

PACIFIC COUNTY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS - WIREFRAME DOCUMENT

Submitted to
The Pacific County Economic Development Council

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PACIFIC COUNTY

Economic Opportunities Analysis - 2026

Wireframe Outline

1. Executive Summary

Pacific County is entering a critical planning period as it prepares for updates to its five-year economic strategy and long-term comprehensive growth plan. The county's economy is shaped by a combination of rural geography, seasonal tourism activity, and historic natural resource industries including timber, aquaculture, and agriculture. Demographic trends, including an aging population, a relatively small workforce base, and modest population growth, create structural constraints that affect economic diversification and long-term resilience. At the same time, Pacific County possesses significant assets: strong community institutions, entrepreneurial small businesses, globally recognized natural resources, and growing interest from visitors and remote workers seeking high-quality coastal environments. This project was conducted in partnership with the Pacific County Economic Development Council (PCEDC) through the University of Washington Livable City Year program to identify strategic opportunities that can support sustainable economic growth while preserving the county's rural character and natural assets.

The resulting strategy framework organizes recommendations across four economic development pillars identified by PCEDC. Building systems that support healthy growth includes initiatives such as the Pacific County Small Business Launchpad, Housing Capital Partnership Initiative, Zoning Information Resource Update, Workforce Enhancement Pathways, and regional infrastructure alignment. Making places that create tangible value focuses on improving development readiness through housing supply expansion, zoning simplification, and infrastructure coordination. Supporting businesses that broaden economic opportunity includes sector development strategies such as the Pacific County Blue Marine Economy initiative and the Forest Bio-Economy Program, which promote value-added production and local industry diversification. Finally, telling stories that attract meaningful investment includes place-based branding and tourism initiatives such as the "Beyond Shoulder Season" campaign, Nature and Agriculture-Based Tourism programs, and the Willapa Brand & Artisanal Woodworks incubator. Together, these initiatives form an integrated economic development roadmap designed to strengthen local business ecosystems, expand workforce housing, unlock new capital flows, and position Pacific County for long-term sustainable growth

2. Introduction & Purpose

2.1 Project Background

Pacific County is underway with an update to its Comprehensive Plan for the twenty-year period 2027–2047 as directed by Washington State’s Growth Management Act (GMA) of RCW 36.70A.070 and <https://2027comprehensiveplanupdate.konveio.com/>. This long-term plan guides decision-making by county administration in land use, zoning, development priorities, and investment. Central to implementing the “vision” of this twenty-year plan are economic development actions needed to fuel growth, resilience, and prosperity for all communities. Many of the strategies and tactics that will be necessary to realize these development goals are within the purview of the [Pacific County Economic Development Council \(PCEDC\)](#).

This project will update the PCEDC’s strategic plan for the upcoming five year-term 2026–2030 to reflect the vision and development objectives of the county’s Comprehensive Plan. Direct inputs/feedback from local stakeholders regarding economic development needs and opportunities for Pacific County need to be collected and synthesized. Interviews with key business stakeholders and PCEDC Board members are expected to ensure that the plan captures critical investment/development emphases and nuances relative to specific industries. Priorities for growth and investment should be synthesized from this primary research about where the County is "now" and where it wants/needs to be.

2.2 Scope of Work & Methodology

The primary goal is to develop the Economic Development Element supporting Pacific County’s five year Economic Plan in alignment with its 20-year Comprehensive Plan (2027–2047). Our work will provide actionable opportunities aligned with the four core PCEDC themes:

- Build systems that support healthy growth
- Support businesses that broaden economic opportunity
- Make places that create tangible value
- Tell stories that attract meaningful investment.

The scope is explicitly bounded to the sectors and challenges specified in the charter: forestry and timber manufacturing, shellfish and marine resources, tourism and hospitality, small business formation, housing, and infrastructure.

The analysis is structured to make informed decisions for both the PCEDC’s five-year strategic plan and the longer-horizon 2027–2047 Comprehensive Plan update. Data sources used in this analysis include employment and wage data from the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD), industry cluster data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), land capacity information from the Pacific County Comprehensive Plan GIS layers, and broadband infrastructure assessments from Pacific County PUD No. 2.

Market projections for emerging sectors including mass timber, essential oil extraction, and biofuel wood pellets are drawn from industry research reports. This multi-source approach ensures that the analysis is both empirically grounded and responsive to the lived realities of Pacific County's business community.

3. Economic Context & Baseline Conditions

3.1 Demographics & Population Trends

Demographic trends in Pacific County are driven by its status as a retirement destination. Per the 2024 American Community Survey by the Census Bureau, Pacific County's median age is 55 years, approximately 16 years older than the Washington and national median age of 39. As a share of population, citizens 65 years and older represent 33% of the county, nearly 83% higher than the national average of 18% and 94% higher than the Washington average of 17%. Growth in the county is primarily driven by the relocation of senior citizens drawn to the area's low cost of living and rural character. Per student interviews with local businesses and community members, there has also been an influx of remote workers in the county, attracted by the lower relative cost of living, suitable network connectivity, and the region's character. The economic impact of remote workers on the county is difficult to estimate with accuracy given the lack of the state income tax tying remote jobs to local addresses.

Per the United States Census Bureau, median income in the county was approximately \$67k per year, roughly -17% below the national median of \$82k and -33% below the Washington median of \$99k. Washington's median income is lifted by the significant tech industry presence in the greater Seattle area. In comparison to its nearest neighbors, Pacific County is +10% higher than Grays Harbor County, Washington at \$62k and -10% lower than Clatsop County, Oregon at \$76k.

3.2 Labor Force & Employment Trends

Employment trends in the county are driven by the large share of retirees and the seasonal nature of the county's hospitality industry. Unemployment in rural counties in Washington trend above state and national averages. Per the Pacific County profile at the Washington Employment Security Department, unemployment as of December 2025 was estimated at 7.5% as opposed to the national average of 4.1% and the Washington average of 4.1%. In Pacific County, there is a consistent trend where unemployment sinks in the summer and rises in the winter in alignment with the hospitality season. Unemployment among young adults 20 to 24 tends to trend higher than other age groups due to a mismatch in labor demand and skills in the county. Top employment sectors in the county as of 2024 were Government (28%), Hospitality (14%), Manufacturing (11%), and Retail (11%).

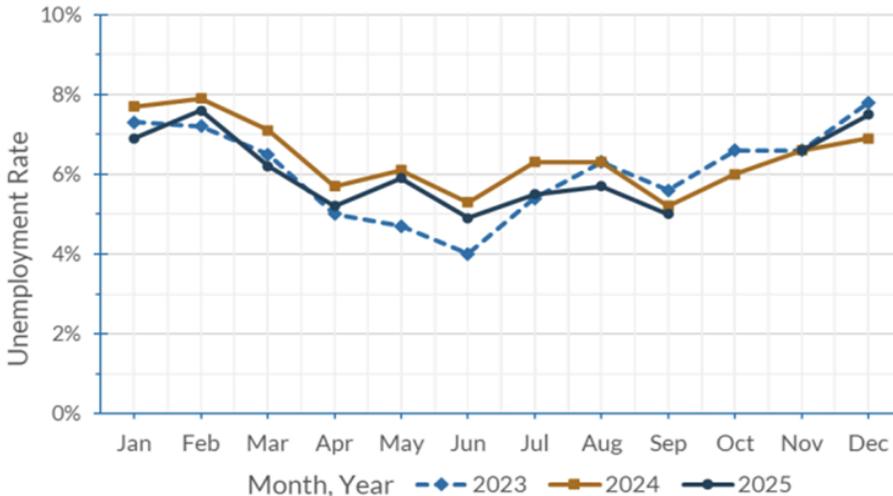


Figure 3.2 Pacific County Employment Trends. Employment Security Department, Pacific County Profile

Student interviews conducted with local employers highlighted a recurring gap between the need for skilled labor and limited professional development resources within the county. Some businesses have been able to meet their needs by offering remote work opportunities for employees located beyond Pacific County, while other roles are left unfilled due to a lack of specialized labor.

3.3 Income & Economic Resilience

Seasonality in the county as a whole has a large impact on Pacific County's economy and the income of the individuals that reside in Pacific County year-round. Due to the number of businesses in the county that center around tourism, you see many businesses close or shorten hours during the off season and therefore you see a rise in unemployment #s during those off-season months from ~6% in the peak months April to September, to between 6-8% October to May, per Pacific City's economic profile from Headwaters Economics. This can make it difficult for individuals looking to maintain full-time employment throughout the year and difficult for business owners that need to maintain a pool of seasonal staff. In the county you also see a large portion of total person income, 61.5% is classified as non-labor income, this is largely in part due to the higher median age of residents, but can signal that the available labor market is smaller for businesses in the area.

4. Industry & Cluster Analysis

4.1 Tourism & Visitor Economy

Pacific County, WA, possesses a distinctive tourism profile defined by its rugged natural beauty and a high concentration of small businesses. Its primary assets, including expansive

state parks, a network of scenic hiking trails, and a prime location along the historic Highway 101, create a compelling destination for travelers seeking an authentic coastal experience. However, this economy faces a large seasonality barrier. While summer months bring a surge of visitors, the region struggles to maintain momentum from October through April, when harsh weather and a lack of indoor attractions discourage tourism. This volatility is clearly reflected in the lodging and hospitality sector. During one of our interviews with a local business owner in the hospitality industry, he quoted that due to seasonal lows and highs, yearly occupancy rates often hover around 50%, forcing businesses to navigate a "feast or famine" financial cycle.

Comparative Regional Analysis

Feature	Pacific County, WA	Clatsop County, OR	Grays Harbor, WA
Primary Hubs	Long Beach, Ilwaco, Raymond	Astoria, Seaside, Cannon Beach	Ocean Shores, Westport
Tourism Scale	Emerging/Boutique; high focus on small, independent shops.	Mature/High-Volume; significant corporate and luxury investment.	Industrial/Recreational; heavy focus on fishing and beach resorts.
Infrastructure	Severely Limited: Wetlands and septic costs hinder growth.	Developed: More robust municipal sewer/water networks.	Mixed: Stronger urban cores but faces similar coastal erosion.
Seasonality	Extreme; deep winter lows.	Moderate; strong "shoulder season" events and indoor dining.	High; though "storm watching" is a growing winter niche.

Labor and Housing Constraints

The hospitality workforce in Pacific County is under immense pressure. Unlike neighboring Clatsop County, OR which benefits from a larger, more permanent resident pool and established management pipelines, Pacific County relies on a highly seasonal labor force. This creates a cyclical housing crisis: during the peak season, there are virtually no available affordable housing options for temporary workers, as many properties are utilized as Short-Term Rentals (STRs). Furthermore, the prevalence of small businesses means that many positions

lack the comprehensive benefits packages (health, retirement) necessary to attract and retain skilled management professionals. This "management gap" limits the ability of local properties to scale operations or provide the high-touch service found in more developed coastal markets.

Critical Infrastructure & Environmental Risks

Infrastructure constraints remain as one of the most significant barriers to long-term economic expansion for tourism and in particular hospitality businesses in the county. Pacific County's geography is dominated by wetlands, which drastically restricts the footprint for expansion of existing properties as well as growth and development of new properties. Another obstacle that many businesses run into when looking to expand, is the lack of municipal sewer connections outside city limits, this coupled with the large expense that comes with septic systems due to very few providers willing to service the remote areas. Furthermore, the "capital gap" is palpable; many traditional lenders view rural hospitality as a high-risk investment, limiting the funds available for property updates or "climate-proofing."

On top of the constraints listed above, most concerning is the intersection of sea level rise and fresh water security. As sea levels climb, the risk of saltwater intrusion into coastal aquifers increases, potentially contaminating the fresh water sources that both residents and hotels rely on. This environmental vulnerability, coupled with rising insurance premiums and a lack of lending options, creates a high-stakes environment for investors and existing business owners alike.

4.2 Natural Resources & Working Lands

Marine Economy

Pacific County's marine economy is anchored by a robust shellfish sector in Willapa Bay and a major commercial fishing fleet in Ilwaco and Chinook, collectively supporting over 1,900 jobs and generating more than \$46 million in annual personal income, including a significant \$21 million "Alaska connection." While the county leads in raw production volume, particularly in aquaculture, it lags behind neighboring Clatsop County in capturing value-added revenue. To strengthen its five-year strategy, the PCEDC must address this gap by modernizing infrastructure and expanding processing capabilities to better retain the economic value of its high-volume landings.

Comparative Marine Economic Metrics (Annual Estimates)

Economic Metric	Pacific County, WA	Clatsop County, OR	Strategic Implication
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Commercial Fishing Fleet	200+ Vessels	984 Vessels (with landings)	Pacific County has a high concentration per capita but less total volume than Clatsop.
Aquaculture Production	50 million lbs (Shellfish)	Emerging (Kelp/Seaweed focus)	Pacific County leads in production but faces higher ecological risks.
Total Personal Income (Marine)	\$46 million+ (Local + Distant)	\$3.4 billion (Statewide context)	Pacific County is more reliant on individual earnings than corporate industrial revenue.
Seafood Processing Jobs	High (Largest private employer)	Concentrated in Astoria/Warrenton	Pacific County needs to modernize facilities to match Clatsop's "7-day miracle" resilience.
Primary Species Value	\$15M - \$25M (Fishing)	\$55M (Total dockside value)	Clatsop captures more value through a diverse mix of whiting, crab, and albacore.

The Blue Economy: Innovation in Value-Added Processing

Pacific County's marine industry is currently dominated by the export of raw or minimally processed products. The five-year plan should prioritize the "100% Fish" and "Industrial Symbiosis" models that have gained momentum in the Oregon legislative session. This approach focuses on maximizing the utility of every portion of the harvest, including byproducts that are traditionally treated as waste.

Industrial Symbiosis and Chitosan Extraction

Research suggests that the non-food portions of seafood, particularly the shells of Dungeness crab and shrimp, can be more valuable in the marketplace than the food portion. These shells contain chitosan, an element used in medical, industrial, and agricultural applications due to its natural antimicrobial properties. Currently, much of this material is land-applied or discarded, representing a significant loss of potential revenue.

Pacific County should establish a "Marine Resource Utilization Hub" to explore:

- **Chitosan Production:** Processing waste shells into high-grade industrial and medical products.
- **Organic Fertilizers:** Converting fish waste into fertilizers enriched with seawater minerals,

supporting both the marine and agricultural sectors.

- **Sea Ranching and Genetics:** Investigating the sea ranching of salmonids and breeding oysters for ocean acidification tolerance to stabilize long-term yields.

High-Pressure Processing (HPP) and Shelf-Life Extension

The perishability of seafood is a primary barrier to reaching distant markets. The five-year plan should advocate for the adoption of High-Pressure Processing (HPP) technology, which extends shelf-life without the use of chemicals. This technology is particularly effective for oysters and clams, allowing them to be sold in microwavable, consumer-ready packaging like the "Steamers in Five" model. By moving into these value-added prototypes—such as retort-pouch albacore tuna or salmon pepperoni—local firms can bypass the "Seafood Paradox" where coastal regions export high-quality raw fish and import lower-quality processed products.

Seaweed and Mariculture Expansion

Seaweed farming represents a major growth opportunity for the Pacific County "New Blue Economy". Unlike land-based agriculture, seaweed farming requires zero inputs of feed or fertilizer and actively improves water quality by absorbing excess carbon dioxide and nutrients. Washington is currently exploring collaborative structures to support this emerging industry through Maritime Blue initiatives.

The PCEDC should incorporate the following seaweed-focused strategies:

1. **Facilitating Shared Processing Infrastructure:** Developing platforms that multiple small-scale growers can use to process kelp and other seaweeds for food and industrial use.
2. **Permitting Support:** The lack of a clear regulatory pathway for kelp and urchin cultivation is a significant barrier to innovation. The county should work with the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to create streamlined, pre-approved zones for mariculture.
3. **Market Development:** Aligning seaweed production with the "regenerative" brand of Willapa Bay to attract eco-conscious consumers interested in nutrient-rich products like "Seacharrones" (kelp snacks).

Forestry and Timber

The following sub-sections situate Pacific County's forestry and timber industry within its state and national context, drawing on four IBISWorld industry reports published March 2026. Each provides a one-paragraph industry outlook, key performance metrics, a revenue trend chart (reflected in the statistics below), and — where county data are available — a direct comparison of Pacific County against the average Washington county and adjacent Grays Harbor County.

Logging in Washington State

Washington’s logging industry ranks second in the United States by revenue, generating an estimated \$1.4 billion in 2026 across 2,258 establishments — representing 8.4% of the \$16.1 billion national industry. Over the past five years Washington outperformed the national average on the downside (–0.9% CAGR vs. –1.5%), and the five-year outlook turned positive at +1.4% CAGR through 2031, recovering to approximately \$1.5 billion. Employment contracted from 6,255 workers in 2021 to 5,707 in 2026 (–1.8% annually), yet Washington’s average logging wage of \$49,726 is 51.2% above the national average of \$32,898, reflecting the high-value Douglas Fir and old-growth species mix concentrated in Southwest Washington. Primary headwinds are declining residential construction and softening lumber prices; key upside drivers are a recovering housing starts index and rising Producer Price Index for sawmill lumber.

Metric	Washington State	CAGR '21–'26	CAGR '26–'31
Revenue	\$1.4B (#2 in US)	–0.9%	+1.4%
Establishments	2,258 (#5 in US)	–2.6%	–0.6%
Employment	5,707 (#4 in US)	–1.8%	+0.6%
Total Wages	\$283.8M (#2 in US)	–5.0%	+1.0%
Avg. Wage	\$49,726	—	51.2% above US avg

Table 4.2.4a Logging in Washington Key Performance Metrics (2026). Source: IBISWorld WA11331.

County Comparison - Logging

Pacific County does not appear in the IBISWorld top-10 county rankings for Logging in Washington, indicating it falls below the state’s top-decile threshold on all metrics. Estimates below are population-scaled from Grays Harbor County data (Pacific County population ~ 30% of Grays Harbor), partially corroborated by the Pacific County Comprehensive Plan figure of 278 total direct forestry jobs. Grays Harbor ranks #3 in establishments (7.9% of state) and #7 in employment (6.3% of the state), making it a meaningful regional benchmark.

Metric	Pacific County (est.)	Avg. WA County	Grays Harbor
Establishments	~25–30	58	179 (7.9% of state, #3)
Revenue	~\$15–19M	\$34.8M	\$62.3M (4.6% of state, #9)
Employment	~100–110	146	359 (6.3% of state, #7)
Total Wages	~\$9–12M	\$7.3M	\$23.3M (8.2% of state, #4)

Table 4.2.4b Logging County comparison (2026). WA avg = state total ÷ 39 counties. Pacific County estimates are population-scaled; employment corroborated by Pacific County Comprehensive Plan 2020–2040. Source: IBISWorld WA11331.

Timber Services in Washington State

Timber Services encompassing timber tract operators, forestry consulting, and managed harvest contracting is a comparatively small but highly skilled segment in Washington,

generating \$75.1 million in 2026 from just 96 establishments. Washington ranks 5th nationally by revenue (7.2% of the \$1.0 billion U.S. industry), and the state's 318 employees command an average wage of \$104,000 ~67.8% above the national mean of \$61,722, reflecting the technical nature of professional forestry services. The segment has contracted (-2.1% CAGR 2021–26) amid declining housing starts and subdued paper manufacturing demand, but employment has been essentially flat (+0.1%), signaling firms are sustaining professional capacity even as revenues compress. The five-year forecast is +0.5% CAGR to \$76.9 million by 2031, supported by growing demand for wildfire risk management, carbon credit verification, and sustainable forestry certification. Neither Pacific County nor Grays Harbor County appears in the IBISWorld top-10 county rankings for this segment.

Metric	Washington State	CAGR '21–'26	CAGR '26–'31
Revenue	\$75.1M (#5 in US)	-2.1%	+0.5%
Establishments	96 (#11 in US)	-1.2%	+0.4%
Employment	318 (#8 in US)	+0.1%	+0.4%
Total Wages	\$32.9M (#3 in US)	+0.1%	+0.9%
Avg. Wage	\$104,000	—	67.8% above US avg

Table 4.2.4c Timber Services in Washington Key Performance Metrics (2026). Source: IBISWorld WA11311.

Sawmills & Wood Production in Washington State

Sawmills & Wood Production is the anchor of Washington's forest products economy, generating \$4.7 billion in 2026 and ranking second nationally by both revenue (8.6% of the \$54 billion U.S. industry) and employment (6,444 workers). Washington leads the nation in total industry wages (\$593.1 million), with an average wage of \$92,038 that is 42.8% above the national average reflecting high-productivity, capital-intensive mill operations across Southwest and Northwest Washington. While the state underperformed the national industry on revenue growth (-0.6% vs. +3.5% CAGR 2021–26) due to softening export lumber prices, the five-year outlook is the strongest across all three forestry sub-industries: +1.9% CAGR to \$5.1 billion by 2031, driven by recovering housing construction, rising home improvement spending, and growing mass timber and CLT demand. Establishments grew marginally (+0.2% CAGR) to 118 locations, signaling consolidation into larger, higher-capacity facilities.

Metric	Washington State	CAGR '21–'26	CAGR '26–'31
Revenue	\$4.7B (#2 in US)	-0.6%	+1.9%
Establishments	118 (#10 in US)	+0.2%	+1.0%
Employment	6,444 (#2 in US)	+1.8%	+1.6%
Total Wages	\$593.1M (#1 in US)	+1.5%	+2.1%

Metric	Washington State	CAGR '21–'26	CAGR '26–'31
Avg. Wage	\$92,038	—	42.8% above US avg

Table 4.2.4d Sawmills & Wood Production in Washington Key Performance Metrics (2026). Source: IBISWorld WA32111.

County Comparison - Sawmills

Pacific County does not appear in the IBISWorld top-10 county rankings for Sawmills & Wood Production. Notably, Grays Harbor County holds the largest share of sawmill establishments in the entire state (14.4%), ranking #1, and is #3 in employment and #5 in revenue underscoring both the immediate adjacency of large-scale mill capacity and the structural gap relative to Pacific County's current contribution to this sub-sector.

Metric	Pacific County (est.)	Avg. WA County	Grays Harbor
Establishments	Not ranked (est. <5)	3	17 (14.4% of state, #1)
Revenue	Not ranked (est. <\$100M)	\$119.6M	\$362.3M (7.8% of state, #5)
Employment	~200 (est.)	165	685 (10.6% of state, #3)
Total Wages	Not ranked	\$15.2M	\$33.6M (5.7% of state, #7)

Table 4.2.4e Sawmills & Wood Production County comparison (2026). WA avg = state total ÷ 39 counties. Pacific County estimates are population-scaled. Source: IBISWorld WA32111.

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting in United States

The U.S. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sector generated an estimated \$578.4 billion in 2026 across approximately 2.1 million businesses employing 3.1 million workers. The sector contracted at -0.6% CAGR over 2021–26 as crop prices retreated from 2021–22 peaks, with a sharper -4.5% single-year decline in 2026 driven by softening commodity prices and elevated input costs. Forestry accounts for \$15.6 billion (2.7%) of total sector revenue, a modest share, but one seeing renewed strategic interest as wildfire risk, carbon markets, and sustainable building demand drive investment in managed forest systems. The five-year outlook calls for a return to growth (+1.4% CAGR to \$618.8 billion by 2031), supported by moderate crop price appreciation, yield gains, and expanding carbon credit markets. The sector carries a 20.7% profit margin above the broader sector average, while average wages of \$17,736 reflect the preponderance of small, family-operated enterprises.

Metric	Value (2026)	CAGR '21–'26	CAGR '26–'31
Total Revenue	\$578.4B	-0.6%	+1.4% (to \$618.8B)
Total Businesses	~2.09M	-2.0% ('21–'26)	+0.2%
Total Employment	~3.15M	+1.8% ('21–'26)	+0.6%

Metric	Value (2026)	CAGR '21-'26	CAGR '26-'31
Forestry Sub-segment	\$15.6B (2.7%)	—	Growing
Profit Margin	20.7%	+0.8 pp	—
Avg. Wage	\$17,736	+9.6% over period	Steady

Table 4.2.4f U.S. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting Key Metrics (2026). Source: IBISWorld NAICS 11.

4.3 Small Business & Entrepreneurship

One method of evaluating business formation trends in a county is the number of applications submitted for Employer Identification Numbers (EINs) as reported by the Census Bureau. While Pacific County has consistently seen fewer EIN applications than neighboring Grays Harbor County, Washington and Clatsop County Oregon, a normalized view of applications per capita show a consistent range of 0.01 to 0.013 across all three counties. This indicates a healthy parity for business formation between Pacific County and its neighbors.

However, Pacific County's status as a border county has a tangible impact on business development in the retail sector specifically. The lack of statewide sales tax in Oregon and the presence of big retailers like Costco makes Astoria an attractive destination for Pacific County consumers to do their regular shopping. This style of tax evasion and retail leakage is consistent across all counties in Washington that border Oregon and Idaho. Per a 2014 Washington Department of Revenue study (WADOR,2014), this consumer behavior led to an estimated loss of \$193M in state revenue and \$54M in local sales tax revenues across the state. Pacific County's losses in 2014 were estimated at \$561k in sales tax revenue, approximately \$775k in 2026 when adjusted for inflation. While this behavior is illegal and Washington citizens are expected to pay taxes on these purchases, this is rarely enforced and the tax is rarely collected. This effect blunts the growth of the retail sector in Pacific County.

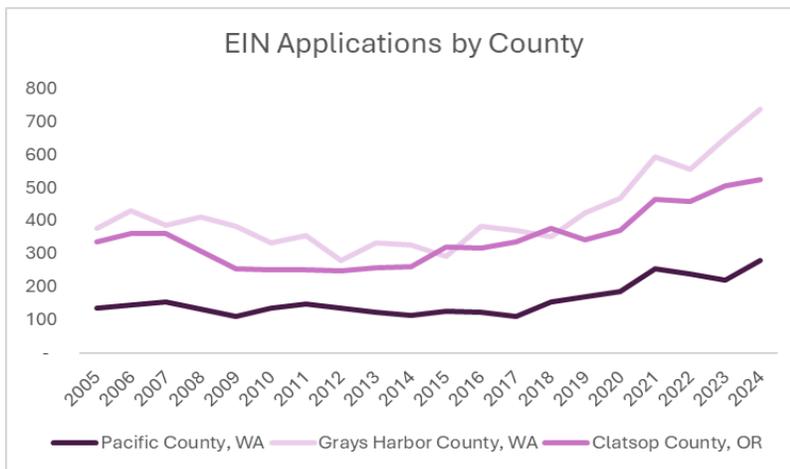


Figure 4.3a Business Formation Statistics. United States Census Bureau

County	2024 Population	EIN Applications	Applications per Capita
Pacific County, WA	23365	278	0.012
Grays Harbor County, WA	75636	738	0.010
Clatsop County, OR	41072	524	0.013

Figure 4.3b Business Formation Statistics, Normalized. United States Census Bureau

4.4 Banking & Capital Access

Pacific County’s financial ecosystem is characterized by strong relationship banking and locally embedded financial institutions that possess deep knowledge of the community and its businesses. However, interviews and industry research indicate that lending practices tend to be conservative, reflecting the risk environment of small rural markets and regulatory pressures on community banks. As a result, financing is generally available for established businesses and traditional real estate projects but is more difficult to obtain for startups, small commercial developments, manufactured housing, or unconventional projects. This dynamic creates a gap between local economic needs and traditional underwriting models.

Several capital access gaps are particularly relevant for economic development. Small businesses often struggle to obtain early-stage financing, while entrepreneurs seeking to launch new ventures may lack both collateral and track record. Similarly, small-scale housing and commercial real estate projects—especially those involving manufactured housing, mixed-use buildings, or adaptive reuse—often fall outside standard lending categories. These gaps can slow business formation and delay projects that could otherwise contribute to local economic vitality.

Addressing these constraints may require innovative financing mechanisms that leverage public and private resources. Potential strategies include the creation of a revolving loan fund targeted toward small businesses or housing development, loan guarantee programs that reduce risk exposure for local banks, and partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) that specialize in underserved markets. PCEDC and local chambers of commerce can play an important role as conveners and facilitators, bringing together lenders, government agencies, and entrepreneurs to develop collaborative capital solutions.

4.5 Housing & Residential Development

Housing availability represents one of the most significant structural constraints on Pacific County’s economic development. The existing housing stock is dominated by single-family homes and manufactured housing, with relatively limited multifamily or “missing middle” housing types such as duplexes or small apartment buildings. In addition, a significant portion of the housing inventory is older, requiring ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation to

remain habitable and energy efficient. These characteristics, combined with seasonal housing demand along the coast, create limited year-round housing options for local workers.

Affordability and workforce housing mismatches further complicate the issue. Many households face housing costs that exceed recommended affordability thresholds, while the county's aging population and shrinking prime-age workforce reduce the availability of labor for key sectors such as healthcare, hospitality, and construction. Employers increasingly report difficulty recruiting staff due to the lack of available housing.

Infrastructure limitations and regulatory constraints also play a central role. Sewer and water capacity, particularly outside urban growth areas, represent a primary barrier to new development. At the same time, regulatory frameworks developed for suburban or urban markets may not always accommodate small-scale rural housing development. Addressing these issues may involve strategies such as expanding accessory dwelling unit programs, enabling missing-middle housing types, exploring alternative wastewater solutions, and coordinating infrastructure investments to unlock housing development in priority areas. Employer-assisted housing programs and partnerships with housing nonprofits may also offer opportunities to expand workforce housing supply.

4.6 Infrastructure & Industrial Lands

Port assets

The industrial utility of Pacific County's Port assets is currently undermined by a combination of federal dredging dependencies and stringent shoreline regulations. This lack of reliable depth creates a physical ceiling on infrastructure usability, preventing modern, deep-draft vessels from utilizing local docks and forcing them toward more reliable regional competitors. When coupled with the Shoreline Master Program's "no net loss" requirements and restrictive wetland buffers, the cost of expanding or modernizing existing Port facilities often becomes prohibitive. These overlapping constraints not only limit the expansion of the seafood processing cluster but also drive a steady out-migration of maritime businesses to ports with deeper channels and less restrictive development pathways.

Industrial land supply

Pacific County primarily maintains industrial land in its port districts, specifically the Port of Willapa Harbor (Raymond/South Bend) and the Port of Ilwaco. While there is available land, much of it is tied to traditional resource industries like timber and seafood processing. The supply is often constrained by environmental protections, such as wetlands and shoreline management acts, which limit the "buildable" footprint for large-scale manufacturing.

Utilities capacity

Electricity and water are primarily managed by Pacific County PUD No. 2, which serves over 18,000 customers. While electrical capacity is generally stable, the county is actively upgrading infrastructure to support electric vehicle (EV) charging and industrial growth. Sewer capacity varies by municipality; cities like Raymond and Long Beach have made recent investments, but rural areas remain dependent on septic systems, which limits denser industrial development outside city limits.

Broadband gaps

Significant "last-mile" gaps exist, particularly in the rural interior and northern parts of the county. However, the Pacific County Broadband Working Group and the PUD have secured state grants (through the Public Works Board) to install fiber-to-the-home and wholesale middle-mile infrastructure. As of 2025–2026, the goal is to provide at least 100/100 Mbps or 1 Gbps speeds to anchor institutions and underserved residents.

Transportation access

Pacific County's transportation network is defined by its reliance on key highway corridors—US-101, SR-6, and SR-4—which serve as the primary conduits for both the tourism and resource-extraction industries (timber and seafood). While these routes provide essential regional connectivity, they are frequently compromised by environmental vulnerabilities, such as seasonal flooding, landslides, and ongoing fish-passage culvert replacements that cause significant freight delays. Public transit access is primarily managed by Pacific Transit System, which provides crucial "last-mile" connectivity to neighboring hubs like Aberdeen, Astoria, and Kelso/Longview, though rural service remains limited in frequency. Furthermore, while the county hosts small municipal airports and active marine ports, the lack of direct rail infrastructure and the logistical reliance on the Astoria-Megler Bridge for southern access create bottlenecks for large-scale industrial distribution.

5. Land Capacity & Development Readiness

Industrial land availability plays a critical role in Pacific County's long-term economic development potential. The county contains a number of designated industrial areas and resource-based employment centers that support sectors such as seafood processing, timber products, and marine-related industries. However, the effective usability of these lands varies significantly depending on access to transportation infrastructure, utilities, and environmental constraints. A key distinction within the industrial land inventory is the difference between parcels that are technically zoned for industrial use and those that are realistically development-ready. Many parcels face limitations related to water and sewer availability, transportation access, environmental protections, or parcel configuration. As a result, the supply of truly "shovel-ready" industrial land may be considerably smaller than the nominal acreage

suggests. Economic development strategies should therefore focus not only on land designation but also on strategic infrastructure investments that improve site readiness. Prioritizing infrastructure improvements for key industrial sites—particularly those near ports, transportation corridors, and existing employment centers—can significantly increase the county’s ability to attract and retain employers.

Commercial development in Pacific County is largely concentrated in historic downtown districts, small rural activity centers, and highway-oriented commercial corridors. These areas serve as hubs for local services, tourism activity, and small business entrepreneurship. Downtown areas in communities such as Raymond, South Bend, Long Beach, and Ilwaco provide important cultural and economic anchors, while highway commercial areas support tourism and visitor-oriented businesses. Despite these assets, commercial development faces several structural barriers. Limited population density constrains the customer base for many businesses, while older building stock and financing challenges can make property redevelopment difficult. In some cases, small business owners also face challenges navigating permitting processes, accessing suitable commercial space, or securing capital for expansion. Strategic interventions could focus on strengthening these commercial centers through coordinated downtown revitalization, flexible zoning for mixed-use development, and improved access to financing for building renovation and small business startups. Supporting these commercial nodes is especially important given their role in tourism and local service economies.

5.3 Development Constraints

Environmental

Development is primarily restricted by the Pacific County Critical Areas Ordinance, which aims to protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas. To maintain the ecological integrity of the Willapa Bay watershed, the county requires that all projects demonstrate "no net loss" of habitat function. This often involves a mandatory Environmental Checklist and a Critical Areas Review to identify potential impacts on native species and vegetation. If a project is found to disrupt a habitat, developers are typically required to implement a formal Mitigation Plan, which may include restoring degraded land or planting native vegetation to offset any environmental footprint.

Wetlands

Wetlands in Pacific County are managed through a tiered classification system (Categories I–IV) that dictates the intensity of development constraints. The most significant

barrier for landowners is the requirement for undisturbed vegetation buffers, which can extend up to 300 feet for highly sensitive Category I wetlands. Before any site work begins, a certified professional must perform a Wetland Delineation to map these boundaries. Because filling, grading, or draining these areas is strictly regulated, projects often face reduced buildable acreage or the high cost of compensatory mitigation, where new wetlands must be created or restored at ratios as high as 4 to 1 relative to the area impacted. Lack of reliable wetlands map also is a problem, must physically walk in the property to understand development feasibility

Shoreline Regulations

Shoreline Master Program (SMP), which mandates that all new projects achieve "no net loss" of ecological functions, translates to strict physical limitations, such as mandatory vegetation buffers and significant setbacks that can restrict the buildable area of a waterfront lot. Furthermore, any development exceeding a fair market value of \$8,504 typically requires a Shoreline Substantial Development Permit, a process that involves rigorous environmental review. Because the county categorizes shorelines into specific designations—ranging from "Natural," which is highly restrictive, to "Rural" or "Community"—the feasibility of a project depends heavily on its specific location and whether the proposed use is water-dependent.

FEMA Floodplain Issues

Due to its coastal and riverine geography, a large portion of Pacific County falls within FEMA-designated Special Flood Hazard Areas. Development here is governed by strict elevation requirements, where the lowest floor of new structures must be at least one foot above the Base Flood Elevation. In high-velocity "V" zones near the ocean, buildings must be elevated on pilings to allow wave action to pass underneath. Furthermore, the "50% Rule" presents a major constraint for renovations: if the cost of improvements exceeds half of the home's market value, the entire structure must be brought up to modern flood-resistant standards. In designated floodways, new residential construction is generally prohibited to prevent any obstruction that could increase flood levels for neighboring properties.

6. Competitive Position & Development Opportunities

6.1 Regional Comparison

The Pacific County economy is smaller than its immediate coastal neighbors to the north and south driven by its smaller population size, roughly half the size of Clatsop County, Oregon and a third the size of Grays Harbor County, Washington. Small business formation trends are in alignment with neighboring Clatsop and Gray's Harbor Counties when controlling for population. Pacific County at a distinct retail disadvantage due to border county effect: shoppers drive to nearby Clatsop County to take advantage of Oregon's lack of sales tax. This effect is observed in all Washington counties that border Oregon and Idaho, per the Washington Department of

Revenue. The impact on sales tax revenue for Pacific County was estimated at \$561k in 2014, approximately \$775k in 2026 dollars.

Metric	Pacific County, WA	Grays Harbor, WA	Clatsop County, OR
Median Home Price	~\$355,000	~\$335,000	~\$525,000+
Market Status	Cooling (Price -17% YoY)	Stable (+1.8% YoY)	Highly Competitive
Primary Industry	Aquaculture & Small-scale Tourism	Wood Products & Manufacturing	Tourism, Seafood, & Maritime
Business Profile	Independent / "Mom & Pop"	Industrial / Port-centric	Corporate / Professionalized

Tourism and Seasonality

Pacific County experiences the most pronounced "shoulder season" drop-off of the three regions. While its natural assets are immense, the tourism infrastructure is primarily passive centered on state parks and outdoor recreation, which offers little draw during the rainy months from October through April. In contrast, Clatsop County has successfully professionalized its tourism sector, creating a year-round draw through Cannon Beach's luxury lodging and Astoria's robust "indoor" economy of breweries, museums, and galleries. Grays Harbor occupies a middle ground; while it shares Pacific County's weather challenges, it has leaned heavily into "storm watching" and large-scale resort amenities in Ocean Shores to keep occupancy rates more stable during the winter.

The Marine Economy and Aquaculture

The maritime identity of Pacific County is defined by its status as the "Oyster Capital," producing roughly 25% of the United States' oyster harvest. This creates a specialized, boutique marine economy that is highly sensitive to environmental shifts like ocean acidification. Grays Harbor maintains a much more industrial maritime profile, anchored by the Port of Grays Harbor, which focuses on deep-sea commercial fishing and international shipping/logistics. Clatsop County offers the most diversified marine sector, blending a massive commercial fishing fleet

with sophisticated maritime support services and educational research facilities associated with the Columbia River.

Logging and Forestry

While Pacific County is a heavy hitter in raw timber production—consistently ranking among Washington’s top five producers with harvests often exceeding 182 million board feet (MMBF)—it lacks the secondary manufacturing infrastructure to capture the full economic value of the wood. Most logs are exported to other counties for processing. Grays Harbor, however, is the industrial heart of the regional timber industry. It possesses a wood product job density over 1,000% higher than the state average, sustained by a concentration of active mills and processing plants in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. Clatsop County also maintains high harvest levels on private lands, but the industry there is less visible, often overshadowed by the high-volume tourism and maritime sectors.

Housing and Infrastructure

Pacific County faces a unique "utility wall" that stifles growth; its vast wetlands and the prohibitive cost of septic and water systems make expansion physically and financially difficult. Interestingly, Pacific County saw a significant price correction in early 2026 (down roughly 17% year-over-year) as the post-pandemic "work from home" surge leveled off. Grays Harbor remains the most affordable entry point for housing in the region, though it struggles with aging infrastructure in its urban cores. Clatsop County sits at the opposite end of the spectrum, facing a severe housing crisis driven by "equity migrants" from Portland. This has pushed median home prices above \$525,000, creating a workforce shortage as hospitality staff are priced out of the very markets they serve.

7. Strategic Recommendations:

Pacific County Small Business Launchpad:

Pacific County’s small businesses form the backbone of the local economy, particularly in sectors such as tourism, retail, construction, and personal services. However, entrepreneurs often encounter barriers related to capital access, permitting complexity, and limited business support resources. In smaller rural markets, these obstacles can significantly slow business formation and expansion. To strengthen the small business ecosystem, the county and PCEDC can focus on building systems that support entrepreneurs throughout the business lifecycle. One potential intervention is the creation of a “project concierge” or coordinated development support function that helps entrepreneurs navigate permitting, site selection, and financing.

Chambers of commerce and economic development organizations can also play a role in storytelling and promotion, highlighting local businesses and attracting outside investment.

Potential partners for these efforts include local chambers of commerce, community banks, the Washington State Department of Commerce, Small Business Development Centers, and regional nonprofit organizations. Funding pathways may include federal rural development programs, state economic development grants, and philanthropic investments focused on rural entrepreneurship.

Housing Capital Partnership Initiative

Housing availability and affordability have become a central constraint to workforce stability and long-term economic growth in Pacific County. Employers across multiple sectors—including healthcare, tourism, natural resource industries, and small business services—report difficulty recruiting and retaining workers due to limited housing supply and rising housing costs. Much of the county’s housing stock is older and limited in diversity, with relatively few options for workforce housing such as smaller homes, rental units, or “missing middle” housing types. Seasonal housing demand, second-home ownership, and infrastructure limitations further constrain the development of new housing. These conditions create a structural mismatch between available jobs and attainable housing for local workers, making housing development a critical economic development issue rather than solely a land-use or planning concern.

To address this challenge, the project recommends that the Pacific County Economic Development Council establish a Housing Capital Partnership Initiative designed to unlock small-scale housing development and improve project feasibility. This initiative would convene local lenders, employers, jurisdictions, and housing developers through a Housing Capital Roundtable to explore tools such as loan guarantees, blended public-private financing, and infrastructure-first site prioritization. By coordinating capital access, infrastructure investment, and development readiness, PCEDC can help reduce financial risk for builders while accelerating workforce housing production. Potential partners include local banks, municipal governments, state housing agencies, and employers seeking workforce housing solutions, with potential funding pathways including state housing grants, infrastructure programs, and regional lending partnerships. Together, these strategies position housing development as a foundational component of Pacific County’s long-term economic resilience.

Capital Access & Financing Innovation

Limited access to flexible capital remains one of the most significant barriers to economic development in Pacific County. While local banks maintain strong relationships with businesses, their lending models are generally optimized for lower-risk projects and established borrowers. This creates financing gaps for startups, small-scale developers, and innovative projects that fall outside conventional underwriting frameworks. Capital access innovation can help bridge this gap by combining public and private financing tools. One promising approach is the creation of a revolving loan fund or loan guarantee pool designed to reduce lender risk and

encourage investment in small businesses and housing projects. Partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) may also provide access to specialized lending programs that support underserved markets.

Implementing these strategies will require collaboration among financial institutions, economic development organizations, and government agencies. Potential partners include local banks, PCEDC, the Washington State Department of Commerce, USDA Rural Development, and philanthropic organizations focused on rural economic resilience. By developing new capital pathways, Pacific County can unlock projects that would otherwise remain stalled due to financing constraints.

Zoning Information Resource Updates:

One recurring theme from interviews during this project was the challenge of properly siting new homes and businesses. While the county has its own zoning code, each of the four municipalities within also have their own codes. This leads to an information patchwork effect, making preliminary research difficult. The recommendation is the consolidation, or centralization of zoning information. Depending on jurisdiction, zoning information may be as advanced as interactive mapping tools with parcel level data or static images of maps with limited granularity. A resource update may look like the following: Consolidation: All governments within Pacific County use the same interactive mapping tool with all zoning information, or negotiate collectively with one mapping tool provider. Centralization: All governments within Pacific County have their zoning information resources linked to the central Pacific County zoning information page. Execution: The EDC's role in this recommendation is advocate. The EDC would encourage contacts in local planning departments to align on a unified zoning information strategy for the purposes of building systems that support healthy growth. The updates themselves would be executed by the municipalities and county planning departments. The monetary and time costs to the EDC for this initiative are limited and likely within the existing regular course of business.

Zoning Simplification Initiative:

Building on the previous recommendation, the zoning codes themselves limit the number and types of appropriate parcels for new homes and businesses. The county government and cities each have distinct zoning codes. A review of the zoning information mentioned above indicates the county contains jurisdictions with as few as 3 or as many as 21 distinct zoning designations. Given the desire to spur both economic development and protect housing affordability, the set of the zoning codes within the county may warrant a comprehensive review, alignment, and simplification. Execution: The EDC's role within this recommendation is as an advocate. The EDC would encourage contacts within local planning departments to coordinate a zoning review, alignment, or simplification for the purposes of building systems that support healthy growth and making places that create tangible value. Changes to zoning code are significant undertakings likely to attract public resistance, but the EDC may serve as a catalyst for collaboration or conversation throughout the county. The monetary and time costs to the EDC for this initiative are limited and likely within the existing regular course of business.

“Up For Grabs” Campaign:

Taking advantage of deep and wide connections to the community, the EDC is recommended to generate, maintain, and formalize a list of desired businesses and amenities that lack a presence in the community. The EDC then publishes and presents the list as appropriate to local entrepreneurs and outside investors. The list would prioritize businesses and amenities with a strong likelihood of supporting secondary organic growth. For example, a commercial kitchen would lower access obstacles to community groups, micro value-add food processing businesses, and support the wedding economy by improving near-site catering access. Alternatively, an industrial equipment and supplies co-op would support existing maritime repair businesses while lowering obstacles to equipment access for the next generation of tradespeople. Execution: The EDC would generate and maintain a running list of desired amenities with limited or no competition within the county, sharing the list itself, the rationale, and background context as appropriate with interested parties.

“Beyond Shoulder Season” Campaign:

A recurring theme in our interviews was the seasonality of the economy. Many people are looking for opportunities to get more out of the existing capacity, but some businesses tend to shut down outside of peak seasons. This is less common than it used to be due to ongoing efforts throughout the county to extend the hospitality season. This recommendation builds on previous and existing efforts to extend the season while recognizing the success of previous efforts. The first primary action would be to continue encouraging off-season programming oriented towards locals to support businesses beyond the hospitality season. The other would be to continue encouraging shoulder-season programming to attract Portland and Seattle visitors, capitalizing on existing capacity without exacerbating summer season crowding, Execution: The EDC would promote a collaborative vision for the ongoing effort to extend the hospitality season, serve as a conversation leader to support collaboration between local businesses, and as a thought partner with the Evergreen Coast DMO. The EDC would also continue to serve as a vocal advocate for projects that support this effort, such as previous conference center efforts.

Nature and Agriculture Based Tourism:

By leveraging its rich agricultural and natural resources, Pacific County can transition from a summer-centric destination into a year-round hub for high-value "educational" tourism. The strategy centers on professionalizing niche experiences such as "Working Landscape" tours of inland cranberry bogs and farms that appeal to affluent hobbyists and families seeking authentic, localized goods. Central to this effort is the revitalization of events like the 'Wings Over Willapa' festival into a major annual event. By aligning local business participation, the county can capitalize on the late-September and early-October bird migration to anchor a new high-traffic season just as the traditional summer surge fades.

The execution of this vision relies on connecting coastal assets to the rural interior, encouraging visitors to explore via the Project DART (Discovering Area Recreation Trails)

network by foot or bike. Encouraging local RV parks and campgrounds to host specialized events and promoting the county as a premier bird-watching and agritourism destination will draw tourists into non-coastal towns like Raymond and South Bend. This integrated approach not only diversifies the visitor profile but also builds a more resilient, year-round economy that rewards local small businesses for their unique high-quality products.

Hospitality Career Pathways:

We recommend that the PCEDC partner with Grays Harbor College or other local colleges to create a Hospitality Management Certificate Program. Interviews with Pacific County hospitality leaders reveal a persistent challenge: a critical shortage of qualified candidates for mid-level and management roles. Local applicants often lack the specialized experience required for these higher-wage positions, while external candidates are frequently deterred by the region's severe lack of accessible housing. This "management gap" forces many small businesses to operate with reduced efficiency or rely on a transient labor pool, stifling long-term stability and growth. By establishing a local Hospitality Management Certificate Program, Pacific County can provide residents with a clear pathway to professional advancement without requiring them to relocate. This allows the community to grow its own leaders, ensuring that talent remains within the county while specifically targeting the "living-wage" roles that current residents aspire to fill.

Workforce Enhancement Pathways:

To cultivate a resilient local economy, PCEDC should assist in establishing a collaborative network between educational institutions and local industries to develop a specialized, home-grown talent pipeline. By partnering with Grays Harbor College and regional employers to implement "Targeted Workforce Training" programs, the county can design curriculums specifically tailored to the technical requirements of the hospitality, marine, and timber sectors. This initiative directly addresses critical labor shortages while increasing economic mobility, offering residents a pathway to high-wage careers and professional upskilling without the need for relocation. Strengthening the bond between the PCEDC, education providers, and private industry ensures that training modules evolve alongside market needs, ultimately building a robust human capital infrastructure that both retains existing businesses and attracts new enterprises seeking a stable, skilled workforce.

Pacific County Blue Marine Economy:

The PCEDC will lead a comprehensive strategy to maximize the economic value of Pacific County's natural marine resources. This initiative transitions the local economy from strictly raw harvesting to high-value industrial and biotech production, thereby reducing waste, diversifying the economic base, and capturing revenues currently lost to external markets.

Key Execution Point: Marine Resource Utilization Hub Establish a centralized, innovative facility that serves as an industrial bridge, enabling raw marine materials to be fully processed and utilized on-site rather than being exported as low-value commodities. This hub will process 30–50% of the marine biomass that is currently considered waste.

Primary Value Streams (Key Actions)

- On-site Chitosan Production: Directly process waste shells into high-grade biochemicals for lucrative industrial and medical markets.
- Organic Fertilizer Production: Convert fish-processing waste into specialized fertilizers enriched with seawater minerals, benefiting local agriculture.
- Strategic Aquaculture Research: Investigate sea ranching for salmonids and develop ocean-acidification-tolerant oyster genetics to secure long-term shellfish yields.
- Localized Value-Added Processing: Develop cooked, canned, and premium packaged convenience products to access regional and export markets and mitigate the impacts of seasonal harvest fluctuations.

Expected Outcomes and Key Themes

- 100% Resource Utilization (Zero Waste): Monetize every component of the organism, significantly increasing the total revenue generated per organism harvested.
- Capture "Economic Leakage": Prevent local raw resources from being shipped to external processors, thereby keeping jobs and profits within the county.
- Workforce Synergy: Leverage the local skilled workforce developed through parallel county training programs to support on-site manufacturing.
- Market Diversification: Broaden economic opportunities beyond traditional food markets into higher-stability, higher-margin technical sectors

Infrastructure & Regional Alignment:

All three forestry initiatives above depend on four infrastructure enablers that must be addressed in parallel. A PCEDC survey found broadband in Pacific County to be “brittle, expensive, and characterized by limited customer choice” directly constraining e-commerce platforms, remote manufacturing monitoring, and AI adoption by local SMBs. Highway connectivity, port access, and a vocational training pipeline are equally foundational. (Source 1)

Infrastructure Priority	Specific Action	Lead Timeline
Fiber Broadband (FTTP)	PUD No. 2-led fiber to Raymond & Long Beach industrial corridors	3–10 years
Vocational Training	Wood Innovation apprenticeships via Clatsop CC MERTS & GHC	Ongoing
Expedited Permitting	“Green Wood” review track with County Community Development	1–3 years
Port & Highway	Hwy 101/6 maintenance; navigation channel dredging at Willapa Harbor & Ilwaco	Ongoing

Table 7.4 Infrastructure Enablers for Pacific County Forestry Strategy. Source: Pacific County Comprehensive Plan 2020–2040 (Source 1)

PCEDC Role in these initiatives would include, leading fiber-to-the-premise advocacy through the PCEDC Broadband Working Group, coordinating PUD No. 2 expansion plans with WA Commerce broadband grants and prioritizing the Raymond and Naselle industrial corridors. Facilitating Wood Innovation apprenticeship curriculum development with Clatsop Community College MERTS and Grays Harbor College, connecting training programs directly to WWIIH equipment and employer partners. Maintain standing priorities to advocate for state and federal

resources to maintain Hwy 101, Hwy 6, and dredge navigation channels at Willapa Harbor and Ilwaco Ports.

Forest Bio-Economy Program:

This program focuses on high-margin wood innovation, specifically wood pellet production for export and essential oil extraction (e.g., Willapa Essentials).

Wood Pellet Export Facility (Small-to-Mid Scale)

Typical setup for a facility targeting Europe or Asia.

- Core Pelletizing Equipment: \$3–\$4 million (Includes crushing, drying, and packaging machinery).
- Warehousing & Loading Infrastructure: \$2 million for storage and rail car loading.
- Total Initial Capital (CAPEX): \$5 million – \$6 million for a complete production line.
- Ongoing Export Logistics: \$35–\$45 per ton for international shipping from the U.S..

Essential Oil Distillation (Willapa Essentials)

Initial costs for extracting high-purity oils from Cedarwood and Douglas Fir.

- Primary Extraction Hardware: \$150,000 for industrial steam and hydro-distillers.
- Quality Assurance (GC-MS Machine): \$75,000 to prove purity for premium pricing.
- Automated Bottling Line: \$120,000 for high-volume fulfillment.
- Facility Fit-Out: \$30,000 for utilities and IT setup.
- Total Startup Capital Needed: Approximately \$766,000 to reach profitability.

The PCEDC Role: Grant-Writing Support, The PCEDC will assist businesses in securing USDA REAP grants, which significantly lower these barriers.

Willapa Brand & Artisanal Woodworks Incubator:

This initiative focuses on high-end furniture and artisanal goods, providing shared tools and a digital foundation.

Artisan Shared Workshop (Incubator Setup)

Estimated costs to equip a high-precision communal space.

- Machinery & Tooling (CNC Focus): \$182,500 for core high-precision tools, including a \$60,000 CNC Machine and a \$15,000 Wide Belt Sander.
- Leasehold Improvements: \$50,000 for dust collection and industrial power installation.
- Workshop Rent & Deposits: \$14,000 (Estimate for initial two months).

Willapa Brand Digital Foundation

The digital infrastructure required to move local products to national premium markets.

- E-Commerce Platform Build: \$15,000 for high-end design and functionality.
- Photography Studio Setup: \$5,000 for high-quality visual assets to drive brand perception.
- Design Software Licenses: \$4,000 for specialized CAD and design tools.
- Initial Marketing Push: \$42,480 (Benchmark set at 30% of projected Year 1 sales).

Financial Monitoring Table

Asset Category	Description	Estimated Range
Heavy Machinery	Wood Pellet Plant or 5-Axis CNC	\$182,500 – \$4,000,000
Scientific Gear	Distillation & GC-MS Testing	\$225,000 – \$450,000
Digital/Branding	E-commerce, Studio, & Photography	\$20,000 – \$28,000
Compliance	Licenses, Permits, & Insurance	\$2,500 – \$8,000

8. Prioritization Framework - everyone (insert your recommendations into the appropriate timeframe)

8.1 Short-Term (0–2 Years)

- Technical studies
- Grant applications
- Hospitality Career Pathways
- Zoning Information Resource Update
- “Up for Grabs” Campaign
- Workforce Enhancement Pathways

8.2 Medium-Term (3–5 Years)

- “Beyond Shoulder Season” Campaign
- Site development
- Housing initiatives
- Capital fund creation
- Marine Utilization hub
- Willapa Brand & Artisanal Woodworks Incubator
- Forest Bio-Economy Program

8.3 Long-Term (5+ Years)

- Zoning Simplification Initiative
 - Industry diversification
 - Brand positioning
 - Regional coordination
-

9. Performance Metrics & Monitoring

- **Net New Jobs Created:** Distinguish between direct jobs (e.g., commercial fishermen, cannery workers) and indirect/induced jobs (e.g., equipment repair, local retail).
 - **Net New Business Starts:** Beyond just registrations, track the "Survival Rate" at the 2-year and 5-year marks.
 - **Average Median Income:** Specifically tracking the "Family Wage" in Pacific County to ensure the jobs created aren't just seasonal or minimum wage.
 - **Private Capital Investment:** The dollar amount of private money invested in local facilities, new vessels, or processing equipment as a result of EDC advocacy or incentives.
 - **Processing Value-Add:** The difference between the price of raw product and the price of the processed/packaged seafood leaving the county. Higher value-add means more local profit.
 - **Business Churn (Entry/Exit Rates):** The ratio of new business licenses issued to those closed. High entry rates with low exit rates indicate a healthy competitive environment.
 - **Workforce Pipeline:** Enrollment numbers in career related (Career and Technical Education) programs at local high schools or community colleges.
 - **Grant Funding Secured:** The total dollar amount of state/federal grants successfully pulled into the county for economic development.
 - **Tourism Multiplier (Local Capture):** How much of a tourist's \$100 stays in the county? This tracks if visitors are buying gas/groceries locally or bringing supplies from elsewhere.
 - **Off-Peak Visitor Volume:** Tracking volume of tourists during off-season and on-season to analyze differences.
 - **Length of stay:** Analyze data of tourists on the number of days spent in the county.
 - **Rent-to-Wage Ratio by Sector:** Specifically compare the average monthly rent in Pacific County to the average monthly wage of a Seafood Processing Worker or a Hospitality Staffer. If the ratio exceeds 40%, you have a workforce stability crisis.
 - **Housing Affordability Index (HAI):** Track the index score specifically for Pacific County. A score of 100 means a median-income family has exactly enough to qualify for a median-priced home.
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- Critical Areas

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