

Working Group 1

Growth Management Act & Land Use Issues

1. **Regional Cooperation & Participation** in drafting a **Unified Comprehensive Plan** to use as a true guide for development within the County – Establish and use **Coalitions**
 - A. Land use/transportation (sub area planning)
 - B. Water - Infrastructure
 - C. Funding
 - D. Education/Labor Force Training
2. County Office to **Market** the County resources/tourism/recreation.
3. Establish **Statewide Rural Caucus** (Counties, cities, schools, fire districts, civic org., etc)
 - A. Change Laws to **benefit Rural Areas**
 - B. Funding for **rural issues**
4. Explore **“Port”** opportunities
 - A. Existing Ports
 - B. Airports
 - C. **“Others”** (PDAs)

Working Group 2

Education & Workforce Development

Workforce Training

- ◆ Early Childhood Education and Literacy. To be truly successful you must train people from the beginning in what it takes to hold a job.
- ◆ Soft skills (dependability, punctuality, social skills, dress, cleanliness, etc) must be taught as well as technical skills.

Mentoring Programs

- ◆ Mentoring programs between students and successful members of the business community are very effective. People respond to *one-on-one support*.
- ◆ People need *extra support* going to school if they are the first in their family to attempt it (higher ed.).

Integration

- ◆ All *Lewis County agencies* and *businesses* must join together in a partnership promoting programs that further community goals.
- ◆ It really does take the *whole village* to raise a child to become a productive adult.

Public Transportation

- ◆ This is a big *barrier* to education and employment. We need a *better system* in place so people can get to proper resources.
- ◆ This system needs to be *affordable* and *convenient*.

Work with your Representatives

- ◆ Get ***laws*** in place that allow ***flexibility*** in education so that students wanting to enter the Trades can do so without having to meet the educational level of those entering college.
- ◆ Law makers want to work for their supporters, but ***they can't read your minds.***

Strategic Planning

Decide where we want to go and what industry we want in the county, ***train*** our students to fill jobs to be created, then go out and ***market*** Lewis County to the industries we want. Don't wait for them to come to us. That way we ***have control*** over our own development.

Working Group 3

Rural Business Development and Tourism

East Lewis Country Strengths

- Natural beauty and awesome views
- Excellent highway
- Mount St Helens and Rainier
- Lakes, outdoor activities
- Forest Service resources
- Spirit of independence
- Low traffic congestion

Weaknesses

- Few cultural attractions
- Poor job situation, low wages
- Lack of infrastructure--sewers, water
- Drug (Meth) problems
- Few opportunities for farms & ranches
 - Commodity prices
 - Doesn't cover cost of production

Gaps to Prosperity

- Sustainability
- Government policies favor larger business
 - Takes as much effort to loan \$10M as \$1K
 - Bureaucrats rewarded on how many jobs created
- Lack of infrastructure, especially water & sewers

- Labor intensive crops from farming
- Poor access to technology
- Lack of unifying strategy or theme
- Chicken and egg problem
 - No large business to draw people, resources
 - No 4 star restaurants, resorts, attractions

Problems from Gaps

- People and business avoid area due to insufficient infrastructure
- Lack of capital to develop new business
- Farms & ranches becoming unsustainable
- Education needed to start business
- Lack of centralized development information
- Citizens don't know what to do so nothing gets done
- Inconsistent government policies

Recommendations

- Determine way to maintain rural culture and identity while moving ahead
 - Include in the East Lewis County Strategic plan
- Pull Community together--Develop Marketing theme so East Lewis county becomes known for a focused thing like Napa Valley=Wines
 - Need to develop a East Lewis County (Theme or brand) focus--or develop a lifestyle concept/clean living
- Help existing and new businesses survive and thrive
 - Retention and expansion business program for rural business
- Band Community and Business together to get government to implement infrastructure improvements
 - Use Win-Win strategy, vice win-lose principle
 - Identify and document the type of improvements needed
 - Get involved in the CEDS and the comprehensive planning process

Final Recommendations

- **Collaborate with existing resources and tie to the Chamber strategic plan:**
 - **Use Washington State Business incubator program (POC Lincoln Ferris 206-527-3347)**
 - **Use Centralia College as central partner**
 - **USDA has rural housing and sewer development resources per www.rurdev.usda.gov**
 - **E.g. can get 25% grant for renewable energy**
 - **Working capital**
 - **Value added agriculture products**
 - **Use Lending Network for business loans**
 - **POC is Tani Gunn 360-740-6960 in Chehalis**
- **Improve business networking**
 - **The Chamber or some entity needs to bring the business community together for greater collaboration**
 - **A Chamber sponsored educational and information exchange to serve as a resource for all East Lewis County businesses –serve as the universal connector**
- **Create incentives and publicize success stories**
 - **Market our own businesses**
 - **Develop recognition programs**
 - **Quarterly introductions and welcome**
- **Seek non-polluting businesses like Info Technology or R+D.**
 - **High tech incubator and community outreach**
 - **Study how to reuse existing site**

Working Group 4

Social Services, Community Support, and Demographics

Strengths & Assets

- ♦ White Pass Community Service Coalition
- ♦ Bus Service
- ♦ Centralia College
- ♦ The Chronicle
- ♦ The East County Journal
- ♦ School System
- ♦ Senior Services
- ♦ Drug and Alcohol Services
- ♦ WorkSource Lewis County
- ♦ Morton General Hospital
- ♦ Community Facilities

Gaps

- ♦ Limited *job shadowing* opportunities
- ♦ *Unavailable* youth activities & employment
- ♦ Lack of *communication or coordination* among service agencies
- ♦ Information technology
- ♦ Transportation
- ♦ Diversity & cultural divide
- ♦ Housing
- ♦ Lack of news – County wide coverage

Outcomes from Gaps

NOTE: Career Plan, Drop out rates, Lack of vision/motivation, leave community

- ♦ **Drugs & Crime**, breakdown of family unit, teen pregnancy, dependency of community and federal services
- ♦ Slow **change** and **economic** improvement, unmet needs/unused services
- ♦ Less access to **local resources**, less educational opportunities, cannot work from home, no job availability
- ♦ **Accessibility** to jobs and schools
- ♦ **Stereotyping** communities of color
- ♦ Limits **diversification** of workforce
- ♦ Children **cannot** learn
- ♦ Lack of **affordable** housing
- ♦ Higher **dependency** in Social Services
- ♦ **Limits** cultural & diverse communities

Recommendations

- ♦ Establish an **advisory committee** between school districts, business and community based organizations
- ♦ Youth Activities **Grant Writer**
- ♦ Contact youth organizations to establish **after school** and **summer programs**
- ♦ **Resource directory** for East Lewis County
- ♦ More events that foster **unity** among agencies
- ♦ Petition **community leaders**
- ♦ Identify and invite **diversity leaders**
- ♦ **Cultural** competency training
- ♦ Seek **outside help** from Federal & State agencies
- ♦ Invite **media** to broaden their coverage