

## **NUTS AND BOLTS – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

The City’s traditional role in economic development has been to retain existing businesses and recruit others to the area in order to maintain existing jobs while helping to create others that offer “competitive wages, meaningful and secure labor and opportunity for advancement.”

### ***Business Retention***

At their core, business retention efforts seek to ensure that existing City businesses do not relocate their businesses elsewhere. To avoid this from happening – and to actually attract new businesses from around the region – business retention efforts typically seek to provide a “nurturing” environment within which small firms flourish. As Del Birch says in his article, “[Eyes Wide Open: A Practical Guide to Business Retention](#).”

“A business retention program is a proactive effort to build a relationship with the business owner and connect the owner to the economic, community, and workforce development system.”

So, creating a supportive culture between local nonprofits, businesses and government is one key element of business retention. City responsiveness to the needs and concerns of business owners is a key component of supportiveness. This includes offering streamlined regulatory assistance, like an efficient permitting process for example, and otherwise seeking to expediently remove impediments to growth.

More cutting edge business retention efforts include providing businesses with market research used to create profitable and efficient business plans. (See “[Economic Gardening: Next Generation Applications for a Balance Portfolio Approach to Economic Growth](#)”).

### ***Business Recruitment***

The most prominent of recruitment efforts are tax breaks, tax credits and other incentives that make it more profitable to operate in one place versus another. A classic example is Vancouver, BC’s film tax credits. An increasing amount of feature films and television shows have stories that take place in Seattle. But, the production crews choose to film in Vancouver rather than Seattle. Why? Probably, because Vancouver offers lucrative tax credits that make it less costly to film there.

### ***The Emerging View of Economic Development***

Amid the well-publicized ‘demise of the suburbs’ and the rapid growth of urban centers, the emerging view of economic development focuses on enhancing quality of life in the given city. Quality of life enhancements are, in sum, efforts taken to develop a place with attractive features that businesses and their workers want to live and work in. This includes a community that offers ample and compelling entertainment options, food and retail destinations, a vibrant arts and culture community, nightlife for the young and old, walkable neighborhoods and good schools for children.

### ***Additional Resources***

- [To Grow Small Businesses, Doing What Local Governments Do Best](#)
- [Eyes Wide Open: A Practical Guide to Business Retention](#)
- [Economic Gardening: Next Generation Applications for a Balance Portfolio Approach to Economic Growth](#)

***Walk Score– A Quality of Life Indicator:***

An increasingly popular indicator of community quality of life is “walkability.” Walkability – or one’s ability to walk to complete basic errands -- has significant impacts on public health, quality of life and even economic vitality. Non-pedestrian friendly auto-centric communities naturally see more motor vehicle accidents and injuries. Furthermore, walkable communities decrease the risks of costly and dangerous health conditions like diabetes by decreasing the risk of obesity. Finally, walkable downtowns are more likely to be thriving with pedestrians that bring wealth and value to local businesses.

According to WalkScore.com – the authority on a community’s overall walkability -- Burien’s overall Walk Score of 48 (out of 100) indicates that one must drive to complete most errands. However, this score is higher than *all* of Burien’s neighbors (see links below). Burien is also becoming increasingly walkable. Downtown’s new town square developments and the nearby hub of restaurants, bars, retail and coffee shops produce a Walk Score well into the 90s – a so called “walkers paradise.”

While Burien has been moving in the right direction, it still has room for improvement. One living outside of the city center must drive to complete most errands.

***Additional Resources:***

- [Walk Score Burien](#)
  - [Walk Score - Kent](#)
  - [Walk Score – Des Moines](#)
  - [Walk Score - Tukwila](#)
  - [Walk Score - Renton](#)
  - [Walk Score – Federal Way](#)
- [Wabi Burien](#)
- [Burien in Motion](#)
- [Walkability and Body Mass Index.](#)

***Other Quality of Life Resources:***

- [MyNorthWest.com: Your Zip Code is More Important Than Your Genetic Code](#)
- [King County Public Health City of Burien Health Profile](#)