

BURIEN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIALOG

Facilitators' Report on the results, themes and priorities that emerged from the Dialog
City of Burien Economic Development Dialog on September 27, 2014.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIALOG

The City of Burien held the Economic Development Dialog on September 27, 2014. The purpose of the Economic Development Dialog was to *provide "a unique opportunity for community members to provide the City with direct and invaluable feedback on Economic Development priorities."* A further purpose was to have the Dialog serve as a 'laboratory' to inform future community outreach and engagement efforts. The Dialog accomplished both purposes.

The City Council developed Goals, Sub-goals and Actions for economic development and worked with City staff to provide these as the basis for discussion at the event. The Dialog focused on two things: (1) giving people the opportunity to speak openly with each other, City staff, and elected officials about their perspectives on the current and future economy of Burien. (2) As indicated in the title of the event, emphasis was placed on how to *develop* economic health.

Themes Drawn from the Dialog

- Burien is a great place.
- Build a stronger, diversified economy – but of the right kind.
- Burien needs better transportation linkages.
- Arts and culture are important.
- Community engagement: it's good, but it can get better.
- Quality schools are important.

Suggested Funding Priorities identified by Participants

The following list was compiled from small workgroups of participants during the Dialog.

Goal A: Attract and retain businesses through an active business retention and recruitment program

1. Develop a business retention and recruitment program that addresses the following:
 - What can the city do to help Burien businesses prosper?
 - What would entice businesses to locate in Burien?
 - What kinds of businesses would citizens like to see in Burien and in their neighborhoods?
 - What kinds of businesses/attractions would entice regional and local consumers to visit and shop in Burien?
 - Track business proposals received by City staff, including who applies, whether they open a business, and if not, why not.

Sub-Goal A1: Pursue major developments that have a positive, large-scale impact on Burien's' economic base.

6. Explore options for attracting hotels to Burien, including co-location with conference, training, or performing arts facility. Identify sites, constraints, opportunities, and needed resources.

Sub-Goal A2: Identify, support and expand Burien's base on small businesses that contribute to the culture, diversity and resiliency of our community.

13. Explore what city staff can do to support or provide assistance to small businesses. Make it easier to start a business, and become more friendly and supportive of existing businesses/property owners/developers.

Goal B: Enhance the branding and marketing of Burien as a family friendly community, built on our economic, cultural and natural assets.

14. Develop a Burien Brand.
15. Amplify marketing opportunities and assess community assets including; marketing Seahurst Park as a destination; and capitalizing on proximity to SeaTac airport and the City of Seattle; and, Burien's ethnic diversity.
17. Support a Shop Burien campaign such as expanding public markets, including the farmers market, and showcase local restaurants and local arts. Review and assess approaches in other cities.

Goal C: Strengthen the customer base in the City of Burien

Sub-Goal C1: Support Working Families

25. Actively support the Highline School District

Sub-Goal C2: Improve multi-modal transportation availability and choices.

27. Work with King County and other regional entities to improve and expand pedestrian, bike, mass transit and other non-automobile modes of transportation and ensure inequities are addressed.

Sub-Goal C3: Explore options to create more type of wealth and enhance livelihood opportunities.

29. Explore options for community ownership and financing in economic development projects in the City.



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Summary Report

Economic Development Dialog

PURPOSE AND GENESIS OF THE DIALOG

The City of Burien held the Economic Development Dialog (Dialog) on September 27th at the Burien Community Center from 8:00 am to noon. The purpose of the Dialog, as noted on the [City website](#), was to *provide “a unique opportunity for community members to provide the City with direct and invaluable feedback on Economic Development priorities.”* A further purpose was to have the Dialog serve as a ‘laboratory’ to inform future community outreach and involvement efforts. The Dialog accomplished both purposes.

Throughout the summer, the City Council, City Manager and staff worked on goals, sub-goals and actions. This overall plan was developed to guide decisions, and to form the foundation of a strategic approach to budgeting. City Council members decided they would like to hear from the larger Burien community about the goals, sub-goals and actions related to economic development. The City Manager and staff worked with the City Council to plan and execute the Dialog event.

Just prior to the Dialog, on September 27, the City Council developed and summarized draft [Goals, Sub-goals and Actions](#) for economic development. City staff prepared a worksheet on these, which guided discussion at the event. Participants at the event worked together to suggest priorities for funding from among the draft Goals, Sub-goals and Actions. In addition to this solid outcome, participants provided a wealth of information that will be of use to the City Council and City staff as a solid economic development plan is built.

The Dialog focused on two things: (1) giving people the opportunity to speak openly with each other, City staff, and elected officials about their perspectives on the current and future economy of Burien. (2) As indicated in the title of the event, emphasis was placed on how to *develop* economic health.

METHODS / APPROACH

Outreach & Attendance

A marketing plan was developed to announce and publicize the Dialog. The City reports that over 8,000 specific invitations were made. Media and other generalized outreach made another 5,000 impressions. Some highlights of the outreach include:

- The Highline times published a column written by Andrea Reay of Discover Burien describing and promoting the event.
- The B-Town Blog covered the Dialog both before and after September 27.
- Discover Burien sent 674 invitations to its membership.
- Flyers were posted in both Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Two City interns went door-to-door to about 24 strategic businesses to place flyers.

More detail can be found on outreach in Appendix B.

Discover Burien handled the registration, and reported over 100 had registered. 86 people actually attended the event on the warm and sunny Saturday morning of September 27. The new Connect Burien website was available to those who could not attend, but wanted share their perspectives on Economic Development.

An Agenda Designed to Invite Dialog and Direction

The agenda for the event is found in Appendix A. Several approaches and methods were provided for people to interact with one another and with City personnel. This design was done specifically to generate conversations and input in a setting different from a standard public meeting or hearing. The Agenda had four blocks of time allocated, each encouraging a different type of interaction.

'Build the Boat'

As people arrived, they were greeted by City staff, elected officials, and Discover Burien representatives. Coffee and snacks were provided. Each participant was provided with a name tag, which indicated which table group they would be a part of.

Participants were invited to look at, and then add to, an image of a boat (see image to the right), which functioned as a visual "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats" exercise. With each portion of the boat representing a strength, a weakness, an opportunity or a threat, Participants were invited to add to the boat, using 'sticky notes' to indicate their perspectives, observations and knowledge about the economic future of Burien.



- **Where are we headed?** – *What direction should we take with our economy? What is our vision for economic development and health? What are our opportunities?*
- **Where are there holes in the boat** – *What about our current economy may need to be 'patched up' in order to keep moving forward? What are our weaknesses?*
- **What might rock our boat?** – *What might come up that could knock us off our course, or even overturn the boat? What are the threats to economic health?*
- **What moves us forward?** – *What provides the power to move us ahead? What are our strengths?*

Tables of Neighbors

Registrants were assigned seats at various tables. The City Council, Manager and staff had all suggested that the event 'mix it up' so people could meet new neighbors and hear different perspectives. After people were seated, they were asked to raise their hand if they were sitting with someone they didn't know well. Virtually all participants raised their hands. In addition to worksheets and other materials, participants were invited to review a list of practices that would help all have a lively and respectful conversation. The tables of neighbors functioned as small groups at three different points in the meeting, working consecutively on goals A, B and C.

Dot Exercise

For each Goal, participants individually placed blue dots on the action (or actions) they felt were important for the future of Burien's economic growth and health. They could use all their dots on one action, or spread them out. Discussion followed, with all encouraged to learn as much as they could about the choices of others around the table. Then participants were asked, based on their discussions with others at the table, to use green dots to indicate the actions they wanted the City Council to *fund* in the coming budget cycle. It is important to note that actions prioritized for funding were often different from the actions discussed at the beginning of the table conversations. There are several reasons for this: 1) Participants recognized that some important issues are best left to citizens themselves, or are not necessarily the purview of City government; 2) Discussion with others at the table caused some changes in thinking; 3) There were fewer green dots (funding) than blue dots (importance). This emulated the situation the City Council faces in their decision making, when important topics must be prioritized given available funds.

Plenary Discussions

The group met as a whole at different times throughout the event. First, everyone was greeted and received a 'snap shot' of Burien's demographic and economic trends as of 2014. Second, the table groups reported to one another during plenary, after the small group discussion. Third, the event closed with an open discussion, with people free to offer insights and ideas to and for the full group.

RESULTS: THEMES FROM THE DIALOG

1. BURIEN IS A GREAT PLACE

People in Burien are passionate about their town. The City has an abundance of character, assets and opportunity, coupled with an excellent and central location. Identify and brand what is great about Burien, and get the word out!

Strengths

- People at the meeting really appreciate living in Burien. It has a small-town feel, a sense of being a distinct place, and a genuine 'community feel'.
- Burien has many different kinds of people and communities. The mix and diversity of ethnic communities is a richly appreciated characteristic of the city.
- It is understood that this mix also means there are a variety of cultural interpretations of actions and issues and this is to be embraced.
- Housing is perceived to be affordable here. Other day-to-day costs are perceived to be less than in other nearby communities.
- Burien is in a central location, a beautiful location, a location with ease of access to large employers.
- Burien is beautiful: parks, trees and the shoreline are some of the attributes.
- Seahurst Park is stunning and unique.

Weaknesses

- Residents understand and experience Burien as unique, memorable and worthy of a special trip. Many believe the City is not perceived this way by others.

Opportunities

- Coordinate with nearby communities – it doesn't make sense to compete with our neighboring cities for some attributes/markets/customers.
- Make our character and our assets part of the Burien 'brand'.

Threats

- Loss of home-town, small-town character.
- Preparing for a mix of housing types and housing affordability is difficult. Regional pressures need to be balanced with local concerns on housing.

2. BUILD A STRONGER, DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY– BUT OF THE RIGHT KIND

A strong and diverse economy is essential. Existing retail businesses give Burien a particular identity and the small town feel many of us love. Existing businesses need local customers, need to attract customers from out of town and need tangible support to thrive. There is untapped opportunity for business in Burien. People have many ideas, some conflicting, about the type of businesses and development that would best serve Burien and could be attracted to Burien.

Strengths

- Location and proximity to major employers.
- A City willing to work for economic development.

Weaknesses

- Some local businesses may not have the where-with-all to withstand even minor disruptions.
- A clear plan for exactly what kind of diversified economic base is both possible and desirable.
- Lack of market analysis of what kinds of business development opportunities make sense. We might be able to build it – but will they come?
- The social services "net" appears to have holes in it – though this is not unique to Burien.

Opportunities

- Work with Discover Burien to find and build opportunities.
- Assist local businesses to be and stay viable, and to grow. Be particularly attentive to the dreams, innovations and potential for business growth in the diverse communities that constitute a large portion of Burien's residents.
- Work with adjacent and nearby cities and unincorporated areas to determine how to leverage each others' existing and future business opportunities.
- Look at ways to co-locate facilities, businesses, and attractions. Explore public-private partnerships, and other non-traditional methods of attracting businesses and economic activity in Burien, and retaining it.

Threats

- Economic development that eclipses the small town feel.
- Economic development that does not match a vision people develop for the City.
- Currently it appears many people shop outside of Burien. But does Burien want to attract the 'big box' stores that might bring local people and revenue back into Burien?

3. BURIEN NEEDS BETTER TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES

Bus service and Rapid Ride are available at the Transit Center, but additional cuts in service are expected. Light rail and the Sounder serve Burien, but are located outside the City; many believe they are not easy to access. Pedestrians and bicyclist may be underserved for both commuting and recreational purposes. The City is still car-dependent at a time when commute times are rising. This makes Burien less attractive to those who work at major employers, even those employers who are relatively close at hand.

Strengths

- A transportation plan is in place.¹
- Location.

Weaknesses

- Location is central – but as yet underserved by a true multi-modal transit system.
- Sustainable funding.
- Coordination with other governments and transportation agencies; it seems Burien gets left out of the discussion.

Opportunities

- Growing congestion could force this issue.
- Alternative forms of transportation may become more prevalent. What if Burien attracted a purveyor of electric cars?

Threats

- Continued loss of bus service.
- Reduced State and Federal funding and coordination.
- Cost of public transportation for underserved populations.

4. ARTS AND CULTURE ARE IMPORTANT

The arts and culture are important to the attractiveness, identity and future economy of Burien. Incorporate a vibrant arts and culture component into an overall economic development plan. Be both realistic and visionary in this effort.

Strengths

¹ The [City of Burien Transit Plan from 2012](#) provides more information on these topics.

- People have a vision for what an art-filled and culture-oriented Burien could be.
- Burien already has a strong community both doing and supporting the arts – more than in other cities of its size. The Hi-liners Musical Theatre is an example.

Weaknesses

- Lack of support; lack of knowledge of the impact arts can have on a community and Burien in particular.

Opportunities

- The arts can be an economic engine. Art is 'place-making', giving a location an identity. The arts and culture could be part of Burien's 'brand'.
- Consider co-locating an economic venue with other facilities that are needed for the community (e.g., expanded community center) or for economic development (e.g., a hotel).

Threats

- Lack of funding; lack of recognition that the arts and culture are important.
- Competition from nearby locales; this may make it hard to market Burien as a center for arts and culture.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: IT'S GOOD BUT IT CAN BE BETTER

Burien is full of people who care deeply about the City and are involved in proactively defining the future. The City helps with this, as does Discover Burien and other Burien-centric organizations. Euro-Americans are most frequently involved in traditional and visible engagement and governance in Burien. Other groups are underrepresented and/or exercise their influence in different ways.

Strengths

- Burien is served by the B-Town Blog, a local and unique source of community news and connection.
- Discover Burien connects many people and businesses with opportunities and with each other.
- The City is making progress helping people access and understand all kinds of information about City government and Burien as a whole. The City appears genuine in its desire to enhance communication.
- Many people are friendly, outgoing, and willing to engage.

Weaknesses

- Communication and engagement is complex. The best methods for reaching people vary according to age, socio-economics and interest. The availability of and competency with technological resources can be an impediment.
- Those who are from minority and/or immigrant communities are less engaged than those of Euro-American decent and those with long-established ties in Burien.

Opportunities

- More forums on important topics such as this Dialog.
- Consider districts and neighborhoods.

- Seek out communities not currently involved. Find out how the communities wish to be engaged or wish to be communicated with, and then do it.

Threats

- Lack of communication and engagement could further marginalize those who already are or feel disengaged.
- Some communities may not see the value in becoming involved in civic endeavors, given their experience in other countries and locales. Some may fear engagement.

6. QUALITY SCHOOLS ARE IMPORTANT

Quality schools attract people to a location. Some businesses look to the quality of schools prior to settling on a location, as schools are important component of attracting employees. There is no doubt that Highline Public Schools needs support, but it also gets undersold.

Strengths

- Highline Public Schools serve several cities and communities. The fact that it is larger than Burien should provide economies of scale and allow leveraging where possible.
- Some schools in the Highline district have excellent reputations; innovation is occurring.

Weaknesses

- Highline Public Schools as a whole is not perceived as a high-performing district.
- Funding in the Highline district falls behind those districts in more affluent communities.

Opportunities

- An investment in schools will create a stronger community. If successful, results will show up in both attracting and retaining businesses and residents to Burien.
- Options for Burien to support Highline Public Schools abound; a decision needs to be made where, how and how much to invest in both time and resources.

Threats

- Schools do not improve, or fall further behind.

RESULTS: FUNDING PRIORITIES

The following list of suggested funding priorities includes those identified through the small group work done during the Dialog. It should be considered one piece of illustrative information helpful to the City Council as they make decisions about where to focus time, resources, and funds. The full list of draft Goals, Sub-goals and Actions can be found on the [webpage](#) devoted to the Economic Development Dialog.

Goal A: Attract and retain businesses through an active business retention and recruitment program

1. Develop a business retention and recruitment program that addresses the following:
 - What can the city do to help Burien businesses prosper?
 - What would entice businesses to locate in Burien?
 - What kinds of businesses would citizens like to see in Burien and in their neighborhoods?
 - What kinds of businesses/attractions would entice regional and local consumers to visit and shop in Burien?
 - Track business proposals received by City staff, including who applies, whether they open a business, and if not, why not.

Sub-Goal A1: Pursue major developments that have a positive, large-scale impact on Burien's' economic base.

6. Explore options for attracting hotels to Burien, including co-location with conference, training, or performing arts facility. Identify sites, constraints, opportunities, and needed resources.

Sub-Goal A2: Identify, support and expand Burien's base on small businesses that contribute to the culture, diversity and resiliency of our community.

13. Explore what city staff can do to support or provide assistance to small businesses. Make it easier to start a business, and become more friendly and supportive of existing businesses/ property owners / developers.

Goal B: Enhance the branding and marketing of Burien as a family friendly community, built on our economic, cultural and natural assets.

14. Develop a Burien Brand.
15. Amplify marketing opportunities and assess community assets including; marketing Seahurst Park as a destination; and capitalizing on proximity to SeaTac airport and the City of Seattle; and, Burien's ethnic diversity.
17. Support a Shop Burien campaign such as expanding public markets, including the farmers market, and showcase local restaurants and local arts. Review and assess approaches in other cities.

Goal C: Strengthen the customer base in the City of Burien

Sub-Goal C1: Support Working Families

25. Actively support the Highline School District

Sub-Goal C2: Improve multi-modal transportation availability and choices.

27. Work with King County and other regional entities to improve and expand pedestrian, bike, mass transit and other non-automobile modes of transportation and ensure inequities are addressed.

Sub-Goal C3: Explore options to create more type of wealth and enhance livelihood opportunities.

29. Explore options for community ownership and financing in economic development projects in the City.

OBSERVATIONS

Outreach

- Those who speak English as a second language, and people from minority communities were underrepresented at the Dialog. Outreach techniques that are specific and meaningful to these communities could allow the City to reach a larger audience. Discussion with leaders from these communities would provide insights into how to increase participation at City events. It may also yield the type of events – organized or informal – that are best for connecting and gaining insights.
- Burien is using website tools (Connect Burien, unique webpages) and partnerships (Discover Burien) in ways that many cities of a similar size have yet to do. More savvy investment in the use of social media could yield more participation.

Timing / Location

- Choosing a time and location for an event like the Dialog always involves trade-offs. Giving up a Saturday morning may be tough for some; impossible for others. For future events, the City may want to consider a series of meetings. Meetings where the City ‘meets you where you’re at’ can help address the fact that having one meeting, at one time, restricts who can participate. As familiarity with new on-line tools (e.g., Connect Burien) increases, there are many options for inclusion that don’t require the physical presence of participants all at the same time and place.

The Event Itself

- A large number of people reported that they appreciated the attentiveness and openness exhibited by the City at this meeting, and hoped it can become a model for future outreach.
- People also reported appreciating the opportunity to talk with people they had not connected with before, learn new things about their community, and hear alternative views.
- Instructions for the small group work were confusing for many, coupled with some difficulty using the worksheets and dots.
- The number of ways people could have their say was appreciated by many; they also appreciated the fact that the majority of the meeting was given over to discussion by participants.

APPENDIX A – AGENDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIALOG AGENDA

Date / Time: September 27, 2014 - 8:00 am to Noon

Location: Community Center



OBJECTIVES FOR DIALOG

1. Participants **LEARN** about the current economic setting in Burien, and about possible futures
2. Participants review and provide input on **GOALS** for Burien's economy currently under discussion at the City Council
3. Participants give **INPUT** and provide **IDEAS** for the future economic health of Burien
4. **LAB** for new ideas for public outreach and gathering input

8:00	MEET & GREET
8:25	Be seated for opening remarks.
8:30	OPENING Welcome and opening remarks from City official. Review meeting agenda and group discussion norms.
8:45	ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT A high level snapshot of Burien's economy.
9:00	SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTIONS
9:05	FIRST SMALL GROUP WORK Suggest priorities for City to work on goals and actions.
9:30	VISUAL REPORT-OUT Participants put their posters on the wall. These should be grouped by goal.
9:35	SECOND SMALL GROUP WORK Suggest priorities for City to work on goals and actions.
10:00	VISUAL REPORT-OUT Participants put their posters on the wall. These should be grouped by goal.
10:05	THIRD SMALL GROUP WORK Suggest priorities for City to work on goals and actions.
10:30	VISUAL REPORT OUT Participants put their posters on the wall. These should be grouped by goal.
10:35	REFRESHMENT / RESTROOM BREAK
10:45	OPEN DIALOG DISCUSSION RULES AND NORMS Event facilitator will remind Participants of norms.
10:50	OPEN DIALOG / RAPID FIRE
11:50	WRAP UP / CLOSING REMARKS Short themes summary. Thank you from City official.
NOON	END – THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

APPENDIX B – OUTREACH PRIOR TO EVENT: IMPRESSIONS AND DISTRIBUTIONS

Social media posts attracting attention, interest (Facebook and Twitter); ongoing prior to event	see left
PSAs in community publications:	
• B-Town Blog (estimated # of impressions)	5,166
• Highline Times / Westside Weekly (Andrea Reay, Discover Burien ED, wrote an op ed promoting Dialog)	see left
• La Raza de Noroeste (Hispanic)	
Recology blurb (via CleanScapes)	692
Email (using ConstantContact)	
• Parks Department Newsletter List.	6,313
• Wellness Cluster	57
• BEDP Members.	14
• Discover Burien board and member businesses of DB.	674
• SKC Chamber of Commerce Email List	636
Postcard distributed at Thursday Farmers market (City and Discover Burien tents)	
Flier/Postcard Distribution Locations:	300
• Para Los Ninos	
• New Futures Woodridge	
• Laundromat - 4 location, fliers in Spanish	
• Boulevard Park Library	
• The Might Joe Coffee Shop	
• Laundromat	
• Albertson's	
• Burger Joint	
• La Canasta Bulletin Board	
• Hair Salon	
• Burien Gardens Bulletin Board	
• Little Pat's Café	
• Gino's	
• Puget Sound Skills Center	
• Start Fresh	
• Micronesia Market	
• Wayne's Produce	
• La Variedad	
• Oriental Foods	
• Dukem Market	
• Hispanic Grocery	
• Burien Press	
• Starbucks (in shopping center)	
• Post Office	
Contacted Churches	-
• Boulevard Park Presbyterian	
• Burien Free Methodist Church	
• The Evergreen Church	
City Council Announcements	ongoing
Total Impressions	13,852

Andrew Desmond of the City of Burien implemented the marketing plan and prepared this table

This summary report was prepared by Martha C. Bean, the facilitator working with both the City of Burien and the citizens who attended the Dialog. The analysis and observations made here are her own, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of others.

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