



# CITY OF BLAINE

## City Manager's Office

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **City Receives Governor's Award for the Strategic Economic Initiative (SEI)**

The City of Blaine is excited to announce it has received a prestigious award from Governor Inslee's office. The Governor's 2019 Smart Communities Awards – Smart Choices Award recognizes the hard work and dedication of City Council, City employees, community members, and the Beckwith Consulting Group.

**Michael Jones, City Manager, said** "We are honored to have the work recognized and sincerely thank the Governor's Office for the recognition. We've taken some big steps recently with the vacant building demolition and other projects. Our job is to keep at it and find ways to move the various projects forward. Evolution and development of a community take a long time. We've got a lot left to do"

The City hired the Beckwith Consulting Group to take the lead in assembling a program that would help direct the City in achieving the economic goals laid out in our various planning documents. The final product is known as the Strategic Economic Initiative. The effort broke out the process for developing the initiative into two phases. Phase One focused on initiating the process and defining project scopes, costs, and methods. Phase Two primarily focused on community and tourist input through three targeted surveys. These surveys included a survey for residents, a survey for library users, and a visitor survey for tourists in Blaine. The results of these surveys helped formulate an action plan that identified and rated from lowest to highest the 43 goals residents and visitors cared about the most. This process and completed strategic plan was a success due to the support and pro-growth mentality of the City Council. Their support, coupled with an active community, helped shape a solid foundation for the City to act upon for years to come.

**Mayor Bonnie Onyon said,** "It's been exciting to see how some of our 'plans and the 'on the ground' projects link, and how they are truly moving the City forward achieving the goals of our Tourism Plan and Comprehensive Plan."

Although many of the goals listed were medium to long range, several of them are already in progress or have already materialized. Completed objectives include the demolition of an unsightly and condemned building (665 Peace Portal Drive), the creation of a new visitor Welcome Center which also includes public bathrooms, and the sale of property at the Gateway site (old municipal airport).