



PIERCE COUNTY · WASHINGTON

ECONOMIC STIMULUS REPORT

July 31, 2010

Implementation Progress

Pierce County Executive's Office
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Pierce County Economic Stimulus Report Implementation Progress

KEY TO STATUS CODES



Complete and/or no action needed

IP


In process; substantial work has been accomplished


CI

Continuing initiative with ongoing work; no anticipated "completion" date.

No

No action taken to date; when no further action will be taken, it is noted in the description.

Status Code	Stimulus Recommendation
	<p>Development Review Fee Structure</p> <p>1. Level of service is critical. We do not recommend a fee reduction or moratorium that would affect predictability or timeliness of permitting.</p> <p>This item required no action; advice received during our research for the Stimulus Report was provided for informational purposes.</p>

<p>IP</p>	<p>charges is collected at closing allowing for the creation of more new lots.</p> <p>Please see #6 above.</p> <p>9. Pierce County should review the connection charge structure to ensure it is providing the revenues needed for the utility and is more easily understandable for the customer.</p> <p>Public Works and Utilities (PWU) is reviewing connection charge structures in light of recent rate increases and planned expansions at the treatment plant to ensure capacity improvements are fully funded and economic development can be continued. As of the end of July the impact of the new structure has not been ascertained.</p>
<p>CI</p> <p>No</p> <p>CI</p>	<p>Development Code Consolidation</p> <p>10. A rigorous review of Pierce County’s development regulations is needed.</p> <p>The Phase II Code Consolidation proposal was taken to Land Use Advisory Commissions and had its first Planning Commission hearing in July. The proposal is expected to be forwarded for Council consideration in August.</p> <p>11. Discrete parameters for the development of community plans should be defined.</p> <p>There are currently no plans in development; this issue would be addressed if a plan is proposed.</p> <p>12. Code and regulation changes should be proactively distributed.</p> <p>Information is continuously made available on PALS and PWU and the County’s websites. Outreach is also occurring for groups most impacted by regulatory changes both before and after regulations are implemented or changed. A Commercial Real Estate Workshop will take place September 14th, 2010.</p>
<p></p> <p>CI</p> <p>IP</p>	<p>Platting and Subdivision Issues</p> <p>13. Establish a temporary policy in PCC 18F to increase the amount of time a plat can be extended from one to three years and allow the extension by administrative approval.</p> <p>The Council granted a pilot program that provided pipeline projects an extended maturity date. The majority of projects that applied were given the extension. One hundred and eighty-two projects received two year extensions.</p> <p>14. Create a new chapter in Pierce County Code, Title 18F, establishing a simplified standard for industrial land division.</p> <p>The EDD should have a final recommendation before the end of the 3rd Quarter of 2010.</p> <p>15. In an effort to prolong the timeframe required to pay taxes on assessed values, Pierce County should study a potential equivalent to allow developers to record only groups of parcels in an approved plat, rather than having to record the entire plat.</p> <p>The proposal moving collection of sewer connection charges to the point of building permit issuance on individual lots should dramatically reduce the carrying costs of subdivisions</p>

and allow more lots to come to market at a lower cost. This is nearing completion. Recording changes would require policy changes. Additional input has been processed and a proposed ordinance is being finalized.

Workforce Training and Education

Please note that Pierce County is not the primary point of contact for Workforce Training and Education programs. The recommendations of this report were forwarded to the Director of the Workforce-Central Business Connection (WCBC), the local workforce entity for consideration; for purposes of this report, most recommendations are considered complete with this action.

No

16. A one-stop resource for businesses to access workforce training and education should be established.

With decreased funding at the technical and community colleges and at the State universities, this resource was not addressed. The role is adequately filled by the Economic Development Board, the staffs of the various municipal economic development groups, and Workforce-Central. No additional resource is anticipated at this time, and no further action will be taken.



17. K-12 students should receive information and support for high demand occupations and careers in Pierce County.

No action taken beyond recommendation to WCBC.

No

18. A workforce training broker should be implemented to provide a seamless delivery system for workforce training.

This position has not been created and there are currently no plans to do so. However, EDD staff acts very much in this capacity. Staff participates in Forum educational events and works closely with the training coordinators at WCBC. Using the extensive Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) database, training opportunities are easily and readily transmitted to Pierce County businesses.

When EDD works with businesses, staff works with owners or managers to identify training needs and develop custom solutions.



19. A study of apprentice utilization programs for County funded public works projects should be undertaken.

PWU has a training/apprenticeship program for civil engineers. Four participants are enrolled. The program has been in effect for several years and will most likely continue.

PWU is also exploring the possibility of an apprenticeship program at the sewer treatment facility, where it is difficult to find trained employees.



20. Pierce County should include increased funding for the Job Skills Program (JSP) in its 2009 legislative priorities.

Budgetary constraints required that this recommendation be tabled until such time as the state budget improves.



21. Pierce County should consider establishing its own “mini JSP program” to benefit County businesses, specifically targeted to employee advancement (incumbent worker training), employee retention (those at risk of being laid off), and the attraction of high wage companies to the County.

This will be considered for recommendation as a Supplemental Request when the budget situation improves and if businesses request it on an ongoing basis. The EDD supported Workforce Central creation of a grant fund for incumbent worker training and participated as a member of the selection committee which awarded \$450,000 in training dollars to 61 Pierce County businesses. A total of 1,321 employees will benefit from the training as a result of the awards.



22. Pierce County should include the removal of the job growth requirement under the Washington Customized Training Program in its 2009, legislative priorities.

This will be considered when budget restrictions are removed.



23. The County should pursue a “Live and Work in Pierce County” campaign to increase resident awareness of job vacancies in high demand fields in Pierce County.

This will be considered when budget restrictions are removed.



24. We recommend a more proactive engagement with the K-12 system; the Malcolm Baldrige Assessment might be the tool for engagement.

No action taken beyond recommendation to WCBC.

No

25. Pierce County should provide opportunities to create student innovation; an inventor’s contest could generate interest and spark excitement among the K-12, college, and business communities.

Numerous contests were evaluated and determined to be too expensive to implement. The plethora of contests in use and available makes another program “just one more program”. Staff will continue to monitor these programs and support those that can have an impact on the economic environment of Pierce County.



26. Pierce County should encourage efforts by the K-12 system to expose kids to the work environment through career development programs and work internship opportunities.

This recommendation was taken under advisement by the Director of Workforce-Central Business Connection. Programs similar to this have been encouraged by the Executive’s Office (e.g., high school intern programs) for all Executive Departments.






27. Encourage school districts in Pierce County to increase use of “Navigation 101,” life skills and planning.





No action taken beyond recommendation to WCBC.



28. Determine if additional Industry Skill Panel opportunities exist and support the creation of additional panels to support important local industry clusters.

No action taken beyond recommendation to WCBC.

<p>CI</p> <p>CI</p> <p>No</p> <p>CI</p>	<p>Washington State Tax Incentives</p> <p>29. The County’s legislative agenda should continue to support targeted incentives that keep and attract corporate headquarters and manufacturers.</p> <p>This was promoted in the 2010 legislative session. Budget difficulties at the state level made it impossible to extend incentive programs. The EDD is currently formulating its agenda for the 2011 legislative session.</p> <p>30. Reform existing incentives by revising the formula used to calculate the High Technology B&O Tax Credit and easing or eliminating the requirement to hire employees from the CEZ under the Rural County Sales and Use Tax Deferral/Waiver. This should be a Pierce County priority legislative agenda item.</p> <p>Same as 29 above.</p> <p>31. Pierce County should support the elimination of local-option B&O taxes.</p> <p>This is a very sensitive issue with local jurisdictions that have a local-option B&O tax. There was no organized opposition to the tax and therefore no opportunity to support this issue.</p> <p>32. The County needs to both “play defense” with the incentives we have and develop a portfolio of new tax incentives that attract and keep innovative companies.</p> <p>Same as 29 above.</p>
<p></p> <p></p>	<p>Buy Local Program</p> <p>33. The County Council should make a definitive disposition of the existing HUB Program- it should either be reinstated or terminated.</p> <p>The HUB Program was eliminated and no further action is required.</p> <p>34. The County could research the value of a Buy Local Program.</p> <p>The advantages, disadvantages and legalities were reviewed by Budget and Finance and EDD. The result was the 2009 Greater Pierce County Purchasing Forum to assist Pierce County businesses obtain more contract opportunities. Due to its success, this event is scheduled again in for October 1st of this year and will be an annual event.</p>
<p></p>	<p>Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT)</p> <p>35. Pierce County should lobby for Governor’s Request Legislation to provide a dedicated funding stream for CERB, permit more than one LIFT per county and infuse more money into the program, while at the same time ensuring the PWTF is preserved.</p> <p>The LIFT legislation now allows more than one per county. The local legislative delegation is well aware of the limited availability of infrastructure funding and knows Pierce County’s desires for dedicated funding. The County supported extension of the LIFT legislation in the 2010 State legislative session. Commerce is currently looking at consolidation efforts of</p>

<p>CI</p> 	<p>various infrastructure financing mechanisms. PWU and EDD will comment as appropriate.</p> <p>36. Work to ensure that funds raised in Pierce County stay here.</p> <p>Pierce County was aggressive seeking funding for local transportation projects. As a result, HOV lanes were extended in Pierce County that had not been in the original funding announcements. Pierce County is also taking a very aggressive role at the Puget Sound Regional Council in the Transportation 2040 Plan to ensure that Pierce County gets its “fair share” of investments.</p> <p>37. Pursue EDA funding for Pierce County projects for the 2009 grant cycle.</p> <p>Pierce County applications (cities/towns) were supported by Pierce County; no application was made due to a recent award.</p>
	<p>Empowerment Zones</p> <p>38. Support Tacoma’s efforts to extend the Renewal Community designation in order to preserve a valuable incentive.</p> <p>Letters of support were and are offered on an as-needed basis. No further action is required.</p>
<p>CI</p>  	<p>The Rising Demand for Transit</p> <p>39. Pierce County and its partners at Pierce Transit and the City of Sumner should continue to work with the business community to seek a creative solution that meets transit service demand in North Sumner.</p> <p>Route 409 was established that provided transit service into the Sumner Industrial area due to collaborative efforts of the EDD and City of Sumner working with Pierce Transit. No further action is needed.</p> <p>40. The Council should assist Pierce Transit in County-wide solutions to transit needs; facilitate individual communities working together instead of each jurisdiction independently asking for similar service.</p> <p>EDD staff participated in Pierce Transit’s strategic planning process. With the severe budget restriction Pierce Transit is facing, service will be affected in many jurisdictions. The need to match routes with employment centers was emphasized during these meetings (and this recommendation made it into the final recommendations.) Pierce Transit is taking the lead on this effort.</p> <p>41. In unincorporated Pierce County, staff should work to reinforce the coordination between economic development, land use, and transit planning.</p> <p>Staff attended Pierce Transit’s Spring Planners Summit to provide evaluation and feedback regarding three draft service concepts to help shape transit system to meet challenges of the future. Issues of economic development, land use and transit planning will be ongoing considerations for PALS and EDD.</p>

No

Economic Development Fund

42. As budget pressures ease, Pierce County should look at establishing an Economic Development Reserve Fund, with very strict parameters on funding use.

No action taken due to budgetary restrictions. This issue may be looked at again in the future when budget restraints are eliminated and if further need is identified.