

SWOT Analysis: Central Business District

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

To: Ad Hoc Downtown Advisory Committee
From: Stacie Pratschner, AICP, RPA: Community Development Services Director
Date: March 2, 2023
Re: SWOT and a new Vision Statement for the downtown Central Business District

Background

On Thursday, February 16, 2023, the ad hoc Downtown Advisory Committee (“the Committee” of “DAC”) met and completed a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)¹ to help identify the following as it relates to the Central Business District:

- ✚ What is currently working downtown to encourage development?
- ✚ Where is the City lacking in encouraging vibrancy downtown?
- ✚ What opportunities exist for the Committee to further the purpose of the [downtown Project Charter](#)?²
- ✚ What are the risks to the Committees success, and how can those risks be mitigated?

The purpose of this memo is to consolidate the handwritten easel notes from the February 16 meeting (Attachment A). The following analysis may at the pleasure of the Committee serve as the basis for proposing changes and updates to the Comprehensive Plan, the Code, and Engineering standards. The themes may also at the pleasure of the Committee serve as a basis for proposing new programs or community outreach to increase the vitality of downtown.

¹ The [Economic Development Element of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan](#) also includes a SWOT analysis of Blaine’s economy at the time of adoption of the Plan. The [Strategic Economic Initiative Action Plan](#) (January 2017) identifies a number of different action items that provide opportunities for economic growth and resiliency. Appendix A to this summary includes the SWOT analysis completed for the City of Blaine and included in the Region’s Community Economic Development Strategy.

² Pursuant to [RES 1897-22](#), the purpose of the project is to identify tools that will promote quality development on vacant and underdeveloped lots and parcels in the City’s Central Business District, resulting in a favorable environment for investment and redevelopment.

SWOT Analysis

<p><u>(S)trengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The productive working relationship between the City and the Port; ✚ Environmental accomplishments, such as the health of Drayton Harbor facilitating shellfish farming; and ✚ Culture of volunteerism in the community. ✚ The natural beauty of downtown resulting from its location on the water. 	<p><u>(W)eaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Doesn't necessarily appeal to a variety of generations. ✚ Lack of resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing - Infrastructure - Lack of capacity for downtown enhancement programs; ✚ Lack of communication to Council and the public about the City's wins; and ✚ Burnout of existing volunteers (i.e. the Chamber).
<p><u>(O)pportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Sub-area planning for individual downtown zoning districts; and ✚ Develop a culture of strategic planning. 	<p><u>(T)hreats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The City is in a reactive mode rather than a proactive mode, which drives our agenda; ✚ A perceived lack of long-range thinking from policy-makers³; ✚ Lack of a Strategic Plan; ✚ Lack of prioritization, work programs, and key priority indicators. ✚ The limits inherent for Cities fully planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA). ✚ Create synergy between the City; the developers; and the citizens (allow enhancement of the urban and natural environments to help create that synergy).

Next Steps

The Committee may use and modify this list as it builds consensus on recommendations that will ultimately be reviewed by the City Council.

³ CDS provided a synopsis of the [State-required Comprehensive Planning](#) and docketing.

WHATCOM COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDs) 2022-2026
October 2021

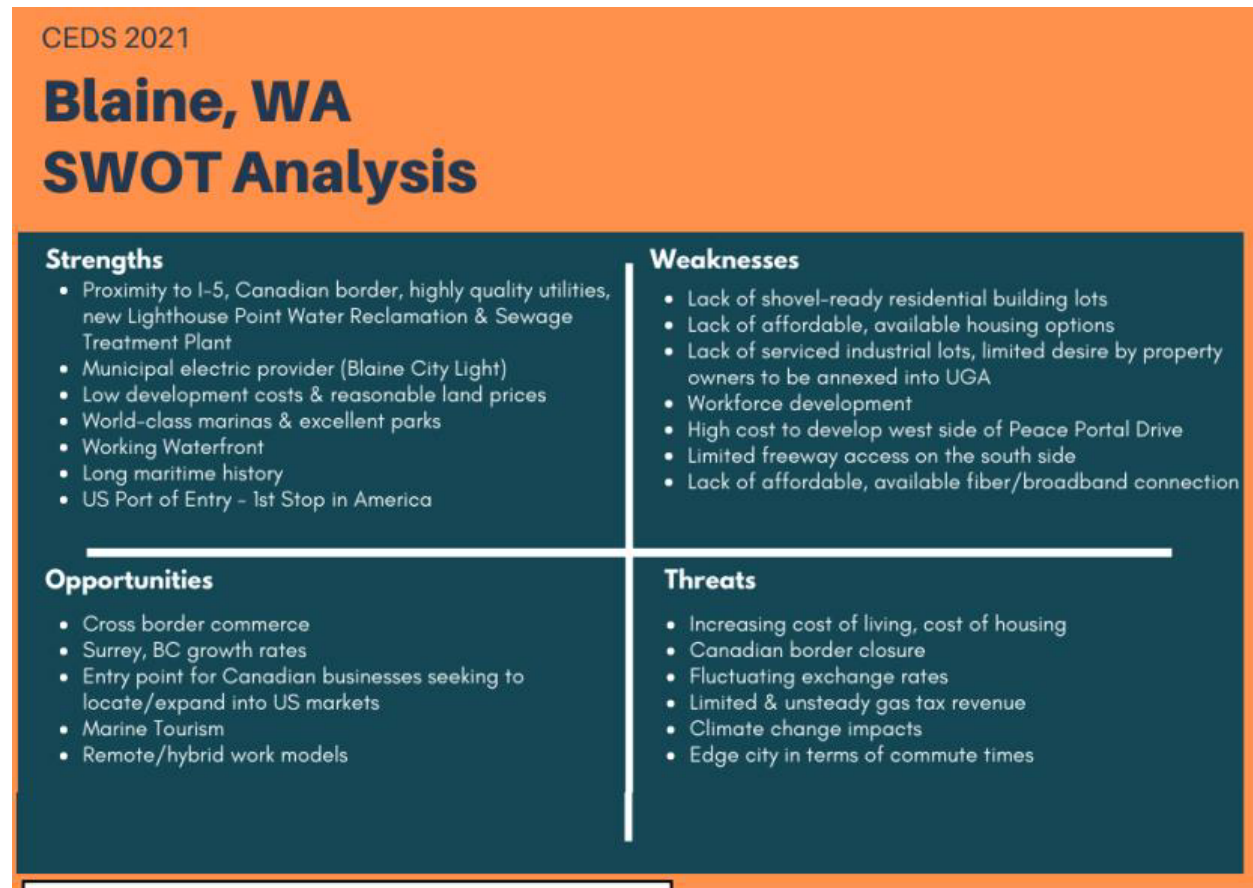


Figure 15: City of Blaine SWOT analysis.

(S) Strength

- Relationship to the Port
- Enviro accomplishments
 - ↳ after
- Culture of volunteerism
-

(W) Weaknesses

- How to appeal to different generations?
- Resources
 - ↳ housing
 - ↳ infrastructure
- Communicate the wins
- Type of volunteers
 - burn-out
- Lack of capacity for program?

(O) Opportunities

- Sub-area planning
 - ↳ for individual zones
- Synergy:

City	} Enviro
Dee	
Citizens	
- Develop a culture of Strategic planning

(T) Threats

- Tyranny of the immediate
- Lack of truly long-range thinking
- Need a strategic plan
- 2025 Comp
- Limits of GMA