



Greater Pasco Area Economic Strategic Vision – Summary Report –

October 2017

Introduction

Pasco has become one of Washington’s fastest growing cities. Its residents – now majority Hispanic – are much younger than in peer cities, and most are employed. Leading sectors of the today’s economy are agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing.

But what’s next for Pasco’s economy? To answer that question, *Somos Pasco* creates a long-range vision and action plan for Pasco and its economy, in alignment with the most promising economic opportunities and community-wide priorities:

- The **industries to rely on** for job growth in the next decades
- **Investments** to support those sectors
- **Strategies** to improve educational attainment, wages and household incomes in the Pasco area
- The **top amenities** to enhance quality of life and make sure employers and their employees want to stay here

Somos Pasco is a collaboration of the Port of Pasco, City of Pasco and Franklin County, Benton Franklin Council of Governments, along with Pasco School District, Columbia Basin College, Pasco Chamber of Commerce, Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and other Tri-Cities community organizations and businesses.

Together, these partners are seeking a shared vision that moves Pasco ahead.

A 19-member Steering Committee guides the Economic Strategic Vision. This group met over 10 months to conduct economic research, investigate the strengths and challenges confronting Pasco’s economy, engage the community in the vision process and adopt core values, vision and strategies for the future economy. The Steering Committee’s number one goal was to “get everyone on the same page.”



A priority was gaining the broadest possible community participation. Nearly 2,000 area residents participated in *Somos Pasco*, through:

- Developing a bi-lingual English/Spanish brand for *Somos Pasco*
- Creating an interactive website: www.somospasco.org
- Interviews with a cross-section of community leaders and other stakeholders
- Online survey (in English and Spanish) attracting 1,600 participants
- Business/partner workshop co-sponsored with Pasco Chamber of Commerce
- Focus group to get input from Columbia Basin College students
- College scholarship contest for local high school students
- Community events with a “60-Second Survey” (English/Spanish)
- In-depth sessions with implementation team members

There’s good news about Pasco’s economic future. By 2016, Pasco had more than 70,000 residents and had become the fastest growing part of the Tri-Cities, among the fastest growing cities in the Pacific Northwest. The population grew nearly 6% per year from 2000 to 2010. In the current decade, Franklin County has been the fastest growing area in the state.

Notable strengths in Pasco’s economy include a formidable agriculture/food processing presence, a well established transportation/logistics hub, a growing manufacturing sector, an abundant water supply and robust infrastructure to support economic growth. Promising sectors for Pasco’s future economy are shown below.

<p>Ag-Industrial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Direct-to-table food manufacturing✓ Advanced manufacturing (e.g., specialty metals)✓ Multi-modal transport/logistics and distribution services✓ Construction & design <p>Consumer Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Planned retail centers and specialty districts (e.g., mixed use)✓ Latino/Anglo foodie culture catering to locals and visitors <p>Business and Government Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Professional/technical services to ag-industrial✓ Creative services from the arts to marketing✓ Customized workforce training
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Pasco has attracted a young, energetic, largely Hispanic workforce. The median age is just 29 – a decade younger than the statewide average. Most of Pasco’s labor force is employed and household incomes are climbing closer to regional and statewide norms.

Pasco area businesses and institutions are also bullish about their future prospects. A survey of local employers of all sizes from 1 employee to 2,000+ in the public, private and non-profit

sectors reveals 60% have plans to expand here in the future. And they strongly support added public amenities including: a year-round public market, arts and culture facilities, and walking/biking trail system.

The greatest challenge is education. Some 31% of Pasco's adult residents (25+ years) have no high school diploma. The proportion of diploma-less residents is even higher among Hispanic adults (59%). Only 14% of Pasco area adults have a bachelor's degree (4% of Hispanic adults). Pasco's high school graduation rate (75%) is also below the statewide average.

While these percentages are increasing, they remain well below regional and statewide averages, where 32% of residents (Washington) and 25% (Benton-Franklin) have a bachelor's degrees or higher. With educational attainment so closely related to long-term employment prospects and lifetime income, this presents the most significant barrier for Pasco's future economic vitality.

What's important to the community? In a word – education. From the outset of strategic planning, *Somos Pasco* participants revealed a deeply seated commitment to public education as the key to Pasco's future. The reemphasis and reinvestment in public education, and Pasco School District's pivot toward the STEM (science – technology – engineering – math) curriculum is gaining promising results. The partnership of public schools and superior higher education (Columbia Basin College, WSU Tri-Cities) to construct a “*K through College*” pipeline provides continuous support for students at all levels.

Beyond education, there's also community-wide agreement on other priorities:

- Building the future economy on a foundation of agriculture/food processing and other current strengths.
- Diversifying the economy into new sectors.
- Undertaking worthy community projects that support Pasco's quality of life.
- Capitalizing on Pasco's unique multi-cultural population and heritage.

Joining forces to shape Pasco's future economy, the Steering Committee and community have adopted an Economic Strategic Vision. Key elements include: Core Values for the community and its people; a Vision for Pasco to *envision*, *invest* and *achieve*; a robust set of more than 25 strategies; and an action plan identifying the lead partner responsible for each strategy. These key elements for *Somos Pasco* are outlined in the next pages.

Economic Strategic Vision



Foundation

Our roots are in agriculture and our mission is to produce food for America and the world.

We count on being well connected, to the Tri-Cities and beyond via highway, air, rail and river, and state-of-art telecommunications.

Education is the foundation for our economic future. Education is our future.

We want our businesses and our youth to stay and grow right here in Pasco.

Core Values

Our community is:

Livable	Affordable
Family friendly	Safe
Multi-cultural	Connected
Welcoming	Attractive

Our people are:

Ambitious	Educated
Strategic	Hard working
Visionary	Neighborly

Vision

Envision As the fastest growing community in a fast-growing region, our possibilities are limitless. We imagine a distinctive and highly livable community – and are creating that place.

Invest Placing strategic, timely investments—in innovation, private enterprise and job creation, education, public infrastructure and services—will ensure our continued economic vitality.

Achieve The benchmark for Pasco’s success will be economic and educational progress for every enterprise and every family in our multi-cultural community.



We are Pasco!



Our Strategies

There's community-wide consensus on what makes Pasco great – and where we should be headed.

1. Investing in Education

Education at all levels is the foundation for our economic future – the key to building the future workforce to capitalize on new opportunities. Pasco is on the right track, and already showing signs of improved educational attainment. Ongoing reinvestment in educational programs and facilities – voter supported – will be essential. (In general, the public education system in Pasco consists of Pasco School District, Columbia Basin College and WSU Tri-Cities.)

- a. **The “K through Career” pipeline:** Only through close collaboration can Pasco's (and Tri-Cities') public schools and higher education institutions offer solutions to meet the personal needs of every student. CBC and PSD have strong ties and shared programs. WSU has an admissions office on the CBC campus and attracts 300 transfers yearly. The higher ed institutions' course offerings are tailored to local/regional employees' needs in agriculture/viniculture, health sciences and engineering. That collaboration should continue and strengthen with an even greater level of communication between the organizations. Pasco School District has taken the lead to arrange for regular meetings of the organizations and how they manage the K through Career pathway through the pipeline.
Lead: Pasco School District
- b. **Career opportunity awareness:** Career path planning tied to local jobs is another priority. A big goal is to expose every student to career/job opportunities in several areas through: field trips to businesses, documentary films, summer camps, and in-school visits by business executives. While businesses can interact in many ways with the education system, this is the number one way they can prepare the students for the K-Career Pipeline. The
Lead: Pasco Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee
- c. **On job training:** Another opportunity is customized OJT (on job training) matching educational offerings at CBC with the emerging needs of the agriculture sector and other employers. CBC is developing certification programs for the hospitality and logistics sectors and other local industries. This provides a valuable service to employers and produces workers who now have the qualifications to warrant much higher wages. As the organization responsible for coordinating local workforce development programs, the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council offers a one-stop system to “meet the needs of the job seeker and the employer customer.”
Lead: Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council
- d. **Mentorships:** Access to the professions (law, medicine, etc.) often requires a guide – an individual who has successfully navigated that career path. Formal and informal mentorship programs can be established and expanded.
Lead: Pasco School District, Columbia Basin College and education-minded community organizations

- e. **Scholarships:** The community will create a fund to ensure that every graduating high school student who qualifies is given an opportunity to pursue higher education, regardless of the family's economic situation.
Lead: Columbia Basin College Foundation

2. Building on Our Strengths

Pasco has a competitive advantage in several economic sectors and niches. These will continue to be supported as mainstays of the future economy.

- a. **Food/food processing/value added/Pasco-branded specialty products** (e.g., asparagus): Opportunities to be pursued include recruiting more value added food processing, produce packaged as grocery-ready, and ready-to-serve frozen meals as well as expanding organic offerings. Given Pasco's prominence in this sector, the parties should consider creating and marketing a "Pasco" brand signifying higher quality and freshness. This could involve new linkages and cooperative research between existing firms, educational providers and innovation / entrepreneurship partners as with the Pasco Specialty Kitchen. Consider creation of an industry and university funded Food Innovation Center centered in Pasco.
Lead: TRIDEC, Port of Pasco, City of Pasco
- b. **Transportation/warehouse/distribution/logistics:** This sector is also flourishing and industry experts expect more new entries, drawing upon Pasco's superior location, robust labor pool, and sites as they become available and are made development-ready. The City of Pasco, private entities and TRIDEC will take the lead in this effort. Evaluate availability, cost and accessibility of Pasco industrial sites – in terms of strengths/weaknesses – relative to other transportation and distribution locations in SE Washington / NE Oregon. Also catalog available land for future development.
Lead: City of Pasco, TRIDEC, private companies
- c. **Advanced manufacturing;** ag-related manufacturing: Industry experts anticipate increased automation in agriculture and food processing. Pasco's possible niche in metals manufacturing may also present the possibility of expanding in this niche to manufacturing equipment and parts as the automation advances. The Big Pasco Industrial Center offers low-cost space for startups; the Pasco Processing Center has become home to major manufacturing and distribution firms – focused on food processing but with opportunity for more diversified manufacturing as the region continues to rapidly grow its population and skilled labor force base. There is also opportunity for businesses serving as vendors or subcontractors to other industries region-wide including Hanford clean-up.
Lead: Port of Pasco and TRIDEC
- d. **Port of Pasco:** airport, marine, industrial development: Port authorities are engines of economic growth for fortunate rural communities. The Port of Pasco has everything it needs to serve this role: an airport with daily commercial service, marine facilities, and land for future industrial development. With successful build-out of the Pasco Processing Center, the Port is looking for suitable sites, getting positioned to redevelop industrial/waterfront sites, develop a new industrial park offering continued opportunities for local/regional business expansion and diversification. The Port is able to invest in real estate to support long-term economic

development. With continued airport development and linkage to needs of area employers, Pasco along with Spokane becomes eastern Washington's go-to business destination. Counting on the successful partnership with TRIDEC, the City, County, PUD and with continued solid community support, anything is possible.

Lead: Port of Pasco in partnership with others

- e. **Timely investments in infrastructure expansion/upgrades:** One of the greatest challenges for any fast growing community is keeping pace with the growing demand for infrastructure expansion. Water, wastewater collection and treatment, stormwater, streets, power, telecommunications must be in place in time to support new residents and jobs – an urgent need requiring ongoing leadership, advance planning and follow-through. Much as is beginning to happen on Ainsworth Street, there is the need and opportunity to begin improving the visual appeal of the 397 (Oregon Avenue) and 395 industrial transportation corridors – an increasingly important factor in securing industrial investments for image-oriented firms seeking to impress customers, expand beyond manufacturing to product design and marketing, and attract next generation workforce.

Lead: This is an ongoing effort by the major infrastructure providers which include the City of Pasco, Franklin PUD, Franklin County and Port of Pasco.

- f. **Affordability:** This trait can be exploited as an asset: Pasco's affordable housing has contributed to its fast growth and high percentage of home ownership, makes it appealing to employers. Greater diversity of housing product, both single family and multi family – from affordable to urban density to riverfront executive – is needed for Pasco to become a clear residence of choice – and an added draw for industrial, commercial and public sector investment. The City and County can aid in the direction of diversified housing product while maintaining affordability.

Lead: City of Pasco and Franklin County

- g. **Business development:** With rapid population and economic growth, it is easy for a community to rest on its laurels. But that risks taking what comes along rather than shaping your own destiny. Pasco has the opportunity to step up its game with an intentional strategy aimed at obtaining more economic and community value from the development investments made in the years ahead. This may mean application of explicitly defined benchmarks – as for employment and wage growth, and for greater local business diversification. Strategic collaborations and cooperative partnerships are pivotal to achieving results. Led by local organizations including the Port of Pasco, City of Pasco and Columbia Basin College (CBC), other key participants in the *Pasco Partnership* should include TRIDEC, Franklin County, the Pasco and Tri-Cities Chambers of Commerce, Visit Tri-Cities, WSU Tri-Cities, and Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council. State agencies of pivotal importance include the Washington State Departments of Transportation and Commerce.

Lead: Multiple strategic collaborations and partnerships

3. Looking Ahead to the Next Chapter

Diversifying Pasco's economy beyond food and today's other leading employers is another imperative. Several opportunities have been identified.

- a. **Local professional/technical/creative employment** to serve local/regional clientele: Pasco does not yet have its proportionate share of the region's higher wage professional ("white collar") employment. Filling the gap offers an opportunity to increase both local wages and employment. Food processors and advanced manufacturers may be provided greater incentive to diversify beyond production to include R&D, testing, new product design and administrative functions in a community re-positioned as also attractive for managerial and professional talent. Professional service businesses also can be more readily induced to open a Pasco office when presented with the demographics of the region's fastest growth community coupled with availability of high quality/high image office/commercial space – as in West Pasco, the downtown or on the Port's waterfront properties. Specifically the City of Pasco is leading on the Broadmoor Master Plan, which will create traditional office space, DPDA leads downtown redevelopment to attract the creative class and the Port of Pasco leads several mixed use projects along the waterfront that will include a professional component.
Lead: City of Pasco, Downtown Pasco Development Authority, Port of Pasco
- b. **Homegrown local service/retail businesses:** The majority Hispanic population, with many Spanish speaking households, creates a market for local enterprises to serve that segment's needs, not just for Pasco but the growing Hispanic population throughout the region. Affordable business space can help incubate these new, local businesses. The community offers diverse locations for commercial retail and service business – including downtown, Court Street and most recently, Road 68. For many businesses, long term economic success is predicated on products and services that draw both Latino and Anglo clientele – marketing to residents and visitors that value being part of the region's most diverse community.
Lead: To be identified
- c. **Business development training** to incubate local entrepreneurship and accelerate local investments: Columbia Basin College can offer training tailored to forming and incubating local small businesses. Courses should be tailored to schedules convenient for business owners; market success stories through media and personal contacts respected by established and just-starting business entrepreneurs. The Chambers of Commerce also offer business development training as does Fuse, a coworking space located in Richland.
Lead: Columbia Basin College, Pasco Chamber of Commerce, Fuse
- d. **Tech industry:** The expertise attracted to the Tri-Cities continuously generates patents, new products, and opportunities for spinoff businesses. The available/affordable land and ready workforce make Pasco a promising place to attract some of these high tech startups. With an authentic downtown, diverse culture, affordable workspaces and emerging waterfront, Pasco should be particularly conducive to creative firms –for media, marketing specialists, product designers and makers spaces, as

well as IT entrepreneurs. Though interviews indicate that embracing art as part of future development would be helpful in recruiting creative firms.

Lead: City of Pasco

4. Priority Projects

There is broad-based support for undertaking a handful of worthy community priority projects.

- a. **Riverfront development:** Among the highest priorities for community members is developing Pasco's riverfront. The shared vision is mixed use residential-commercial development combined with open space and public access along the expansive riverfront – including trail linkages from the waterfront to the downtown. Consider product types as yet under-represented in the Tri-Cities areas – as for townhomes, live-work spaces, and mixed use buildings with ground floor commercial and residential above. The first requirement is creation of a mixed use zone, which is not currently available in the City of Pasco.

Lead: Port of Pasco in partnership with City of Pasco

- b. **Year-round public market:** Another community priority is constructing a public market in downtown Pasco or the Marine Terminal as a year-round (weather-protected) attraction. Continue to maintain linkages with and opportunities for expansion of the Pasco Specialty Kitchen for foodie start-ups and food product innovation.

Lead: Port of Pasco in partnership with City of Pasco

- c. **Walking/biking trail system:** With some trails in place, there's an appetite in the community for more. Walkability and bikability are key ingredients contributing to quality of life. With great trails that run along I-182 and the Columbia River, community members see trails as asset they would like further developed, connecting downtown Pasco with the riverfront, and with connectivity across jurisdiction boundaries: an opportunity for citizens, park departments and Benton Franklin COG to coordinate priorities.

Lead: Benton Franklin COG

- a. **Aquatics center:** The multi-year initiative to build an aquatics facility in Pasco remains a priority for many community members. Develop a funding program that achieves broad community and user support including potential donor participation.

Lead: Pasco Public Facilities District

- d. **Downtown revitalization:** Developing Pasco's downtown as a distinctive local and regional destination is the shared vision of community leaders and residents, including local youth. Embracing the historic character, upgrading the buildings, installing public art, and activating the downtown year-round are elements of the shared vision. The City is investing significantly in the downtown, updating aging infrastructure and repurposing buildings. Encourage a vibrant Latino-Anglo mix of shops and business ownerships. Attract professional and creative service firms as well as retailers into the downtown; set in place the building blocks for adjoining residential neighborhood improvement and new multi-floor residential and infill development including adaptive building reuse.

Lead: Downtown Pasco Development Authority

5. Multi-Cultural Community

With a strong Hispanic cultural heritage and tradition – and now a majority population – Pasco plans to embrace and capitalize on this unique asset.

- a. **Downtown character/signage:** Nothing signals Pasco's unique population more than the downtown and its array of Hispanic businesses. New attractions possibly including a public market, along with way-finding signage and banners in Spanish and English can reinforce and exploit Pasco's uniqueness. Promote Pasco events and attractions throughout the Tri-Cities region and as a not-to-be missed stop with traveler itineraries (as for those traveling to Walla Walla's wine country or to the Spokane area).
Lead: Downtown Pasco Development Authority and City of Pasco
- b. **Latino-themed events:** Traditional annual events and newly promoted ones – festivals, fairs, carnivals, parades, bakery events, mariachi festivals in and near the downtown – offer another strategy to underscore Pasco's distinctive character and draw attendees from the Tri-Cities and beyond. Several successful events already provide a foundation, including one of the West's largest Cinco de Mayo celebrations, Fiery Foods Festival, and the Taco Crawl. There's room for more – keeping in mind the limited pool of community volunteers. The Farmers Market can be used seasonally as an events venue with the improvements being made by Downtown Pasco.
Lead: Downtown Pasco Development Authority and community volunteers
- c. **Hispanic cultural center:** Within the community, there's an interest in having "a place" to gather, meet and celebrate – an indoor/outdoor arts and culture center. The first step is the pursuing the development of an arts and culture commission at the City of Pasco.
Lead: City of Pasco
- d. **Trade mission/Sister City relationship with Mexico:** With so many Pasco families having roots in Mexico, the prospect of Pasco linking with a community in Mexico seems like a natural fit. Trade is built on relationships and there is potential that Pasco can utilize existing familial relationships to develop trade between regions. This could be encouraged through an official Sister City selected through a community-wide decision process or contest. Look for Sister City linkages and trade missions offering opportunity for business investment as well as cultural exchange. Currently the Port of Pasco is working with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, ProMexico and the Mexican Consulate on developing this relationship.
Lead: Port of Pasco
- e. **Conversational Spanish language classes for English speakers:** To raise the bi-lingual competence in Pasco, the School District and College will sponsor informal, free or low cost English/Spanish classes taught by volunteers.
Lead: Pasco School District, Columbia Basin College, community volunteers

6. How Are We Doing?

Pasco's progress (and the region's) will be monitored annually and measured against statewide benchmarks adopted for key strategy areas. Wherever possible, the ongoing evaluation will use data available from Benton Franklin Trends.

Demographics	% growth in population Median age of population % of population of prime working ages (25-65)
Employment	Total employment (% unemployed) Labor force participation/employees per household % Ag sector employment % Non-ag manufacturing employment % Transportation/warehouse employment % professional employment
Income	Average annual wage for key sectors (noted above) # of businesses in Pasco zip code (by sector) Average wage (Hispanic, all) Total household income (Hispanic, all)
Educational Attainment	% 4-year high school graduation % Adults high school diploma % Adults post-secondary education/degree % Bilingual competency (high school) # English/Spanish learners
Housing	Average housing price Average housing price as a percentage of household income
Events	Annual attendance at major community events
Projects	Annual progress on priority projects

Lead: Benton Franklin COG and Port of Pasco

Somos Pasco Documents



Community Engagement

Project fact sheet
Community Engagement Plan
Website somospasco.org

Bi-lingual Branding

Somos Pasco logo
Branding options

Steering Committee

Executive and Steering Committee roster
November 18, 2016 agenda
February 3, 2017 agenda
April 7, 2017 agenda
May 5, 2017 agenda
June 2, 2017 agenda
July 6, 2017 agenda

Economic Analysis

Regional Economic Data & Market Analysis
1/26/17
Cities Potentially Comparable to Pasco
4/26/17
SWOT Analysis 1/23/17
Port Agenda (SWOT Analysis)
Profile of Pasco Economy

Surveys

Summary of Stakeholder Interviews 2/6/17
60-Second Survey (English/Spanish)
Contribute Your Vision: Online Survey
(English/Spanish)
Online survey results (English/Spanish)

Business/Partner Forum

Forum agenda 5/15/17
Participant worksheet
Presentation PowerPoint
Forum results

CBC Focus Group

Invitation to 3/9/17 event
Discussion guide
Summary of results: *Cultivating Young Leadership and Building Community*

Scholarship Contest

Announcement
Evaluation sheet
Contest entries
Translation of Spanish entry
Announcement of scholarship winners
Notification of winners

Partner Focus Groups

Participant list 8/22/17 – 8/23/17

Publicity

Somos Pasco banner
Somos Pasco tee shirt