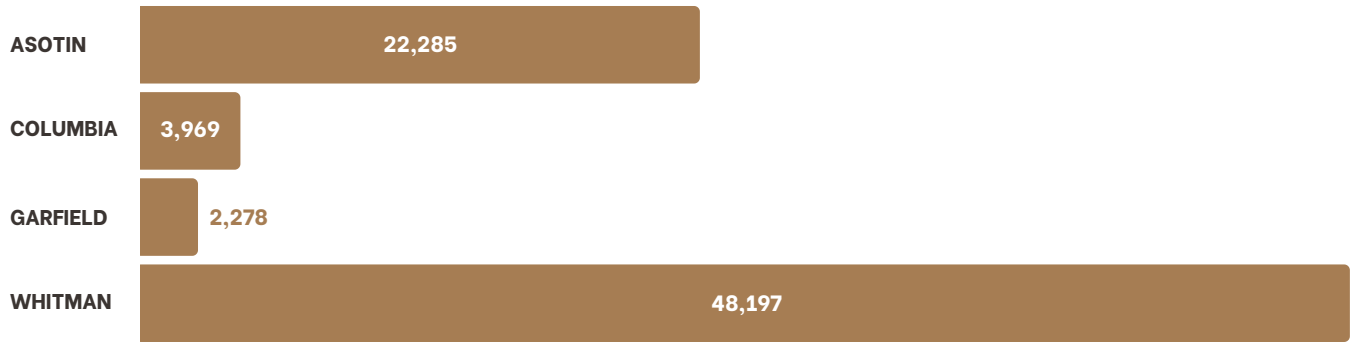


[www.whitman county.org](http://www.whitman county.org)

# POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

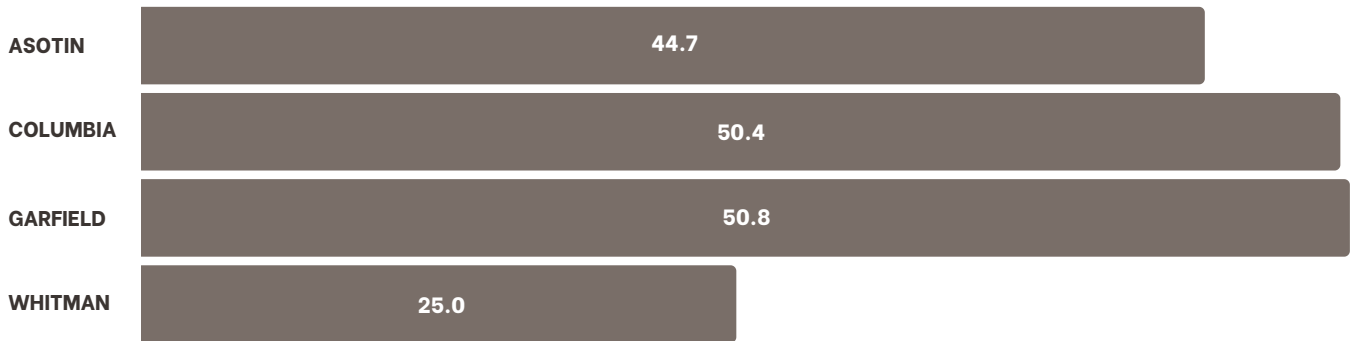
## Total Population

Source: 2020 Decennial Census



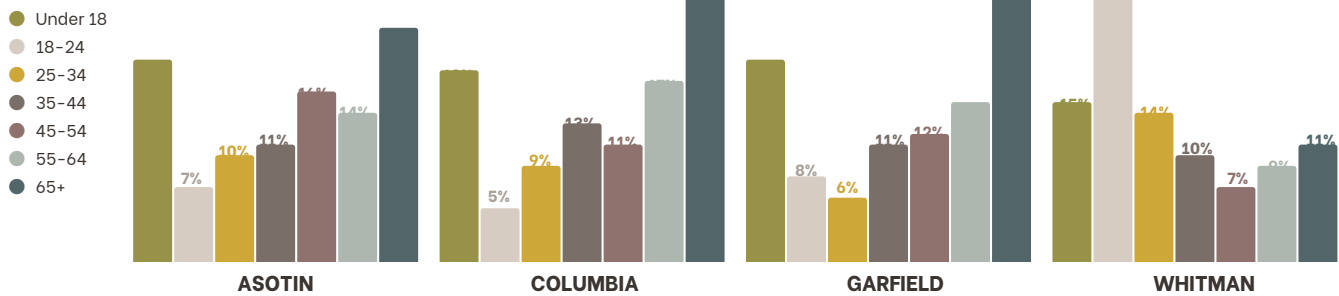
## Median Age

Source: 2020 Decennial Census



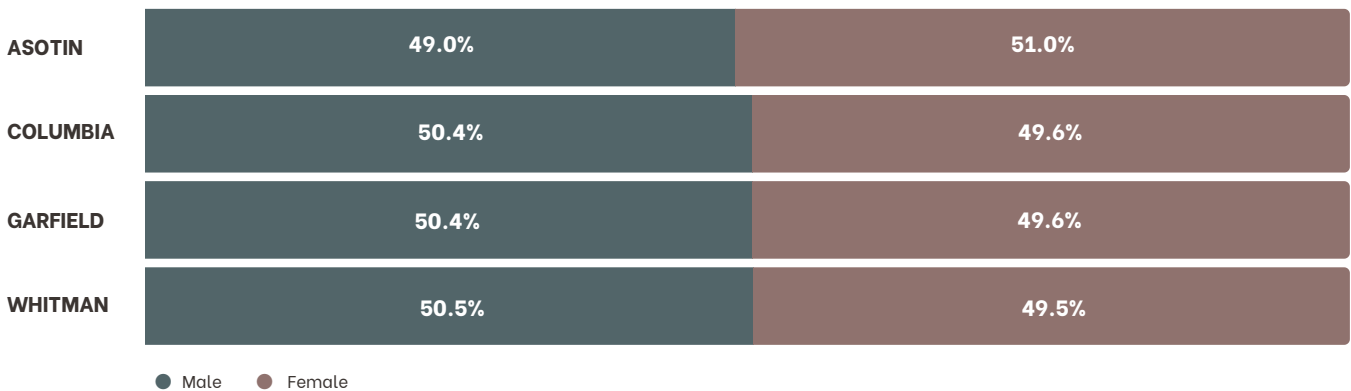
## Age Distribution

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Gender Distribution

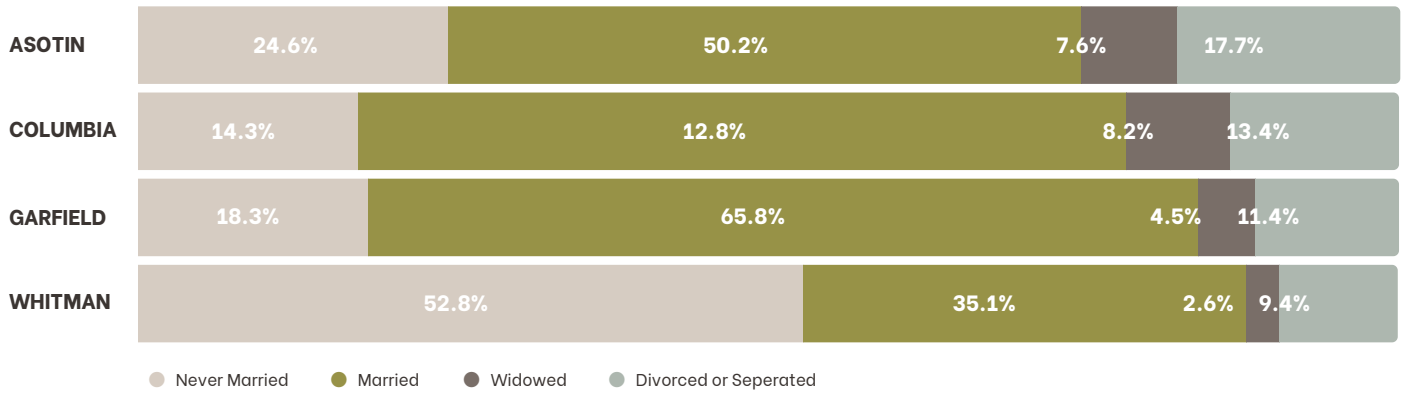
Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



# POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

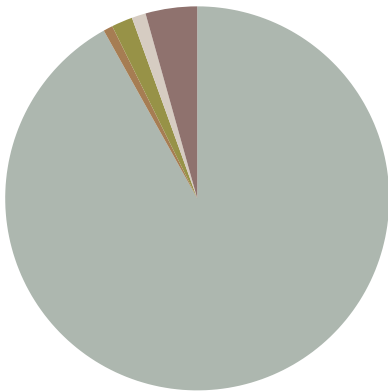
## Marital Status

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



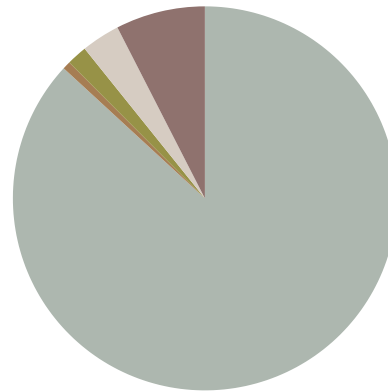
## Race & Ethnicity

Source: 2020 Decennial Census



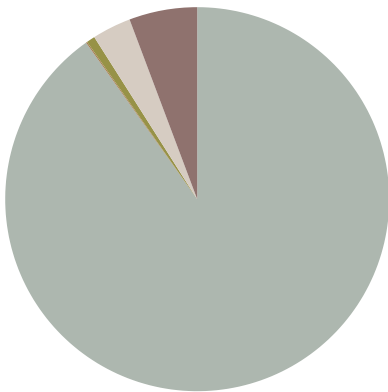
### ASOTIN

- White: 93.2%
- Black or African American: 0.8%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 1.8%
- Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 1.2%
- Hispanic or Latino, any race: 4.4%



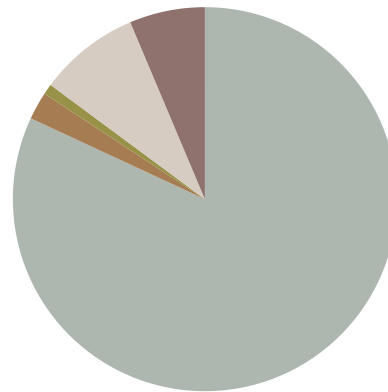
### COLUMBIA

- White: 91.1%
- Black or African American: 0.7%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 1.8%
- Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 3.4%
- Hispanic or Latino, any race: 7.9%



### GARFIELD

- White: 88.1%
- Black or African American: 0.1%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0.7%
- Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 3.2%
- Hispanic or Latino, any race: 5.6%



### WHITMAN

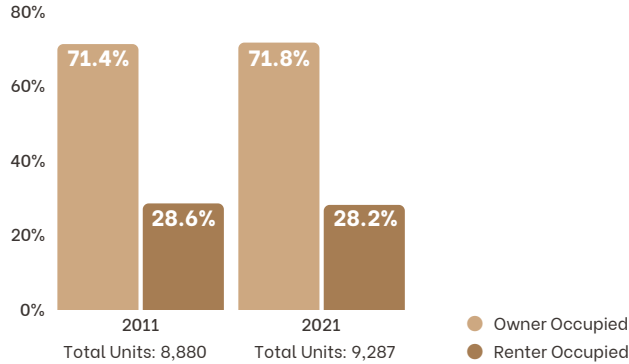
- White: 83.8%
- Black or African American: 2.4%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0.9%
- Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 8.7%
- Hispanic or Latino, any race: 6.5%

# REAL ESTATE AND HOUSEHOLDS

## Asotin County

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates  
UW Center for Real Estate Research

### Owner vs. Renter Occupied Housing Units



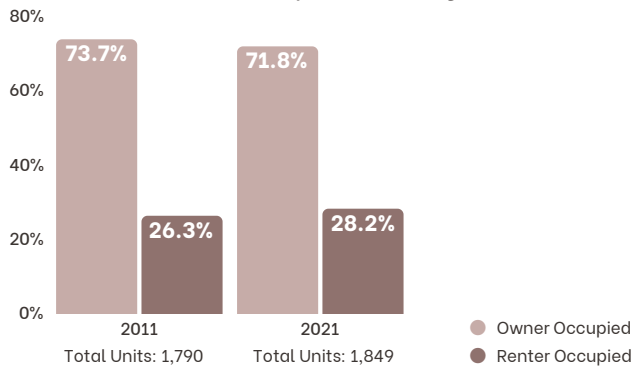
Median Home Price, 2022 **\$292,500**  
+14.3% change from 2021

Housing Affordability Index, Q4 2022 **81.6**  
-4.0% change from Q4 2021

Homeownership Rate: **71.8%**

## Columbia County

### Owner vs. Renter Occupied Housing Units



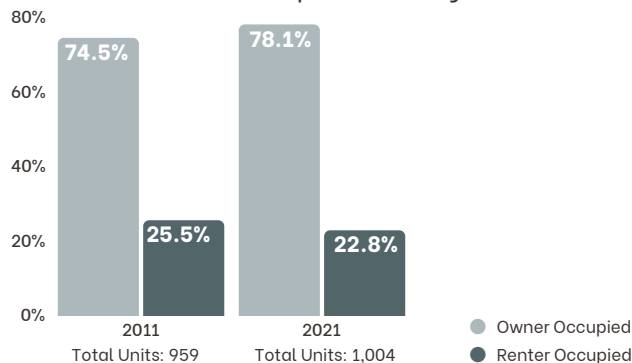
Median Home Price, 2022 **\$269,400**  
+4.9% change from 2021

Housing Affordability Index, Q4 2022 **115.4**  
-6.7% change from Q4 2021

Homeownership Rate: **71.8%**

## Garfield County

### Owner vs. Renter Occupied Housing Units



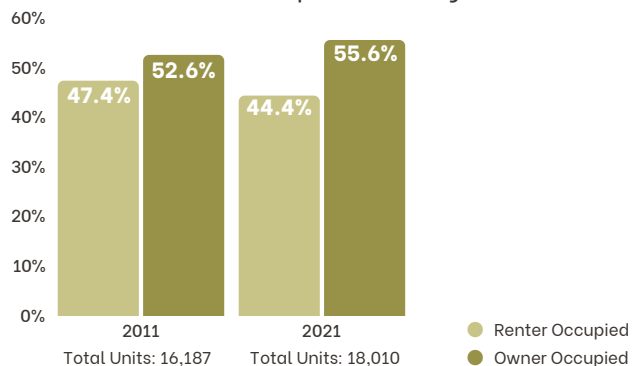
Median Home Price, 2022 **\$207,100**  
+14.1% change from 2021

Housing Affordability Index, Q4 2022 **132.5**  
+29.9% change from Q4 2021

Homeownership Rate: **78.2%**

## Whitman County

### Owner vs. Renter Occupied Housing Units



Median Home Price, 2022 **\$393,000**  
+9.5% change from 2021

Housing Affordability Index, Q4 2022 **73.6**  
+8.2% change from Q4 2021

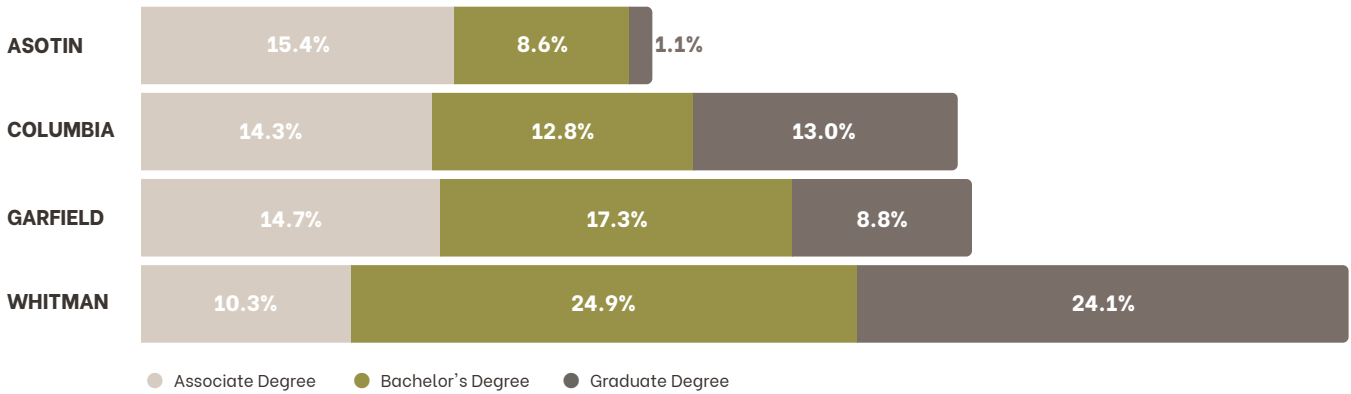
Homeownership Rate: **44.4%**

*Housing Affordability Index measures the ability of a middle income family to carry the mortgage payments on a median price home. When the index is 100 there is a balance between the family's ability to pay and the cost. Higher indexes indicate housing is more affordable.*

# EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

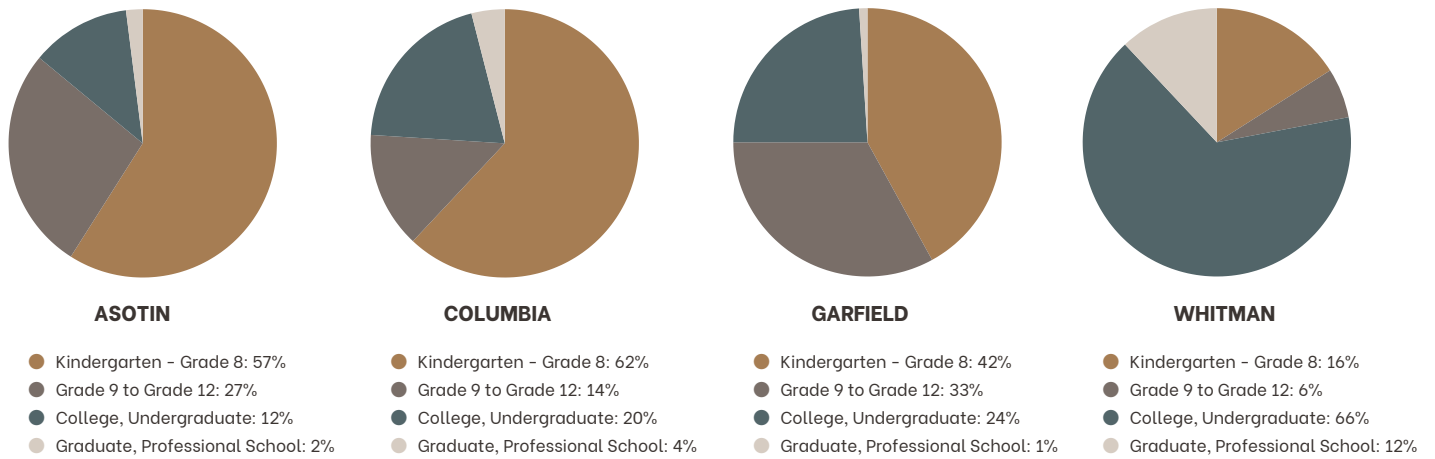
## Educational Attainment

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## School Enrollment

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



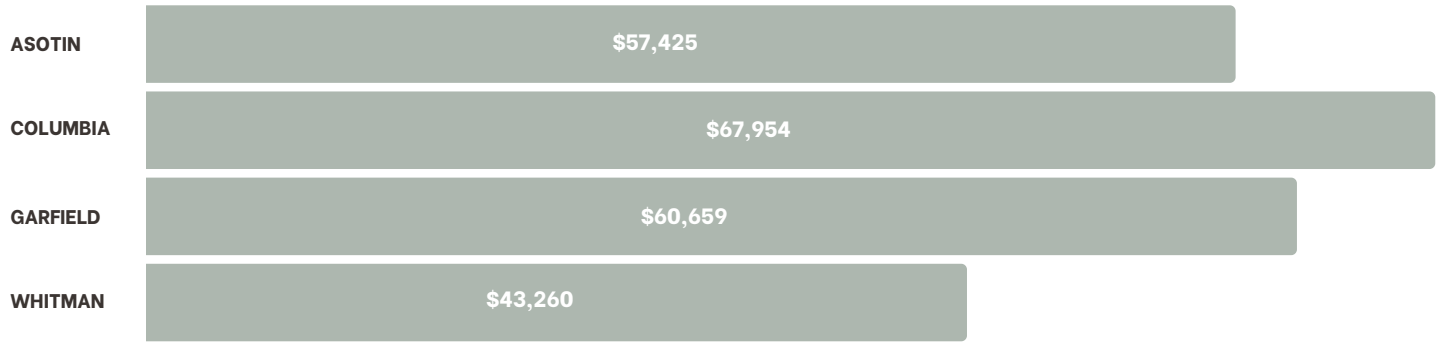
## Regional Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2022 Enrollment

Washington State University	Pullman, WA	27,539
University of Idaho	Moscow, ID	11,507
Lewis Clark State College	Lewiston, ID	3,783
Eastern Washington University	Cheney, WA	10,915
Gonzaga University	Spokane, WA	7,253
Walla Walla University	College Place, WA	1,447
Whitman College	Walla Walla, WA	1,509
Whitworth University	Spokane, WA	2,592
Walla Walla Community College	Clarkston and Walla Walla, WA	5,942
Spokane Community College	Spokane, WA	13,351
Spokane Falls Community College	Spokane, WA	5,893

# EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

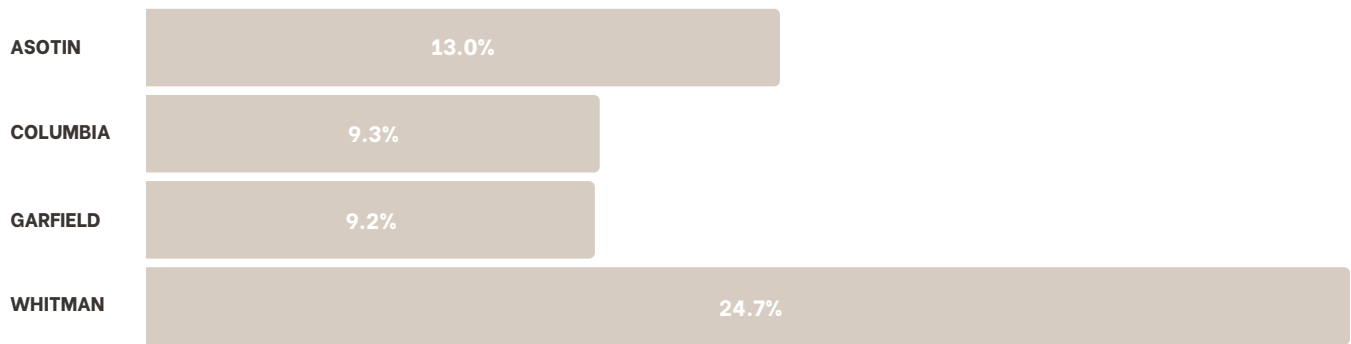
## Median Household Income

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



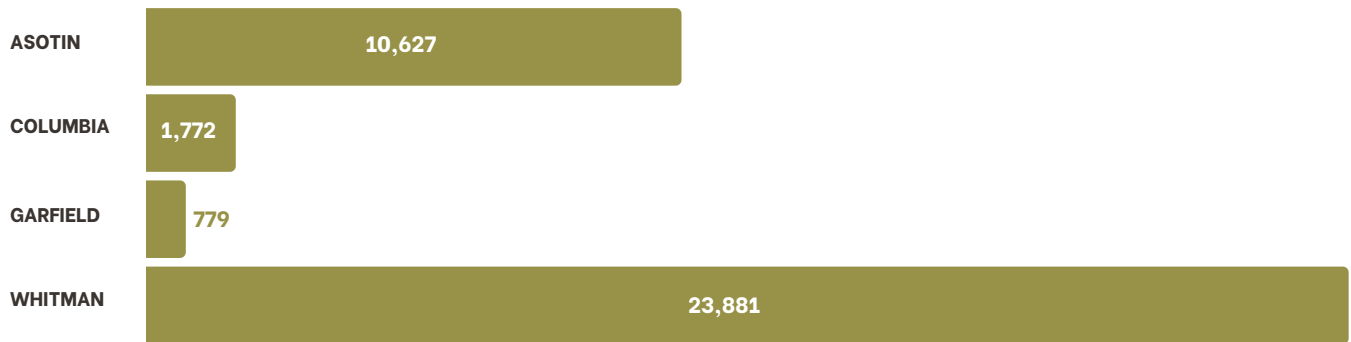
## Living Below Poverty Level

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



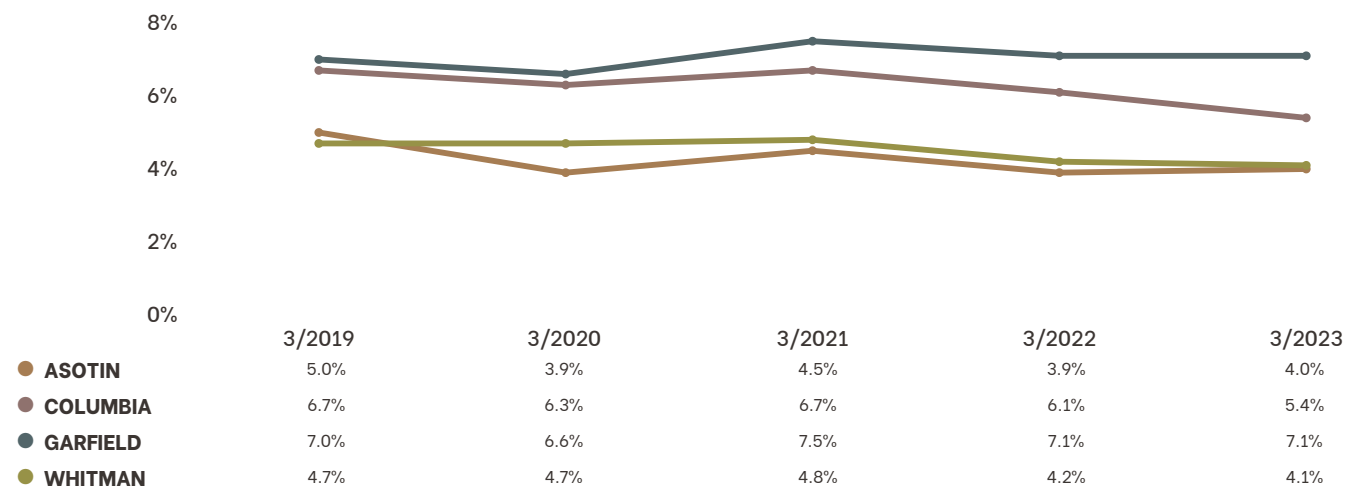
## Labor Force

Source: WA State Employment Security Department Monthly Employment Report, March 2023



## Unemployment Rate

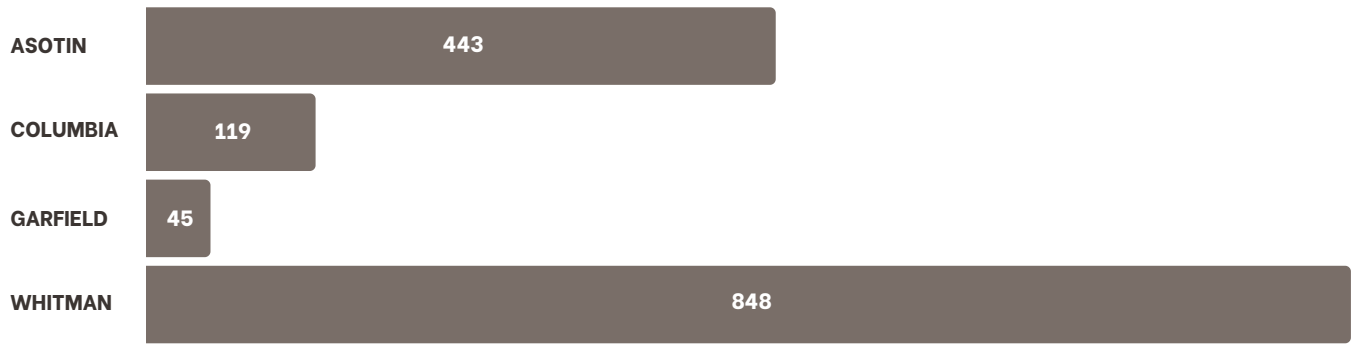
Source: WA State Employment Security Department Monthly Employment Report, March 2023



# BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

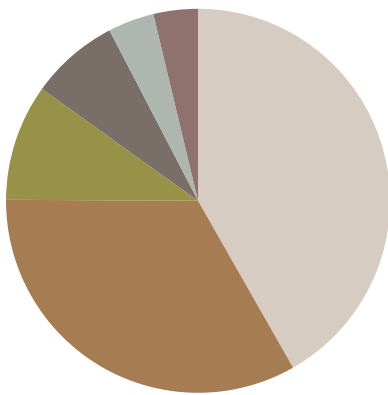
## Total Establishments

Source: 2020, Economic Surveys Business Patterns



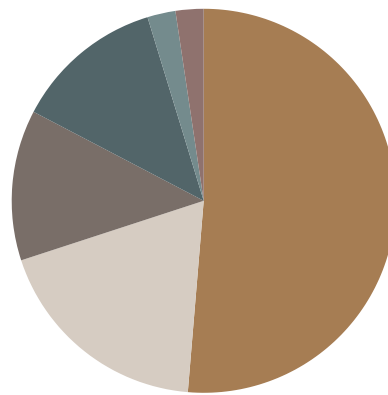
## Taxable Retail Sales

Source: 2022, Washington Department of Revenue



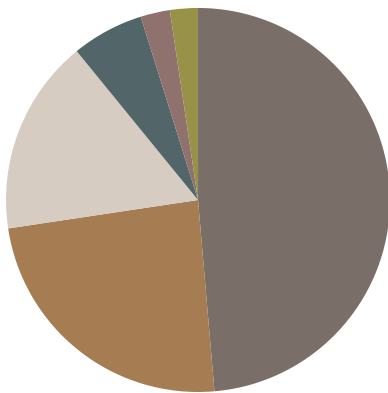
### ASOTIN: \$101,915,285

- Retail Trade, 44-45: \$36,933,575
- Construction, 23: \$29,470,477
- Management, Health Services, 55-62: \$8,685,598
- Wholesale Trade, 42: \$6,607,056
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, 71: \$3,438,113
- Manufacturing, 31-33: \$3,306,375



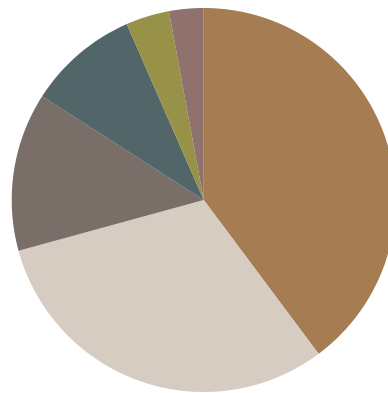
### COLUMBIA: \$43,914,719

- Construction, 23: \$21,125,888
- Retail Trade, 44-45: \$7,682,556
- Wholesale Trade, 42: \$5,222,055
- Real Estate, Rent/Lease, 53: \$5,188,352
- Accommodations, Food Service, 72: \$976,088
- Manufacturing, 31-33: \$970,534



### GARFIELD: \$21,425,873

- Wholesale Trade, 42: \$10,142,597
- Construction, 23: \$5,004,298
- Retail Trade, 44-45: \$3,437,583
- Real Estate, Rent/Lease, 53: \$1,264,102
- Manufacturing, 31-33: \$515,645
- Management, Health Services, 55-62: \$490,632



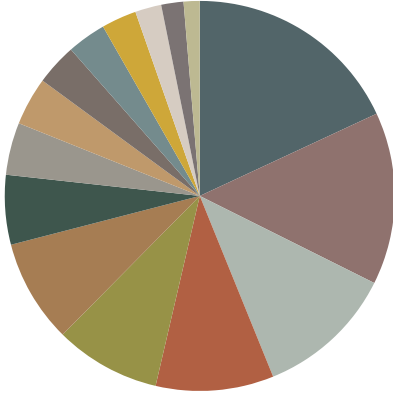
### WHITMAN: \$154,624,448

- Construction, 23: \$57,352,774
- Retail Trade, 44-45: \$44,603,365
- Wholesale Trade, 42: \$19,228,457
- Real Estate, Rent/Lease, 53: \$13,481,547
- Management, Health Services, 55-62: \$5,278,713
- Manufacturing, 31-33: \$4,184,112

# INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION

Source: 2022, Washington Department of Revenue

## ASOTIN



### Employment by Industry Subsector

- Health Care, Social Assistance: 18.1%
- Manufacturing: 14.3%
- Retail Trade: 11.5%
- Educational Services: 9.8%
- Construction: 8.8%
- Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin: 8.6%
- Accommodation, Food Services: 5.8%
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: 4.3%
- Public Administration: 4.0%
- Other Services, Except Public Administration: 3.4%
- Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities: 3.2%
- Wholesale Trade: 2.9%
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, Mining: 2.2%
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation: 1.8%
- Information: 1.3%

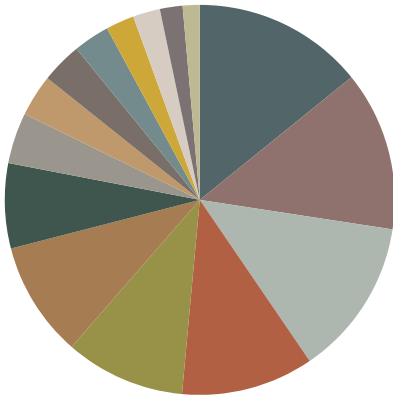
### Top Occupations by Industry Subsector

- Office and Administrative Support: 12.6%
- Sales and Related Occupations: 11.4%
- Construction: 8.4%
- Management: 8.3%

### Highest Paying Industry Subsectors

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting: \$88,164 median
- Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities: \$81,157 median
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: \$60,114 median
- Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin: \$50,521 median

## COLUMBIA



### Employment by Industry Subsector

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, Mining: 15.1%
- Educational Services: 14.1%
- Retail Trade: 13.9%
- Health Care, Social Assistance: 11.7%
- Public Administration: 10.6%
- Construction: 10.2%
- Manufacturing: 7.5%
- Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities: 4.5%
- Wholesale Trade: 3.7%
- Other Services, Except Public Administration: 3.6%
- Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin: 3.2%
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: 2.5%
- Accommodation, Food Services: 2.4%
- Information: 2.0%
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation: 1.5%

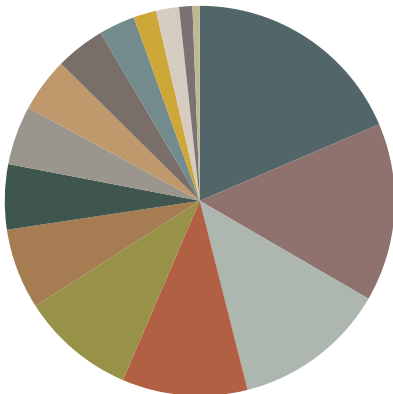
### Top Occupations by Industry Subsector

- Sales and Related Occupations: 12.6%
- Education, Instruction, and Library Occupations: 11%
- Office and Administrative Support: 9.3%
- Management: 8.2%

### Highest Paying Industry Subsectors

- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: \$74,688 median
- Construction: \$54,074 median
- Public Administration: \$58,640 median
- Education, Health Care, Social Assistance: \$40,852 median

## GARFIELD



### Employment by Industry Subsector

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, Mining: 18.6%
- Educational Services: 14.8%
- Retail Trade: 12.7%
- Health Care, Social Assistance: 10.4%
- Public Administration: 9.5%
- Manufacturing: 6.7%
- Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin: 5.4%
- Construction: 4.9%
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: 4.5%
- Wholesale Trade: 4.1%
- Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities: 3.0%
- Other Services, Except Public Administration: 1.9%
- Information: 1.9%
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation: 1.1%
- Accommodation, Food Services: .6%

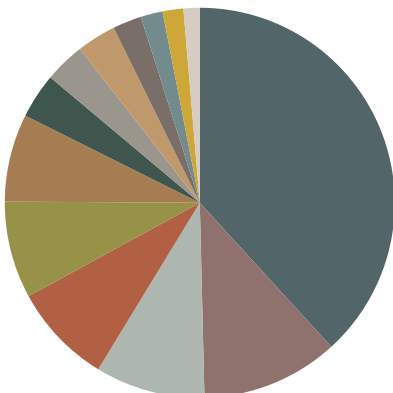
### Top Occupations by Industry Subsector

- Management: 14.9%
- Office and Administrative Support: 10.7%
- Sales and Related Occupations: 8.8%
- Building and Grounds Maintenance: 8.5%

### Highest Paying Industry Subsectors

- Wholesale Trade: \$61,771 median
- Public Administration: \$58,640 median
- Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities: \$53,214 median
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: \$37,679 median

## WHITMAN



### Employment by Industry Subsector

- Educational Services: 39.9%
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation: 11.9%
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting, Mining: 9.5%
- Accommodation, Food Services: 9.2%
- Manufacturing: 8.7%
- Health Care, Social Assistance: 8.6%
- Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin: 8.4%
- Retail Trade: 7.6%
- Construction: 3.9%
- Public Administration: 3.5%
- Other Services, Except Public Administration: 3.4%
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: 2.5%
- Wholesale Trade: 1.9%
- Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities: 1.8%
- Information: 1.4%

### Top Occupations by Industry Subsector

- Education, Instruction, and Library Occupations: 15.2%
- Management: 11.7%
- Office and Administrative Support: 8.05%
- Sales and Related Occupations: 6.89%

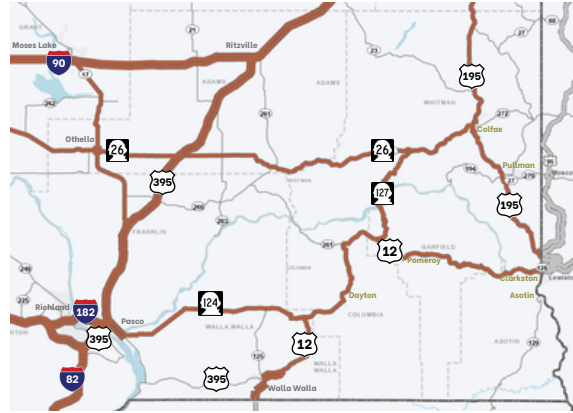
### Highest Paying Industry Subsectors

- Manufacturing: \$56,200 median
- Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities: \$53,750 median
- Public Administration: \$39,380 median
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate: \$33,382 median

# TRANSPORTATION

## Highway Transportation

The major north-south highways are US 195 in Washington and US 95 in Idaho. These highways provide access for the Clarkston-Lewiston, Pullman-Moscow, and Colfax areas to Interstate 90 in Spokane. Traveling east, US 12 connects to US 195 and US 95, and traveling west of the district connects to major highways I-84 and US 395. Additionally, State Route 26 runs west from Colfax and connects with US 395, and on to Interstate 90 at Vantage.



## Air Transportation

Commercial airports serving the SEWEDA region are located in Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Walla Walla, Washington and Lewiston, Idaho. Numerous smaller landing strips are available in the area, as well as some general aviation fields. These smaller airports play an important role in agriculture-related operations such as aerial applications and access to remote recreational areas.



### **Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport | [golws.com](http://golws.com)**

Located in Lewiston, Idaho, the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Regional Airport serves the eastern portion of the District. The airport has regional air service provided by Delta and United Airlines. Charter services are provided as well by Hillcrest Aircraft Company, Lohman Helicopter, and Odonata, LLC.



### **Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport | [flypuw.com](http://flypuw.com)**

The Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport is served by Alaska Airlines, and provides general aviation services through a fixed base operator and houses corporate aircraft. New 47,000sf, \$85M passenger terminal to be completed December 2023.



### **Spokane International Airport | [spokaneairports.net](http://spokaneairports.net)**

Spokane International Airport, the second largest air carrier airport in the state, is approximately 60 miles north of Colfax and 110 miles north of Clarkston in Spokane, WA. It is served by multiple national carriers, air cargo services, and by a fixed base operator.



### **Tri-Cities Regional Airport | [flytricity.com](http://flytricity.com)**

Tri-Cities Regional Airport, the third largest air carrier airport in the state, is located approximately 60 miles west of Dayton in Pasco, WA. It is served by Alaska, Delta, United, Allegiant, and Avelo Airlines. General aviation services are provided through a fixed base operator, Bergstrom Aircraft, Inc., and package freight by Federal Express.



### **Walla Walla Regional Airport | [wallawallaairport.com](http://wallawallaairport.com)**

Located just outside the boundaries of the District, 27 miles west of Dayton, Walla Walla Regional Airport serves the western portion of the region. It is serviced by Alaska Airlines.



Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport



Lewiston Nez Perce County Airport

## Rail Transportation

Whitman County is served by the P & L Line that are parts of the greater Eastern Washington short-line rail system. The line serves Whitman County, parts of Idaho, and interchanges with both the Burlington Northern Santa Fe. The State acquired the short lines in 2006 from Watco. This purchase was made in order to preserve the rail and inject State funds into the infrastructure for rehabilitation purposes. The State has requested proposals for rail operators and is in the process of working with local government entities in order to form a rail governance structure.

Columbia County is served by the Blue Mountain Railroad also known currently as the Palouse River & Coulee City Railroad. The State of Washington Department of Transportation has recently become involved in rail ownership and maintenance in Eastern Washington. Cargoes handled on these lines include wheat, barley, other grains, peas, lentils, lumber, and fertilizers. Asotin County and Garfield County do not have rail service.

## Water Transportation

The Snake River is an important component of the transportation system serving the region. The river handles a significant amount of grain and other goods produced in the region. The construction of four major dams on the Snake River in the 1950's to 1970's, complete with lock facilities, enables ocean going cargo to travel inland as far as Lewiston, Idaho. Both the Little Goose Dam and Lower Granite Dam are located within the SEWEDA region.

There are four port Districts serving the SEWEDA region that operate six waterfront facilities: the Ports of Clarkston, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman. The Port of Whitman operates three industrial sites along the river: Ports of Wilma, Central Ferry, and Alмота. Outbound shipments consist primarily of agricultural commodities and lumber. The ports of Clarkston, Columbia, and Whitman also have contracted marinas at some of their locations.



Port of Columbia | [portofcolumbia.org](http://portofcolumbia.org)



Port of Whitman | [portwhitman.com](http://portwhitman.com)



Port of Clarkston | [portofclarkston.com](http://portofclarkston.com)



Port of Garfield | [portofgarfield.com](http://portofgarfield.com)



Boyer Park & Marina



Port of Clarkston



Port of Central Ferry



Lyons Ferry Marina

# NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

## Geography

The South East Washington Economic Development Association (SEWEDA) is located in the far southeastern corner of Washington State. It is comprised of the four counties of Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman. This is an area of over 4,374 square miles with a variety of topography and geological features. The district is bisected by the Snake River, the largest tributary of the Columbia River. The northern portion of the region contains rich agricultural land that is well suited for the production of dry land wheat, peas, lentils, and barley. The southern section of our district consists of mountainous, forested terrain and is home to the Umatilla National Forest.

## Agriculture

The agricultural soils in the SEWEDA area are considered some of the most fertile in the United States. Farmers in our district have established sound farming practices over the years and have become world leaders in agriculture, especially in wheat production.

Over the past few decades, smaller farms have been purchased by larger operations, and old farming methods have been replaced by modern, less labor-intensive systems. This has resulted in fewer workers being employed in the agricultural industry in the SEWEDA region. Only three percent of the workforce in the SEWEDA region is currently employed in the agricultural industry. However, agriculture has been the mainstay of the region's economy in the past and is still a large contributor to the economy. Profits from area crops are generally returned to the local economy and boost activity in all other industries, especially the retail trade, wholesale trade, and services industries.

The region's primary crops are wheat and barley. Lentils, green peas, and garbanzo beans are also very prevalent in Whitman County. The remaining crops of oats, hay, grass seed and various fruits and vegetables are also grown, but in lesser amounts. Cattle, hogs, and sheep are also raised in the region.

Most of the land in the SEWEDA region is designated as agricultural and can be broken into three categories: Prime Farmland, Statewide Important Farmland, and Other Lands, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Prime Farmland is land best suited to producing food, feed and forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Managed properly, prime farmland has the soil quality, length of growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce a sustained high yield of crops. Prime farmland produces the highest yields; with minimal energy and economic resources, farming this type of land results in the least environmental disturbance.

Statewide Important Farmland is farmland defined as land in public or private use for the purpose of producing irrigated or non-irrigated crops such as wheat, barley, potatoes, alfalfa, etc. and is not designated as prime farmland. These lands have slight to moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices.



August Wheat Harvest



Steptoe Butte

Other Land is a category of lands not used for agricultural purposes as it relates to growing crops, but instead, is used as rangelands and spring pasture for livestock operations. This includes lands where native vegetation is predominantly shrubs and grasses. The production potential and plant composition depend on the characteristics of the soils and climate.

The fertile soil and ample wind, sun, and water resources in the SEWEDA area create great opportunity for renewable energy development, such as bio-fuels and wind energy production. These uses have shown themselves to be compatible with current uses in the agricultural zones in the region.

### Timber and Forest Land

The southern portion of the District is forest and timberland that contrasts the dry land farming and rolling hills that typify much of the District. The wooded areas include the Umatilla National Forest, the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness, and the Blue Mountains. Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield counties all contain portions of the Umatilla National Forest. This area contains Camp William T. Wooten State Park, the Ski Bluewood ski area, and two peaks over 6,300 feet: Oregon Butte and Diamond Peak.

The Umatilla National Forest, located in the Blue Mountains of southeast Washington and northeast Oregon, covers 1.4 million acres of diverse landscapes and plant communities. The forest has some mountainous terrain, but most of the forest consists of v-shaped valleys separated by narrow ridges or plateaus.

The landscape also includes heavily timbered slopes, grassland ridges and benches, and bold basalt outcroppings. Elevation ranges from 1,600 to 8,000 feet above sea level. Changes in weather are common, but summers are generally warm and dry with cool evenings. Cold, snowy winters, and mild temperatures during spring and fall can be expected.

### Surface Water and River Systems

Centuries ago, floods carved out what today is known as the Columbia, Snake and Clearwater River System, with its countless coulees, steptoes, plunge pools, river valleys, and huge depressions. A complex system of reservoirs, canals, rivers, streams, and wetlands resulting from these unique geologic features provide recreation, irrigation, wildlife habitat, and transportation.

The primary surface water in the region is the Snake River. Most of the creeks, streams and rivers within the District flow into the Snake River that in turn connects with the Columbia River and eventually to the Pacific Ocean.

A series of Snake River dams supply the most prevalent source of energy in the SEWEDA area, hydroelectric power. The reservoirs created by the dams enable an economical barge transportation system to serve as a low-cost alternative for shipping the region's agricultural commodities, lumber, and manufactured products to the West Coast and beyond.

The reservoirs also provide recreational opportunities for boating, rafting, fishing, and other water-related sports. The recreational and scenic features are a primary draw upriver from the Lewiston-Clarkston area on the Snake and Clearwater River systems.



Tucannon River



Umatilla National Forest

# TOURISM AND RECREATION

## Recreation and Cultural Activities

The SEWEDA region is rich in natural resources for recreation and tourism. The Snake River runs through the region and offers water-based recreation and fishing on miles of calm, uncrowded water. The Clearwater & Snake River National Recreation Trail offers ten miles of paved continuous trails, boat launches, marinas, and swimming beaches. Several parks and marinas throughout the District offer services and amenities such as: swimming, picnic areas, overnight lodging, RV sites, and many have utility hook-ups.

The region is also known as the gateway to Hells Canyon, North America's deepest gorge, and attracts nearly 30,000 visitors each year to enjoy worldclass whitewater adventures. The Port of Clarkston is the docking point for several cruise boat companies that originate in Portland, OR, and travel the Columbia-Snake River system following the Lewis & Clark water route. The Touchet and Tucannon Rivers are found in the western part of the region and provide additional recreational opportunities. In the northern end of Whitman County a series of lakes entices anglers. Whitman County is the home to Steptoe Butte State Park and Kamiak Butte County Park. The county also operates several other smaller day use parks. Asotin County is the home to Fields Spring State Park, Chief Timothy Park, and several other park areas along the Snake River in Clarkston and Asotin. Garfield County is home to Central Ferry Park and is considered a gateway to the Blue Mountains. Columbia County is home to Palouse Falls State Park and Camp Wooten State Park, as well as Lyons Ferry Park.

Throughout the year, the region is host to many local and nationally recognized events. These include rodeos, fairs, and festivals highlighting the agricultural roots of the SEWEDA region; car shows and road races; the Avista NAIA World Series; and the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival. The National Lentil Festival held each August in Pullman celebrates the regional title as the Pea and Lentil capitol of the world. Garfield County is the site of the developing Eastern Washington Agricultural Museum and the Wild West Road Rally. Columbia County has many activities such as the All Wheels Weekend and fine arts events.

Cultural opportunities flourish in the SEWEDA region. The largest art museum in the Inland Northwest is located on the WSU campus in Pullman, offering changing exhibits ranging from fine arts and fine crafts to architecture and design. In addition, several towns boast art galleries representing a wide variety of local, regional, and national talent. Theatre, dance, and music performances occur regularly at facilities across the area, including the 12,000 seat Beasley Coliseum on the WSU campus.



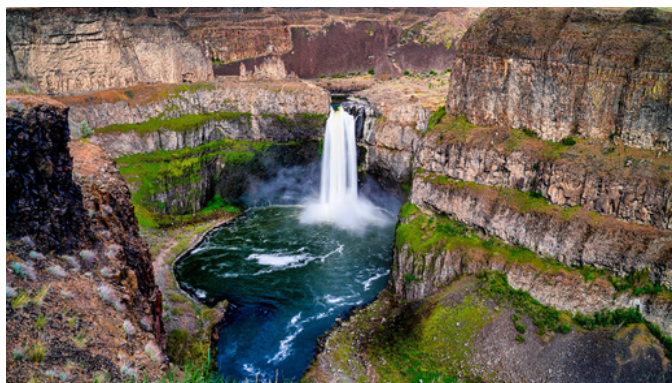
Nez Perce Tourism Saqanpa Hells Canyon Jet Boat Tour



All Wheels Weekend, Dayton



National Lentil Festival, Pullman



Palouse Falls State Park

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## OVERVIEW

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is a strategic tool used to ensure that there is a clear objective informed by a comprehensive understanding of a region's capabilities and capacity. A SWOT analysis identifies a region's competitive advantages as well as internal or external factors that can keep a region from realizing its potential. SWOT analysis elements are commonly defined as:

**Strengths:** A region's relative competitive advantages and are often internal in nature.

**Weaknesses:** A region's relative competitive disadvantages, also often internal in nature.

**Opportunities:** Occasions for regional improvement or progress that are often external in nature.

**Threats:** Occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline, also often external in nature.

The CEDS is developed through consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats specific to our region. Interactive public community assessment displays paired with an in-depth online survey resulted in the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This SWOT analysis, along with the data and insights provided in the Summary Background, is what was used to develop the goals, action plan, and implementation strategy of this CEDS.

## EIGHT FORMS OF COMMUNITY CAPITAL

The EDA also emphasizes the importance of evaluating the regional economy through the lens of multiple forms of community capitals during the CEDS development and SWOT analysis process. These capitals include the following:

**Individual Capital:** The existing stock of skills, understanding, physical health and mental wellness in a region's people.

**Intellectual Capital:** The existing stock of knowledge, resourcefulness, creativity and innovation in a region's people, institutions, organizations and sectors.

**Social Capital:** The existing stock of trust, relationships and networks in a region's population.

**Cultural Capital:** The existing stock of traditions, customs, ways of doing, and world views in a region's population.

**Natural Capital:** The existing stock of natural resources in a region. Example: water, land, air, plants and animals.

**Built Capital:** The existing stock of constructed infrastructure in a region. Example: buildings, sewer systems, broadband, roads.

**Political Capital:** The existing stock of goodwill, influence and power that people, organizations and institutions in the region can exercise in decision-making.

**Financial Capital:** The existing stock of monetary resources available in the region for investment in the region.



## STRENGTHS

A region's relative competitive advantages and are often internal in nature.

- Proximity to natural resources and outdoor recreation
- Quality of life in small-town, rural setting
- Availability of undeveloped land
- Relatively low cost of living compared to larger neighboring regions
- Agricultural heritage
- Waterfront access
- Regional and international airport access within 2-hour radius
- Public safety and low crime rates
- Availability of utilities at a moderate cost
- Lower-cost industrial real estate than many other U.S. regions
- Strong postsecondary, career, and technical training programs
- Strong K-12 education systems
- Supportive local elected officials
- Charming, historic downtown areas
- Healthcare providers and facilities
- Well-positioned to advance innovation and entrepreneurship



## WEAKNESSES

A region's relative competitive disadvantages, also often internal in nature.

- Inability to attract and retain skilled workers
- Lack of entry-level housing options
- Loss of workforce to nearby metro areas
- Outward migration of young adults
- Lack of affordable, available childcare options
- Limited public transportation options
- Older, vacant buildings in downtown areas that require major renovations
- Zoning and building codes in some areas are restrictive and selectively enforced
- Limited access to capital for businesses outside of the conventional profile
- Commercial space and property improvement
- Public transit availability
- Aging workforce and business owners



## OPPORTUNITIES

Occasions for regional improvement or progress that are often external in nature.

- Need for diverse and affordable housing
- Develop local entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Attract remote workers looking to escape metro areas
- Potential for further growth in recreation and tourism economy
- Invest in public infrastructure including parks, public transit, and broadband to make the region more attractive to talent
- Redevelop underutilized or vacant retail spaces
- Encourage young workers to remain in the area
- Build on collaboration that occurred during the pandemic between public and private organizations
- Expand career path exploration and skill development in high schools
- Grow venture capital programs for startup and early-stage companies
- Pursue policies and government or corporate incentives to retain, attract, and train the workforce
- Real estate property development
- Recreation tourism opportunities
- Investing in family-friendly community amenities



## THREATS

Occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline, often external in nature.

- Aging population and workforce
- Talent shortage and migration
- Other states and regions with stronger economic incentives and lower taxes
- Reliance upon and sustainability of grant funding
- Removal of Snake River dams
- Loss of any major employer
- Neighboring states with less business and development regulations, lower cost of doing business
- Increased manufacturing automation
- Tighter environmental regulations
- Lack of business relocation and development incentives
- Rising housing costs
- Challenging retail environment and consumer behavior
- Residential development regulations
- Increasing competition in the global marketplace

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION & ACTION PLAN

## OVERVIEW

The SWOT analysis was used as a strategic planning tool to help identify regional assets that could be leveraged better to build the capacity for growth and develop an implementation plan to promote regional economic vitality. The resulting Strategic Direction and Action Plan outlines the goals, strategies, and actions for the district over the next five years, along with performance metrics for assessing progress.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Southeast Washington region is a preferred location for innovative businesses and entrepreneurs seeking a skilled workforce, reliable infrastructure, high quality of life for residents, and a favorable business environment that contributes to the region's continual economic success.

## GOALS

The goals and objectives listed in the Strategic Direction and Action Plan are consistent with needs and aspirations of the region as identified in the SWOT Analysis:

### **Goal 1: Encourage Economic Growth and Diversity**

**Objective:** Our region has a diverse economy and a thriving, growing business community.

### **Goal 2: Maximize Talent and Workforce**

**Objective:** Our region has education and skill development opportunities that meet the needs of current and prospective businesses.

### **Goal 3: Expand Small Business Support Services**

**Objective:** Our region has plentiful and relevant resources to support emerging local entrepreneurs and innovators.

### **Goal 4: Increase Quality of Life**

**Objective:** Our region has vibrant and resilient communities with sufficient amenities for current and prospective residents.

### **Goal 5: Foster Collaboration and Partnerships**

**Objective:** Our region encourages cooperation amongst stakeholders for the common good of the regional economy.

### **Goal 6: Support Infrastructure and Development**

**Objective:** Our region has modernized utilities and systems capable of supporting the current and future industry needs.

# **GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DIVERSIFICATION**

**Objective: Our region has a diverse economy and a thriving, growing business community.**

## **Strategy 1.1**

Develop a comprehensive growth strategy through an economic assessment of the factors that promote, impede, or cause economic growth.

### **Actions**

- Develop a data-driven economic model for the southeast Washington region to project the effects of various growth variables and potential strategies and investments.
- Coordinate with partners to define the appropriate forum for, and regularly conduct, small business forums or distribute surveys to connect with stakeholders and determine the challenges and opportunities facing the region's business community.
- Establish local partnerships and coalitions to develop and implement the overall growth plan for the southeast Washington region.
- Prioritize diversity in stakeholder groups and ensure equitable access to input opportunities to include voices from underrepresented and underserved communities.
- Work with local governments to take advantage of current funding and capacity-building opportunities to sustain increased capacity in the future.

## **Strategy 1.2**

Strengthen existing business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts, especially for businesses in targeted industries.

### **Actions**

- Provide active, outbound outreach and support for target businesses and proactively inquire about their current and upcoming needs.
- Market the region as a location for new and expanding business headquarters and manufacturing.
- Assess land supply for commercial and industrial uses and document lands available for development, and communicate land availability to current and prospective businesses.
- Support the implementation of land use and zoning regulations that encourage the attraction, retention and expansion of business that diversify the economic base.
- Establish a clearinghouse that combines resources and initiatives of all business development initiatives of local jurisdictions in the region to incorporate one regional effort to educate and assist businesses locate and grow.
- Leverage the region's natural assets to attract outdoor manufacturing to the region.
- Ensure businesses have the resources they need to move into or expand in the region, including new and emerging industries.
- Develop a web-based dashboard that incorporates demographic, economic and real estate data to quickly assess trends, challenges and opportunities for prospective entrepreneurs, business owners and real estate developers.

### Strategy 1.3

Increase the export capacity and capability of the Southeast Washington region's firms, focusing on small and medium sized enterprises.

#### Actions

- Improve capacity of the region's transportation and communication infrastructure to ease trade flows between local and overseas markets.
- Pursue export policy as a critical success factor in regional development.
- Leverage large firms as catalysts to mentor smaller companies in exporting.
- Retain, modernize and expand existing manufacturing firms, which have already invested in the region.
- Invest in supply chain infrastructure to expedite international shipping capabilities.
- Evaluate the region's disaster preparedness and emergency transportation planning, and prioritize infrastructure improvements and redundancies to ensure adequate preparation for future natural disasters.

### Strategy 1.4

Support public policy and processes that will foster achievement of the regional vision and goals to improve the region's competitive standing.

#### Actions

- Advocate for a competitive, fair, and business-friendly regulatory environment.
- Promote predictable, efficient permitting processes in counties and communities throughout the region.
- Expand access to capital as well as public and corporate development incentives available to the region's businesses.
- Identify and catalogue sources for federal, state and county business incentives, including low-interest loans, industrial revenue bonds, sales or property tax deferrals, New Market and other tax credits, SBA HUB Zones, and others.
- Identify the appropriate forum for conversations around complex regional issues and potentially lead the creation or and facilitate a regional working group.
- Review and revise zoning designations to provide neighborhood-serving retail and services in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.
- Develop check lists or fact sheets to aid in understanding and compliance with permitting and code enforcement procedures; produce a guide that outlines various regulatory requirements and codes, available venues and associated costs, and volunteer organizations able to assist.

## **GOAL 2: MAXIMIZE TALENT AND WORKFORCE**

**Objective: Our region has education and skill development opportunities that meet the needs of current and prospective businesses.**

### **Strategy 2.1**

Ensure that the present workforce of the region possesses the required skills and training that correspond to the needs of employers.

#### **Actions**

- Promote and partner with post-secondary education, nonprofits, and the private sector in order to increase the number of students in local STEM programs, internships, and jobs.
- Define cluster-specific career pathways and create training and certification programs to enable more robust firm-worker matching and upward progression opportunities.
- Support businesses in providing paid opportunities for work-based education, including but not limited to paid apprenticeships, internships, placement opportunities, and on-the-job training programs.
- Develop the work skills of nontraditional talent pools, or populations that have experienced barriers to workforce participation, such as non-high school graduates, those who have been through the criminal justice system, and single female heads of households.
- Work with local educational institutions to create programs, such as career fairs or lesson plans, that highlight career paths and technical skills in demand with regional employers.

### **Strategy 2.2**

Attract and retain younger talent by promoting the region's livability and access to exceptional nature and outdoor recreation opportunities.

#### **Actions**

- Develop resources to support employers recruiting from outside the Southeast Washington region to communicate the value proposition of living and working in the region.
- Identify and market amenities targeted to recruit young professionals from the surrounding metro areas, particularly as they start to have families and look for opportunities to live in smaller cities and towns outside the city.
- Work to prioritize investment in recreation infrastructure such as bike paths and hiking trails, parks and sports fields, camping facilities, and water access points.
- Collaborate to develop a regional arts and culture event calendar that centralizes Southeastern Washington arts and culture-related offerings.
- Support a recreation facilities plan that identifies the regional priorities and resources needed to update, improve, expand and add recreational facilities that serve the region's needs.
- Identify the appropriate forum for conversations around complex regional issues and potentially lead the creation or and facilitate a regional working group that meets periodically to develop regional solutions.

### Strategy 2.3

Improve access to skill development and education in career pathways at the elementary and secondary levels.

#### Actions

- Develop regional programming that targets key industry skills gaps with a focus on connecting early career exposure experiences with higher-impact experiences like job shadows, internships, teacher externships, and youth apprenticeships.
- Explore creation of a volunteer workforce development task force to connect employers and students for job shadow, internship and volunteer opportunities, as well as coursework aimed at non-traditional and career-change students.
- Build on existing talent pipeline efforts, develop ongoing partnerships with schools and universities, and promote career awareness.
- Develop programming that targets key industry skills gaps with a focus on connecting middle and high school aged students to early career exposure experiences such as job shadows, internships, and youth apprenticeships.
- Partner with local educators to identify grant-funded opportunities for program expansion in STEM learning.
- Actively publicize local hiring events and other career-related programs, such as career fairs, at local post-secondary institutions.

### Strategy 2.4

Pursue strategies to expand the region's workforce in order to address the shortage of workers while also closing the skills gap.

#### Actions

- Conduct annual assessments of high-demand jobs and specific skills needed.
- Review policies and rules to identify barriers to innovation and creativity in schools.
- Support the growth and expansion of universities and institutions of higher learning and programs that complement economic development and diversification.
- Build on existing talent pipeline efforts, develop ongoing partnerships with schools and universities, and promote career awareness.
- Create job and career opportunities for nontraditional students, disabled workers, older workers, veterans, and immigrants.
- Encourage institutions of higher learning to develop cooperative and integrated curriculums that enhance and increase the productivity of the local work force and attract industries and skilled workers.
- Encourage a continuum of education and workforce development programs that support lifelong learning to allow incumbent workers to seek training to improve their skills and move toward higher wage positions, creating more entry level opportunities for new employees.

## **GOAL 3: EXPAND SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Objective: Our region has plentiful and relevant resources to support emerging local entrepreneurs and innovators.**

### **Strategy 3.1**

Identify and engage directly with emerging local entrepreneurs and startups to determine their needs and goals.

#### **Actions**

- Provide active, outbound outreach and support for target businesses and proactively inquire about their current and upcoming needs.
- Research and identify current and future sectors showing the greatest potential for growth.
- Facilitate alignment and strategic alliances between small business resource providers in the region.
- Promote and support local governments in creating responsive, helpful, and expedient services that promote the region as a great place to do business.
- Provide coordination and information exchange about incentives offered by government at all levels
- Continue to support place-based economic development to assure a place where creatives and entrepreneurs want to live and prosper.

### **Strategy 3.2**

Encourage opportunities for coworking, teleworking, and other arrangements enabled by telecommunications technology.

#### **Actions**

- Collaborate to develop a coworking space to foster entrepreneurship, innovation and to enable convenient telecommuting to regional employers.
- Study the feasibility of aggregators or cooperatives to efficiently distribute locally-made products from regional businesses to larger metropolitan markets.
- Creation of dynamic innovation hubs in major regional towns with coworking and event space to serve as a one-stop business support resource.
- Ensure local, regional, and state plans are in place to meet broadband access, speed goals, and needs.
- Explore unique partnership opportunities for cooperative or pop-up telecommuting spaces.
- Complete a feasibility assessment and establish partnerships for the creation of a makerspace and fabrication laboratory.

### Strategy 3.3

Ensure access to technical assistance, coaching, mentoring, funding, and support organizations for startup businesses.

#### Actions

- Provide direct technical assistance, market assessments, feasibility assistance, and other support services to existing, expanding, or startup businesses within the region.
- Ensure that technical assistance, support and access to capital are available, accessible and easy to locate for businesses at all stages of growth from start-up through retirement and succession and for businesses of all sizes, including incubators/accelerators.
- Create a source of capital funding for smaller businesses having difficulty accessing capital.
- Establish a network of local and regional staff who can help businesses navigate through permitting and other processes.
- Create mentorships between established and emerging business leaders.
- Convene, map and gap the current offerings of business support organizations in order to ensure that services are available to meet the specific needs of local businesses.
- Assist businesses with guidance on preparing applications to access state or federal funding opportunities.
- Create and distribute a list of incentives and resources that would potentially benefit regional entrepreneurs.
- Continue to provide a variety of professional and technical services to companies in order to enhance their prospects for growth and profitability.
- Coordinate with partners to improve access to funding and resources available through local foundations, non-profits and other funders.

### Strategy 3.4

Serve the needs of existing high-potential, small to mid-sized enterprises already operating in the region.

#### Actions

- Catalog and keep a profile of each high-growth potential business in the region.
- Work with counties and towns to develop economic development sites so that there is opportunity for businesses to expand or relocate to the region.
- Identify linkages between high-potential companies and resources available through university systems, research centers, and industry associations.
- Facilitate alignment and strategic alliances between small business resource providers in the region.
- Coordinate with partners to improve access to funding and resources available through local foundations, non-profits and other funders to empower local capacity-building efforts.

## **GOAL 4: INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE**

**Objective: Our region has vibrant and resilient communities with sufficient amenities for current and prospective residents.**

### **Strategy 4.1**

Support the development of a variety of housing types to meet the needs of our growing communities.

#### **Actions**

- Define the issues contributing to gaps in housing across the southeast Washington region and explore housing solutions using zoning, regulation and taxes.
- Coordinate planning to encourage strategic housing investments near employment centers and transit hubs to reduce household transportation costs.
- Evaluate the potential for public-private partnerships that provide infrastructure for new residential development.
- Compile a list of reliable builders and developers interested in providing affordable housing, particularly multi-family and single family dwellings in rural areas.
- Inventory buildable land, and assess access to infrastructure, transit and other factors in order to identify those most suitable for housing.
- Support rezone and other regulation changes, as needed, to ease processes and reduce barriers to housing development.
- Seek resources to develop a regional housing rehabilitation programs to assist low- and moderate-income households and landlords to make needed repairs to their homes and rental units.

### **Strategy 4.2**

Ensure access to affordable and quality childcare and after school care for all who need it.

#### **Actions**

- Provide support to a variety of childcare business types to increase capacity, meet regulatory requirements, and access resources.
- Support partners that work directly with childcare providers and organizations to increase childcare access and affordability for families at all income levels.
- Explore opportunities with nonprofit childcare providers to open facilities in communities with little to no childcare options.
- Provide technical assistance to businesses offering employer-based solutions to childcare needs.
- Promote creative ownership and business models such as co-op-based childcare, and provide support to a variety of childcare business types to increase capacity, meet regulatory requirements, and access resources.
- Support programs that attract and train childcare employees.

### Strategy 4.3

Support the development and growth of community assets and amenities that enhance the Southeast Washington region's quality of life.

#### Actions

- Develop community specific strategies to define unique qualities as a distinct place and necessary public investments to foster private investment.
- Encourage and promote public outdoor events, such as farmers' markets and street fairs, that draw people to downtowns and commercial districts.
- Provide cultural, recreational and aesthetic amenities that will attract young professionals to the region within the next five years.
- Promote and support businesses and policies that protect and enhance our natural environment and increase resiliency.

### Strategy 4.4

Enhance and promote the attractiveness of the southeast Washington region to residents, businesses, workers, and visitors.

#### Actions

- Work with public and private businesses, chambers of commerce, local and county governments, and non-profit organizations to create a collaborative region-wide approach to reshaping the area's public image.
- Promote the region's identity and high quality of life to support business and talent attraction and retention.
- Leverage the region's history, cultural heritage, and natural assets to extend the visitor's stay in the region
- Support arts and culture through placemaking and events to keep the region's downtown centers vibrant.
- Work with small businesses, local companies, and industries interested in community profile stories that highlight economic growth and community development.
- Foster a culture that is welcoming to diverse talent from outside the southeast Washington region.
- Establish and coordinate internal and external branding, marketing, and advertising efforts for the southeast Washington region targeted at both national and local audiences.
- Promote and enhance the southeast Washington region's natural resources and recreational opportunities through the efforts of local tourism marketing organizations.

## **GOAL 5: FOSTER COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

**Objective: Our region encourages cooperation amongst stakeholders for the common good of the regional economy.**

### **Strategy 5.1**

Align the network of entrepreneurial support organizations and leverage existing economic development initiatives to enhance regional cooperation.

#### **Actions**

- Encourage cooperation and teamwork among the various economic development entities in the region, such as local governments, county authorities, and local economic development organizations.
- Coordinate with partners to define the appropriate forum for, and regularly conduct, small business forums or distribute surveys to connect with stakeholders and determine the challenges and opportunities facing the regional business community.
- Enhance community involvement and establish flexible, widespread networks capable of adjusting to economic obstacles and taking advantage of opportunities.
- Bolster community involvement and services through partnerships with existing community systems such as libraries, schools, and recreational facilities.
- Look for opportunities to augment local capacity by hiring regional positions or job sharing by local governments to gain economies of scale.
- Identify linkages between businesses, economic development organizations, and resources available through university systems, research centers, and industry associations.

### **Strategy 5.2**

Develop and implement a procedure to consistently assess the regional economy and strategically adapt to changing economic circumstances.

#### **Actions**

- Work with an expanded list of stakeholders to be part of the regional process, involving communities, sectors, and individuals that have not traditionally participated in these processes.
- Design a system of metrics and measurables that will assist regional leadership in assessing, managing, and maximizing results, as well as recalibrating regional economic development investment strategies.
- Convene economic development practitioners from across the region quarterly or semiannually to brainstorm, revise, and prioritize a list of regionally significant projects.
- Host an annual business summit where business owners, employees and consumers can interact with elected officials, suggest improvements to the business climate, identify networking opportunities and growth strategies, and spread awareness of local offerings, potentially with breakout sessions for specific industry clusters.

## **GOAL 6: SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Objective: Our region has modernized utilities and systems capable of supporting the current and future industry needs.**

### **Strategy 6.1**

Promote development of efficient and resilient infrastructure, utilities, and systems capable of supporting the current and future industry needs.

#### **Actions**

- Identify and prioritize projects of regional importance, and survey regional partners annually to develop a project list and convene a conversation about how to ensure these projects support resilience and are coordinated across the region.
- Conduct an inventory of potential traditional and non-traditional funding for infrastructural needs available from state and federal sources.
- Encourage investment in water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure by supporting economic development projects that produce jobs in these sectors.
- Increase the capacity and resources available to support grant writing and technical project development for infrastructure projects.
- Pursue growth policies and regulations to support the efficient use of existing water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure.
- Support investment in the region's ports and freight infrastructure to provide more efficient access to customers and suppliers.
- Support transportation partners and investments in multi-modal forms of transportation, with a focus on improvements and transit that reduces vehicle miles traveled, improves public transit, and promotes active transportation.

### **Strategy 6.2**

Support sustainable development and adaptive reuse of existing commercial properties.

#### **Actions**

- Encourage the development of well-connected, dense, mixed-use communities and neighborhoods.
- Redevelop underutilized properties and increase the competitiveness of blighted areas, particularly in downtown and historic districts.
- Encourage the assessment, clean-up and redevelopment of old commercial and industrial sites and promote smart growth methods when constructing new sites for future redevelopment.
- Develop approaches to leverage reinvestment by commercial property owners, especially absentee landlords, and private investment.
- Work with counties and towns to develop "shovel-ready" sites so that there is opportunity for businesses to expand or relocate to the region.
- Promote flexible land use policies and regulations allowing higher densities and wider mixture of uses in redevelopment areas and town centers.

### Strategy 6.3

Expand the reach and increase the upload/download speeds of broadband internet service throughout the region.

#### Actions

- Convene stakeholders and partners to continue to draw attention to the challenges and opportunities for broadband expansion and adoption in the region.
- Ensure accurate mapping of broadband speeds across the region.
- Support efforts to provide equitable access by monitoring affordability of access and encouraging internet service providers to participate in programs that subsidize costs for low income households.
- Expand local engagement in broadband development through Broadband Action Teams in each county to define project areas that would be good candidates for grants.
- Engage with Broadband Action Teams in each county to define project areas that would be good candidates for grants.
- Partner with communities and Internet Service Providers to extend infrastructure into unserved and underserved communities.
- Survey local “tech” employers to identify current regulatory shortcomings or infrastructural needs for business relocation and expansion.

### Strategy 6.4

Support development and investment in a resilient and reliable multi-modal transportation system that connects residents, workers, tourists, and businesses within and outside the region.

#### Actions

- Ensure transportation improvements connect households to quality jobs, healthcare, and education.
- Support the development of regional park & ride commute options.
- Work with communities to expand the presence of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations along priority corridors.
- Inventory key bike and pedestrian corridors and rank the investments required to improve pedestrian amenities.
- Invest in existing and new transit service to employment opportunities.
- Increase regional air service options for travel and freight.
- Encourage business development and expansion in areas of the region with existing transit services.

# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

## OVERVIEW

The evaluation framework is the tool that is used to assess the district's progress in working toward the goals outlined in the regional CEDS. In addition to the action items listed under each strategy, outcomes and impact are also measured using the eight forms of community capital.

The CEDS is reviewed annually by the committee and submitted to EDA. The review serves as a performance report. In response to the findings of the evaluation, the CEDS may be adjusted by SEWEDA under the guidance of the CEDS Strategy Committee. This will allow the CEDS to be flexible and responsive to the economic development needs of the region.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

An important component of implementing the Strategic Direction and Action Plan is identifying performance measures to evaluate the progress of the proposed strategies and actions in achieving the region's economic development goals. While it may not be possible to fully quantify the impacts of the proposed actions, several metrics can be helpful in evaluating their effectiveness.

The CEDS committee measures the overall success of its economic development efforts through new and retained jobs, and new investment in the region. Performance measures will include:

### GOAL 1

- Development of a comprehensive growth strategy
- Inventory of resources completed and gaps identified
- Response rate to input opportunities
- Number of business clients assisted by service providers
- Increase in export capacity
- Business-friendly regulations and legislation
- Number of business licenses issued
- Diverse business owner demographics

### GOAL 2

- Availability of grants or other incentives that support workforce development
- Number of trainings for employers for support of employing non-traditional employees
- Number of new certificate and degree programs to meet emerging needs
- Graduates of career and workforce programs
- Number of jobs created and retained
- Creation of partnerships and programs with local educators
- Annual assessment of high-demand jobs and specific skills

### GOAL 3

- Direct technical assistance provided to businesses
- Amount of capital formed and investment identified into new businesses
- Number of funding options available to small businesses
- Amount of business support funding leveraged
- Development of coworking spaces
- Development and distribution of a list of business incentives and resources

## GOAL 4

- Number of new marketing and promotion efforts
- Increase in available childcare options
- Number of working families served by childcare
- Number of new single and multi-family housing units developed
- Housing Affordability Index
- Increase in private and public community asset investment
- Investment in infrastructure development for recreation tourism
- Arts and cultural collaborations
- Number of public events in downtown and commercial districts

## GOAL 5

- Alignment of regional entrepreneurial support organizations
- Development of regional economy assessment procedure
- Increase in community involvement and services
- Creation of annual business summit

## GOAL 6

- Investment in new infrastructure
- Land transactions on industrially-zoned properties
- Development of buildable land capacity analysis
- Total assessed improvement value for industrial lands
- Industrial vacancy and absorption
- Connectivity meets or exceeds WA State broadband goals
- Number of new fiber-to-the-home connections
- Investment in underutilized and blighted properties
- Development of “shovel-ready” sites
- Adoption of flexible land use policies and regulations

## EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process involves the CEDS Strategy Committee and other stakeholders involved in CEDS planning and implementation. Quantitative and qualitative measures are used to gauge progress towards the CEDS goals overall or towards the goals of specific projects or initiatives. The evaluation framework drives successful implementation and guides action plan adjustments along the way.

The evaluation focuses generally on how well the region is doing relative to the long-term vision and goals of the CEDS. These measures reflect long-term structural changes to the economy and will therefore only show small changes on a year-to-year basis.

