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INNOVATION ECONOMY AND PLACEMAKING IN FEDERAL WAY

SUBMITTED TO THE GREATER FEDERAL WAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BY:
INNOVATION COLLECTIVE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intro	2
Stakeholder Engagement	5
Innovation	9
Why It Matters	6
Innovation: How Federal Way Economy Wins	13
Innovation: How Others Are Winning	22
Placemaking	26
Why It Matters	26
How Federal Way Placemaking Wins	32
Key Spaces	35
Arts and Innovation District	43
Placemaking: How Others Are Winning	44
Activation of Federal Way	54
Summary of Observations	61
Food Scene	63
Environmental Tech	68
Appendix	72
About	81

02

SCOPE:

Market Research and Trends Analysis:

- Conduct in-depth analysis of local, regional, and national innovation-aligned industry sectors to identify high-growth potential.
- Examine trends, emerging technologies, and market demands to pinpoint key sectors crucial for District 30's development.
- In-person and virtual meetings to meet with community members, stakeholders, employees, business owners and regional/national industry aligned sector leads for interviews, surveys, etc

Demographic Study and Transportation Corridors Assessment:

- Study demographics and trends, particularly along transportation corridors of the Light Rail.

Site Identification and Space Utilization:

- Evaluate identified sites to optimize space usage, suggesting innovative possibilities
- Propose space design/redesign strategies to cater to the needs of businesses, community, education, and innovators

Recommendations for Campus Activation:

- Develop actionable recommendations for activating potential campuses, fostering a dynamic ecosystem.
- Envision programming that supports diverse stakeholders and encourages collaboration and innovation

Collaboration and Engagement:

- Collaborate closely with Chamber staff and other stakeholders, facilitating focus groups and outreach activities.
- Engage in dialogue with community members, businesses, and educational institutions to gather diverse perspectives.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Greater Federal Way Chamber of Commerce has been working with Innovation Collective to perform a **market analysis on the creation of start-up/entrepreneurial economies and business acceleration, within two identified industry segments, delineating opportunities for campus development in the Greater Federal Way area of the South Puget Sound region**. For presenting this information you will see it broken down into “**Innovation Economy**” and “**Spaces**”.

Innovation Collective was chosen to partner on this report and to support the work, as this is the same spirit that Innovation Collective is built on. Our approach aligns with a strengths-based strategy for instigating change among individuals, entrepreneurs, start-ups, and the broader social and economic fabric of the region by using a flywheel model based on appreciative inquiry. It centers on the notion of humans as creative builders collaborating to address challenges within industrial segments. This approach actively involves large corporate partners, fosters the growth of valuable companies, establishes innovation campuses, strengthens civic connections, and encourages diverse residents to engage in building social bonds designed around learning skills. The ultimate goal is to propel project-based initiatives that co-create robust communities and economies.

04

PURPOSE, CONT'D

An Innovation Ecosystem is one that is all inclusive of creators, small businesses, and entrepreneurs.

For clarity, some definitions used in this report are:

Creators: Creators are humans who have ideas they want to act upon. These could be small businesses, art projects, scalable business ideas, product designs, book topics, non profit projects, etc.

Small Businesses: Small businesses are those with businesses within Federal Way that are not scalable operations. These are brick and mortars or home based services, for example, that do not have the intention of scaling beyond the local area. The typical customer of a small business in Federal Way is the population within Federal Way or neighboring communities.

Entrepreneurs: These are individuals with scalable businesses or business ideas/prototypes. These businesses typically rely on connections outside of Federal Way for product distribution, connections, etc. The typical customer of these businesses is larger, such as regional, national, or international.



05

COMMUNITY SENTIMENTS

IN JANUARY 2024, INNOVATION COLLECTIVE DID AN IN-PERSON IMMERSION IN FEDERAL WAY TO BEGIN A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNITY, AIMING TO IDENTIFY KEY ECONOMIC VERTICALS THAT CAN CATALYZE THE CITY'S GROWTH AND INNOVATION ECONOMY. IN ADDITION TO OUR TEAM, WE ENGAGED EXPERTS IN THE FIELDS OF THE ARTS ECONOMY AND CLIMATE INNOVATION. WE USED THE PROCESS OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY TO IDENTIFY STRENGTHS THAT THE COMMUNITY SEES WITHIN THEIR LOCAL CITY AND REGION.

Engagement of Industry Experts

Our approach included the engagement of two industry experts who visited Federal Way and brought insights into the arts economy and climate innovation opportunities. Their expertise was pivotal in understanding how Federal Way can leverage its diverse cultural and environmental assets to foster economic growth and community cohesion.

Engagement Highlights and Methodology

Our site visit facilitated direct interactions with a broad spectrum of the Federal Way community. These conversations provided valuable insights into the community's aspirations, challenges, and the social fabric of Federal Way. During the site visits, interviews were had with shopkeepers, pastors, students, grocers, servers, security guards, and lifelong residents.



**KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM COMMUNITY
SENTIMENTS**

“ *The best part of Federal Way is the diverse population of residents we have and the great restaurant choices* ”

- **Community Awareness:** A palpable sense of a fragmented social fabric paired with a desire for more communal and after-work activities.
- **Walkable Downtown:** The absence of a central, walkable downtown area was noted as a significant gap, limiting opportunities for community and economic activity.
- **Creative Community Hub:** There is a strong appetite for dedicated space(s) that can serve as a center of gravity for the creative class in Federal Way.
- **Distinct Identity:** Residents expressed a strong desire for Federal Way to carve out its unique identity, distinct from neighboring Tacoma and Seattle.

Special Community Anchors

The food scene, diversity, Rhododendron Garden and Bonsai Museum emerged as critical community assets, deeply valued by residents. These spaces are not just recreational but serve as cultural and community identities, underscoring the community's connection to unique assets that represent their sense of self.

07

BUSINESS LEADER AND STAKEHOLDER SENTIMENTS

IN MARCH 2024, INNOVATION COLLECTIVE DID AN IN-PERSON IMMERSION IN FEDERAL WAY TO CONTINUE THE COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNITY, AIMING TO HONE IN ON THE KEY ECONOMIC VERTICALS THAT COULD CATALYZE THE CITY'S GROWTH AND INNOVATION LANDSCAPE. IN ADDITION TO OUR TEAM, WE ENGAGED OUR INDUSTRY EXPERT BEHZOD SIRJANI. THEY SAT DOWN WITH 10 DIFFERENT GROUPS FROM ACROSS FEDERAL WAY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR PERSPECTIVES AND REACTIONS TO THE CURRENT DISCOVERY WORK THAT INNOVATION COLLECTIVE HAS DONE IN THE AREA.

Engagement of Industry Experts

Our approach included the engagement of industry experts who visited Federal Way and feedback and focus groups with groups from around Federal Way. This included King County Economic Alliance, SKTL, Sound Transit, and leaders from local wellness organizations, educational institutions, ethnic organizations, businesses, and arts & entertainment groups.

Engagement Highlights and Methodology

Innovation Collective had discussions and focus groups with each of the above-mentioned organizations. The primary goals of each conversation were to:

- Identify what of the current findings resonated with each group
- Identify what was missing from the discovery work that should be considered and integrated into the work moving forward
- Highlight any areas of particular interest that should be explored more

These conversations involved both local strengths and macro trends for the market and the campus itself.

**KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM BUSINESS LEADER
AND STAKEHOLDER SENTIMENTS**

“*Federal Way residents want to chart their own destiny and lead from within.*”

The interviews revealed a diverse array of perspectives and experiences within the community. A key strength consistently highlighted is the rich cultural tapestry of Federal Way, as evidenced by the 107+ languages spoken in the school district. However, there is a lack of spaces and programs that bring different groups together organically. Many expressed that existing community hubs and third places tend to operate in silos, failing to foster meaningful interconnectivity across ethnic, economic, and social lines; including a local lack of consistent and open relationships with the tribes nearby. Businesses like The Trap Lab are rare exceptions in this regard.

A deep appreciation for nature was also a recurring theme, though it is not perceived within the community as a shared activity or economic opportunity.

The community acknowledged a significant opportunity in celebrating, improving, and exporting best practices for establishing a harmonious yet diverse community and economy.

From an economic standpoint, the small business ecosystem faces several hurdles. Many entrepreneurs started their businesses out of necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic. As they have grown, they have encountered challenges with commercial space affordability, a lack of pop up space, and a need for basic operational support. This desire for support also represents a tension, as many groups shared the sentiment that "people don't want to be developed by outside forces." Federal Way residents want to chart their own destiny and lead from within.

WHY INNOVATION ECONOMIES AND PLACEMAKING MATTERS TO BUSINESS LEADERS

The City of Federal Way is at a pivotal crossroads. It can either continue as a bedroom community, providing housing for the workers of Seattle and Tacoma, or it can seize the opportunity to build a powerful and creative economy in the heart of the city. This report seeks to engage the business community in understanding the importance of fostering an innovation economy that aligns with authentic local culture, leverages real community strengths, and integrates placemaking strategies to create a vibrant, thriving community and economy.

A strong innovation economy serves as a narrative that all residents can engage with, as it acts as an engine for sustainable economic growth; driving creativity, encouraging entrepreneurship, and embracing cutting-edge technologies.

For Federal Way, this means capitalizing on the unique assets—from a talented and diverse workforce to a supportive and culturally rich community—to create an environment where both new and established businesses can thrive. Placemaking is integral to this vision, as it supports the creative economy and enhances the quality of life for residents and businesses alike.

Young firms are at the forefront of this economic transformation. They bring fresh ideas and energy, acting as leading indicators of economic health and vitality. Supporting these dynamic enterprises will not only invigorate the existing businesses but also attract new ventures, creating a win-win-win scenario for the entire community. **As these young firms grow, they drive more demand for local services, boosting the overall economy and fostering a resilient business ecosystem.**

10

WHY IT MATTERS TO BUSINESS

Federal Way faces a significant challenge: the exodus of talented graduates to other cities and the lack of a shared vision of an innovation economy. Young professionals, equipped with innovative skills, often leave in search of better opportunities. By developing a strong innovation economy, we can retain this valuable talent, providing hope, high-paying jobs, purpose, and pride for our residents. This will create a community where people want to stay, grow, and invest in the future.

Creating a launching pad for startups and companies that complement our local strengths is essential to attract and retain young leaders. This report outlines the needs and opportunities that we, as a business community, must tackle. By doing so, the community can ensure that a decade from now, it will look back with pride at how collective efforts have rooted multi-billion dollar industries in Federal Way. These industries will create a flourishing life for the current residents and future generations of the Federal Way Region.

In essence, building an innovation economy in Federal Way is not merely an economic strategy—it is a commitment to the community's future. **A story to believe in and create together.** This report aims to inform and mobilize the business community to embrace this vision, recognizing the profound benefits of fostering a vibrant, innovative, and prosperous Federal Way.



11

WHY IT MATTERS: DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS



Developing an innovation economy has several positive effects on traditional and older businesses. This transformation is not only beneficial for the new industries but also revitalizes established sectors by fostering a more dynamic and interconnected economic environment.

1. Enhanced Productivity and Efficiency: Integrating innovative technologies into traditional businesses can lead to significant improvements in productivity and operational efficiency. For example, digital transformation, such as adopting advanced IT infrastructure, can streamline operations, reduce costs, and enhance service delivery. The Brookings Institution notes that digital technologies can create powerful new efficiencies and economies of scale across various sectors, including healthcare, education, and communications [【Brookings】](#) .

2. Economic Diversification and Stability: Transitioning to an innovation-driven economy helps diversify the economic base of a region. This diversification can protect older businesses from market fluctuations and economic downturns by providing new revenue streams and business opportunities. The example of Phoenix illustrates how a shift towards advanced industries and a technologically skilled workforce helped stabilize and grow the regional economy after the housing market collapse [【Brookings】](#) .

12

WHY IT MATTERS: DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS

3. **Access to New Markets and Customers:** Innovation districts and tech hubs often become centers of economic activity, attracting new businesses, talent, and investments. Traditional businesses located near these hubs can benefit from increased foot traffic, networking opportunities, and partnerships with innovative firms. Chattanooga's innovation district, anchored by its high-speed internet infrastructure, has revitalized its downtown area and attracted a mix of businesses and residents, creating a vibrant economic environment [【Brookings】](#) .

4. **Job Creation and Workforce Development:** The rise of innovative firms stimulates job creation in various sectors, including traditional industries. These firms often require a range of services, from manufacturing to logistics, which can boost employment in those areas. Additionally, the emphasis on STEM education and skills development in innovation economies prepares the workforce for high-tech jobs, benefitting both new and existing companies that require skilled labor [【Heartland Forward】](#) [【Brookings】](#) .

5. **Increased Investment in Infrastructure:** The development of an innovation economy often leads to substantial investments in infrastructure, which benefits all businesses in the region. Improved transportation, communications, and utilities infrastructure not only supports new tech ventures but also enhances the operational capabilities of traditional businesses. Investments in municipal high-speed internet, as seen in Chattanooga, have provided a solid foundation for both innovative startups and established businesses to thrive [【Brookings】](#) .

Reports from both Brookings and Heartland Forward underscore these benefits by providing data on how young firms and innovation hubs contribute to broader economic growth and stability. By fostering a culture of innovation, regions can ensure that both new and traditional businesses benefit from the synergies created by a more dynamic and interconnected economic landscape.

13

HOW FEDERAL WAY INNOVATION ECONOMY WINS

The following is a strategic plan for developing two innovation economies in District 30, specifically in Federal Way. These innovation economies leverage local strengths and community feedback to create sustainable and inclusive economic opportunities, a true circular economy. The two proposed innovation economies focus on:

Arts + Food Experiences (Taste of Art):

This initiative aims to combine Federal Way's culinary strengths with its growing arts scene to create a unique cultural hub. By hosting innovative and memorable events that blend food and art, the goal is to attract tourism, foster local creativity, and build a thriving local economy with consistent activities for residents and visitors.

Climate + Food Waste (Better Waste, Better World):

This initiative focuses on environmental stewardship by addressing food waste and promoting sustainable practices. By encouraging reusable containers, reducing organic waste, and hosting innovative events like the "Get Wasted" festival, Federal Way can become a leader in environmental justice and sustainability. This initiative aims to create new companies, attract environmentally conscious individuals, and inspire other communities to adopt similar practices.

The document emphasizes that these initiatives are sustainable, grassroots-driven efforts that build strong, consistent economies in Federal Way. The strategic plan provides clear economic focuses that invite community participation and contribute to the region's growth and innovation of a circular economy.



14

INNOVATION ECONOMIES EXPANDED

In the Federal Way region, there are two distinct opportunities to build strong innovation economies that reflect feedback focus groups, leverage local strengths, use grassroots innovation economy best practices, and present real economic opportunities for the region.

Great innovation economies have clear verticals with grassroots models. This means a distinct and clear economic focus that others can articulate, want to participate in, feel they can participate in, and have simple ways to start contributing to it.

For Federal Way, here are two Innovation Economies that meet this criteria.



15

INNOVATION ECONOMY #1: ARTS + FOOD EXPERIENCES

Federal Way has a deep love for the arts, and while it may not yet be seen as a leader in the arts by neighboring cities, it is recognized as a culinary capital. So, why not mix culinary prowess with a burgeoning arts scene to create a unique and nationally acclaimed cultural hub?

Imagine a vibrant fusion of flavors and creativity, where diverse restaurant owners, talented chefs, and passionate home foodies come together to transform food into art. By celebrating their craft, we can honor their contributions and unlock exciting economic opportunities through innovative and quirky food experiences that augment traditional arts.

Picture this: Instead of just having a dinner special before a concert, we take it up a notch. How about a dinner in the park where each section of the concert is paired with specific dishes that tantalize your taste buds and elevate your senses? Or let's get really wild—imagine hosting legendary K-Pop band “BTS” for a massive concert sprawling from the stairs of the PAEC and Town Square Park, with nothing but Korean Food and a Korean arts auction with proceeds going to support local kids' music programs. Now that's memorable!



16

INNOVATION ECONOMY #1: ARTS + FOOD EXPERIENCES

But this isn't just a one-off big idea; it's the foundation for a consistent and thriving local economy. By empowering our local creative economy of foodies to host arts experiences and partner with the local arts scene, we create a vibrant calendar of community events. These events provide locals with opportunities to launch new ideas and companies, offer a steady stream of activities that build the social fabric of the town, and give the 4 million-plus residents of the Puget Sound area a compelling reason to visit Federal Way.

This consistent blend of food and art not only attracts strong tourism but also makes Federal Way a magnet for those who want to be at the forefront of creativity. It retains and draws in individuals who are passionate about food and art, turning Federal Way into a place where innovation thrives and community bonds strengthen.

Let's turn Federal Way into a destination where art meets culinary delight, and every meal is a masterpiece. Ready to make some noise (and some delicious art) together? Let's get cooking and create a sustainable, innovative economy that everyone can own and build!



17

INNOVATION ECONOMY #2: CLIMATE + FOOD WASTE

In Federal Way, the community's love for nature is evident in its admiration for the beautiful Puget Sound, the rhododendron garden, the bonsai museum, and Dash Point State Park. This deep appreciation for the environment is a common theme across the Pacific Northwest, especially in Washington State.

Washington is actively investing in environmental improvements through grants, debt, and equity investments in programs targeting water, energy, and waste. Additionally, there is a strong focus on enhancing access to nature for diverse and lower-income communities, aiming to promote environmental justice.

Federal Way has a unique opportunity to merge its culinary excellence with environmental stewardship by addressing the relationship between food and waste. Imagine this: when you dine out, you bring your own reusable container to pack up leftovers, eliminating the need for disposable to-go boxes. Federal Way could become the first city in the U.S. to ban non-reusable to-go containers and spearhead a national BYOB (Bring Your Own Box) movement, creating a brand that could gain national attention and support from foundations and social media channels, inspiring transformation in communities across America.

Restaurants, grocery stores, and households generate significant amounts of organic waste. Washington State is pushing to reduce this waste, which will require new companies, innovations, and awareness campaigns. Federal Way can lead the way by starting no-food-waste programs for youth, organizing environmental invention conventions where kids and adults create solutions for managing food waste, and even writing books about these innovations to spark creativity and literacy. Imagine an Environmental Justice Fund sponsoring a \$30,000 prize for the community best ideas.

18

INNOVATION ECONOMY #2: CLIMATE + FOOD WASTE

Consider hosting the "Get Wasted" festival, an organic waste innovation conference showcasing community-generated solutions for managing organic waste and fostering a stronger connection to nature. Recognizing that the diverse citizens of Federal Way have unique perspectives and a willingness to innovate for a better future, this festival could become a significant event.

This initiative provides a compelling opportunity to build a grassroots innovation economy that positions Federal Way as a leader in environmental justice and organic waste innovation. By fostering a culture of awareness and love for nature, Federal Way can attract and retain creative individuals passionate about sustainability, transforming the region into a hub for new companies and methods that redefine our relationship with nature. This movement not only enhances Federal Way but also offers new ways of living and products that can inspire cities worldwide.

The regional passion of the environment can be turned into a thriving, sustainable economy that helps people and the planet. Federal Way as a hub and beacon of innovation and environmental justice.



VALUE OF PROPOSED ECONOMIES

These proposed innovation economies appear to be valuable for several reasons:

Innovation Economy #1: Arts + Food Experiences (Taste of Art)

1. **Leveraging Local Strengths:** Federal Way is already recognized for its culinary scene. Combining this with the arts can create a unique cultural hub that draws tourists and engages locals.
2. **Economic Opportunities:** This initiative can generate new businesses and job opportunities in both the food and arts sectors.
3. **Community Engagement:** Events that blend food and art can strengthen community bonds and provide consistent, engaging activities for residents.
4. **Tourism:** Unique, memorable events can attract visitors from the Puget Sound area and beyond, boosting the local economy.

Innovation Economy #2: Climate + Food Waste (Better Waste/Waist, Better World)

1. **Environmental Stewardship:** Addressing food waste and promoting sustainability are critical issues. This initiative aligns with broader environmental goals and can attract funding and support from state programs and environmental organizations.
2. **Innovative Solutions:** Encouraging innovation in waste management can lead to the development of new technologies and practices that benefit the community and potentially other regions.
3. **Community and Educational Impact:** Involving schools and local groups in environmental initiatives can raise awareness and foster a culture of sustainability.
4. **Health and Wellbeing:** Reducing waste and promoting sustainable food practices can improve community health and well-being.
5. **Economic Viability:** By creating a market for sustainable products and practices, this initiative can support new businesses and attract environmentally conscious individuals to the area.

20

VALUE OF PROPOSED ECONOMIES

Overall Value

Both initiatives are designed to be inclusive, engaging, and sustainable, focusing on long-term growth rather than one-off events. They leverage existing strengths and address relevant issues, which can make Federal Way a leader in these areas. Additionally, they provide clear pathways for community participation, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration among residents.

These innovation economies have the potential to create a thriving local economy, improve community well-being, and position Federal Way as a pioneer in blending cultural and environmental innovation.

Biden Admin Invests \$100 Million in Recycling Infrastructure

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Food + Art: Munson Offering a Multicultural Event

By Zach Lewis Mar 7, 2024 Updated Mar 10, 2024



Washington State Investment Board recommends \$400 million allocation to TPG Rise Climate's second fund

21

HOW OTHER BUSINESS COMMUNITIES ARE WINNING

Cities across the United States are grappling with the challenge of growing innovation economies and placemaking – the process of creating quality places where people want to live, work, play, and learn. This challenge is intricately tied to the economic and social lives of their residents. In an era where economic landscapes are rapidly evolving, cities are looking inward, exploring ways to build sustainable, inclusive economies that can compete on a national and global scale. By focusing on mixed-use developments that include housing, coworking spaces, food and beverage options, and gathering locations, cities are not only creating strong centers of gravity but also fostering vibrant communities.

Spokane, Washington: Embracing Sports and Health

Spokane, Washington, has leveraged its natural assets and community enthusiasm to become a hub for sports and health. The city's investment in sports facilities, such as the Spokane Arena, the newly developed Podium sports complex, and the professional soccer stadium has made it a destination for regional and national sporting events. This focus on sports has spurred growth in related sectors, including health and wellness including an effort to integrate care and health of the environment into the overall strategy that has resulted in an NSF Engines Award. Local businesses have thrived by catering to athletes and spectators alike, offering everything from specialized sports medicine services to health-focused eateries that have enjoyed a \$1.5 Billion tourism boom anchored by sports experiences in the region.

The emphasis on sports and health has had a broader economic impact as well. Spokane's healthcare sector, including the renowned Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center, has expanded to meet growing demand. This expansion has created jobs and attracted new residents, further stimulating the local economy. The combination of sports, health, and a strong sense of community has turned Spokane into a model of successful economic placemaking.

22

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING

Bentonville, Arkansas: A Hub for Culture and Innovation

Bentonville, Arkansas, known as the headquarters of Walmart, has transformed itself into a cultural and innovation hub. The city's Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, funded by the Walton family, has become a national attraction, drawing visitors from across the country. This cultural investment has spurred the growth of a vibrant arts scene, with galleries, performance spaces, unique hotel experiences and public art installations becoming common.

Additionally, Bentonville has invested in innovation and entrepreneurship in the retail and outdoors industry verticals due to their local strengths. The 8th Street Market, a culinary and innovation center, houses a mix of food entrepreneurs, artisans, and coworking spaces. The local cycling and mountain bike startups and clothing brands have also added to the excellence in outdoor focus. This mix of culture, innovation, and entrepreneurship has created a dynamic local economy that attracts talent and fosters community engagement while focusing on shared strengths.

Huntsville, Alabama: Music and Entertainment

Huntsville, Alabama, traditionally known for its aerospace and defense industries, is diversifying its economy by embracing music and entertainment. The redevelopment of an old mall into a mixed use development including the Orion Amphitheater has positioned Huntsville as a key player in the live music scene. This venue not only attracts top musical acts but also serves as a catalyst for the apartments, music innovation economy and local businesses, from restaurants and bars to hotels and retail shops.

The city's focus on entertainment has also led to the growth of related industries, including film production and digital media. Huntsville's investment in creative industries is creating new opportunities for residents and attracting a younger, more diverse population. This diversification is helping to build a more resilient and inclusive economy that also retains the current aerospace workers due to a higher quality of life and a vibrant local "scene".

23

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING

Utica, New York: Revitalizing Through Mixed-Use Development

Utica, New York, is revitalizing its downtown through mixed-use developments that combine housing, co-working spaces, food and beverage options, and gathering locations. The Bagg's Square district, once a neglected area, has been transformed into a vibrant neighborhood with loft apartments, trendy restaurants, and innovative workspaces.

This revitalization has attracted new businesses and residents, creating a more dynamic and inclusive community. The success of Bagg's Square is a testament to the power of placemaking in driving economic growth and improving quality of life.

Additionally, the region has embraced opportunities to be a community of excellence regarding key national innovation needs. Specifically, they realized they had manufacturing expertise due to their historic Erie Canal background and have leveraged it to be a manufacturing training ground for the semi conductor industry and have won an NSF Engines grant.

Syracuse, New York: Innovation and Sustainability

Syracuse, New York, is leveraging its history as an industrial powerhouse to build a sustainable and innovative economy. The city's focus on green technologies and sustainable development has attracted companies specializing in renewable energy, environmental engineering, and sustainable construction.

The Syracuse Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems is a prime example of how the city is fostering innovation. This research facility brings together businesses, researchers, and educators to develop new technologies and solutions for environmental challenges. The emphasis on sustainability is not only creating jobs but also positioning Syracuse as a leader in the green economy.

24

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING

Hernando County, Florida: Senior Care and Health

Hernando County, Florida, is capitalizing on its appeal to retirees by focusing on senior care and health. The partnership with the Moffitt Cancer Center to develop a new campus in the area is a significant step in this direction. This facility will provide cutting-edge cancer treatment and research, attracting patients and medical professionals from across the region.

The focus on senior care and health has stimulated growth in other sectors as well, including housing, retail, and leisure. By catering to the needs of its aging population, Hernando County is building a robust and sustainable local economy.

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho: Automation and Robotics

Former timber towns like Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, are reinventing themselves by embracing automation and robotics. The city's investment in technology and innovation has attracted companies specializing in advanced manufacturing, software development, and robotics.

The University of Idaho's Coeur d'Alene campus offers programs in computer science and engineering, providing a pipeline of skilled workers for local businesses. This focus on high-tech industries is creating new economic opportunities and positioning Coeur d'Alene as a leader in the innovation economy.



HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING

San Marcos, Texas: Beverages and Water Conservation

San Marcos, Texas, is leveraging its natural resources and strategic location to build a sustainable economy focused on beverages and water conservation. The city is home to a burgeoning craft beverage industry, with breweries, distilleries, and wineries attracting visitors and creating jobs.

San Marcos is also a leader in water conservation, with initiatives aimed at protecting its precious water resources. The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University conducts research and provides education on water conservation, positioning San Marcos as a model for sustainable development.

Reno, Nevada: The Lithium Loop

Reno, Nevada, is emerging as a key player in the green economy with its focus on the "lithium loop." As the demand for electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy storage solutions grows, Reno has positioned itself as a critical hub in the lithium supply chain. The Tesla Gigafactory, located just outside Reno, is one of the world's largest producers of lithium-ion batteries.

The city's commitment to sustainability and innovation extends to the Reno Market and the Oddie District project. The Reno Market is a revitalization initiative aimed at transforming underutilized areas into vibrant, mixed-use spaces with housing, coworking spaces, and retail options. The Oddie District is a former industrial area being redeveloped into a hub for innovation and creativity, featuring maker spaces, tech startups, and cultural venues.

Reno's focus on the lithium loop and sustainable development is driving economic growth, attracting new businesses, and creating jobs. This emphasis on green technologies is positioning Reno as a leader in the transition to a sustainable economy.



WHY PLACEMAKING MATTERS TO BUSINESS LEADERS

In the realm of economic development, the concept of placemaking has emerged as a pivotal strategy for fostering vibrant, prosperous communities. Placemaking, at its core, is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in. It involves leveraging a community's unique assets, inspiration, and potential to create public spaces that promote health, happiness, and well-being. For the business community, placemaking is not merely about aesthetic improvements but a vital tool for economic growth and normalizing shared understanding of local innovation goals.

The most effective placemaking initiatives integrate local creative and economic strengths, building on innovation verticals of excellence that align with the community's unique characteristics. This approach ensures that placemaking efforts are not only culturally relevant but also economically beneficial. By incorporating local talents, industries, and economic drivers, communities can create a distinctive identity that creates/attracts businesses, investors, and visitors.



27

WHY PLACEMAKING MATTERS TO BUSINESS COMMUNITY

This integration is woven into every aspect of placemaking—from marketing and experiential design to the types of public spaces and businesses encouraged. Marketing efforts highlight the unique attributes and innovative spirit of the community, drawing attention to its strengths and potential. Public spaces are designed to be dynamic, multifunctional, and inclusive, fostering creativity and collaboration. Businesses that align with the community’s shared vision and contribute to its economic and cultural fabric are encouraged, creating a synergistic environment where innovation thrives.

In summary, placemaking matters to the business community because it creates environments that attract talent, foster innovation, and drive economic development. By focusing on local strengths and integrating them into the fabric of the community, placemaking not only enhances the quality of life but also establishes a sustainable foundation for economic prosperity that benefits the current business community and grows a strong and complementary future economy.



WHY PLACEMAKING MATTERS: DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS

Developing a placemaking strategy can have significant positive effects on traditional and older businesses in cities. By integrating local creative and economic strengths into an innovative vertical of excellence, placemaking enhances the overall business environment and promotes economic growth. Here are several ways placemaking benefits traditional and older businesses, supported by data and reports:

1. **Improved Economic Ecosystems:** Placemaking nurtures dynamic economic ecosystems by leveraging local assets and connecting businesses to broader regional markets. For instance, Wytheville, Virginia, revitalized its downtown by providing small businesses with access to capital, free business classes, and mentorship. This holistic approach, combined with street improvements and new amenities, has catalyzed local business growth and entrepreneurship, demonstrating that placemaking can effectively stimulate local economies

[【Brookings】](#) .

2. **Increased Foot Traffic and Sales:** Well-designed public spaces and vibrant streetscapes attract more visitors, which can boost foot traffic and sales for nearby businesses. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Community Development Incentives program reported significant increases in occupancy rates and property values in areas where placemaking investments were made. From 2008 to 2019, residential property values increased by \$659 million, and commercial property values rose by \$3.2 billion, indicating that enhanced public spaces can directly benefit traditional businesses by attracting more customers [【Brookings】](#) .

WHY IT MATTERS: DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS

3. **Support for Local Entrepreneurship:** Placemaking strategies often include support for local entrepreneurs and small businesses. This can involve providing technical assistance, facilitating access to capital, and creating networking opportunities. For example, the Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking emphasizes the importance of nurturing local talent and enterprises through place-based revitalization efforts. Such strategies have been successful in fostering small business growth in rural areas, helping to build resilient local economies [【Brookings】](#) [【Brookings】](#)

4. **Improved Community Identity and Engagement:** Placemaking can foster a sense of community and local pride, which benefits older businesses by creating a loyal customer base. Public events, markets, and cultural activities encourage residents to spend more time and money locally. Programs like the Just Spaces Initiative in Philadelphia's University City District illustrate how inclusive and culturally relevant programming can enhance community engagement and support local businesses [【Brookings】](#) .

5. **Health and Resiliency:** Transformative placemaking supports the development of a built environment that advances community health and resiliency. By improving walkability, green spaces, and accessibility, these efforts can lead to healthier communities, which in turn support thriving local economies. For example, Memphis' riverfront revitalization strategy increased connectivity between neighborhoods, promoting both social and economic gains [【Brookings】](#) .

30

WHY IT MATTERS: DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS

These examples highlight that a well-executed placemaking strategy not only revitalizes areas but also creates a supportive environment for traditional and older businesses to thrive. By integrating local economic and creative strengths, cities can foster inclusive growth and resilience, benefiting the entire business community.

For further reading:

- Embracing Placemaking as a Core State Strategy
(<https://www.brookings.edu/research/embracing-placemaking-as-a-core-state-strategy/>)

Rural Small Businesses and Placemaking

(<https://www.brookings.edu/research/rural-small-businesses-need-local-solutions-to-survive/>)



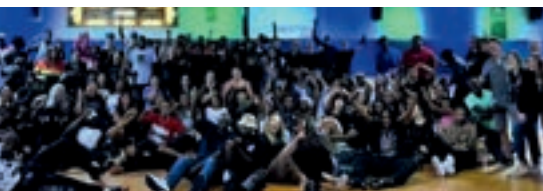
31

HOW FEDERAL WAY PLACEMAKING WINS: A SUMMARY

Within Federal Way, there are multiple remodels and new construction efforts making up a strong physical placemaking effort and some driven by community programs. Notably, the Light Rail is a transformative placemaking asset that is enabling the in and out flow of visitors like never before.

A piece to focus on is the missing regional marketing and local events strategy showing unified support and a clear alignment with the specific innovation economy development efforts by the business community and residents as a shared effort to activate the city spaces, grow the economy, and attract business.

There is a significant opportunity to encourage and support the integration of placemaking activation events to complement the innovation focuses of climate and arts as a thematic that the new developers encourage as on campus events is a big win and more readily achieved by designation of a district as a local and regional “Flag”.



32

FEDERAL WAY PLACEMAKING ACTIVATION OBSERVATIONS

Placemaking transcends the mere concept of "space"; it embodies culture and a protocol for how communities unite to build a future they believe in.

Effective placemaking encompasses diverse spaces such as co-working areas, offices, food and beverage venues, apartments, large event spaces, educational facilities, and leisure rooms. Optimally, a network of facilities hosts a series of events and shared spaces that emphasize innovation economy efforts in a way that engages the community and attracts attention from the region.

Placemaking activation experiences should be a comprehensive stack, supporting early-stage entrepreneurs, business leaders, students, and employees. This endeavor cannot be accomplished by any single entity; it requires a network of partners dedicated to serving each specific audience and something understood as being done by the community. When executed successfully, this effort will create a clear and accessible pathway for residents of all ages, races, genders, and creeds. This pathway will support them in pursuing their dreams and goals through accessing experiences and spaces that help them grow themselves and businesses aligned with the economic focus.

Experience continuity across all development spaces supports the goals of businesses, the creative class, developers, and the city as a whole. In this model, the movement toward personal and professional goals becomes the primary amenity of placemaking and the output of the events, products, and experiences become the attractant that brings in visitors and retains locals.

33

FEDERAL WAY PLACEMAKING ACTIVATION ALIGNMENT

Examples Of Potential Placemaking Activation Events to Explore:

- **Federal Way Environmental Innovation Summit:** An annual expo showcasing local businesses, startups, and innovators in environmental sustainability and organic food waste management. It features demonstrations of innovative technologies, panel discussions on green practices, and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors.
- **Chef Collaboration Series:** A series of culinary events where local chefs collaborate with environmental experts to create dishes using ingredients that minimize food waste. These events are held at local restaurants and highlight sustainable cooking techniques and recipes and can be paired with an international food passport experience targeting Seattle and Tacoma residents.
- **Art Walk & Food Tour:** A guided tour through Federal Way's in-home art collections, where participants can explore private collections and have light bites at each house that showcase the intersection of food, culture, and art. At the end of the tour, a collective meeting point for all to enjoy drinks paired with music.
- **Wild Bites Festival:** A festival celebrating Federal Way's cultural diversity through the most unique food and art represented from each country. Local restaurants, residents, and food vendors offer a variety of dishes from different ethnic cuisines that are very unique, paired with performances by multicultural artists showcasing music, dance, and visual arts thematically paired with the foods style and taste.
- **Waste Reduction Innovation Workshops for Restaurants:** Workshops hosted by environmental organizations and city agencies, focusing on strategies for reducing organic food waste in restaurants. Topics include composting, menu planning to minimize waste, and partnerships with local farms for food recycling.



34

FEDERAL WAY PLACEMAKING ACTIVATION ALIGNMENT

Examples Of Potential Placemaking Activation Events to Explore:

- **Farm-to-Table Art Dinners at the Bonsai Museum:** Special dining experiences held at Federal Way's Bonsai Museum, featuring farm-to-table menus that emphasize locally sourced ingredients and sustainable practices. Guests can enjoy a guided tour of the museum related to food, agriculture, and environmental stewardship as they walk past paintings and sculptures related to the environment.
- **Community Garden Tours and Zero Waste Cooking Classes:** Guided tours of resident and community managed gardens in Federal Way, followed by cooking classes led by local chefs. Participants learn about urban gardening, sustainable farming practices, and how to incorporate fresh, local produce into everyday cooking that doesn't create food waste.

These events would not only promote Federal Way's cultural strengths but also highlight circular economy best practices to develop as a center for environmental innovation and culinary arts. They encourage collaboration between chefs, restaurant owners, artists, and the community to foster creative solutions for sustainable living and enrich the local arts scene with unique culinary experiences.



35

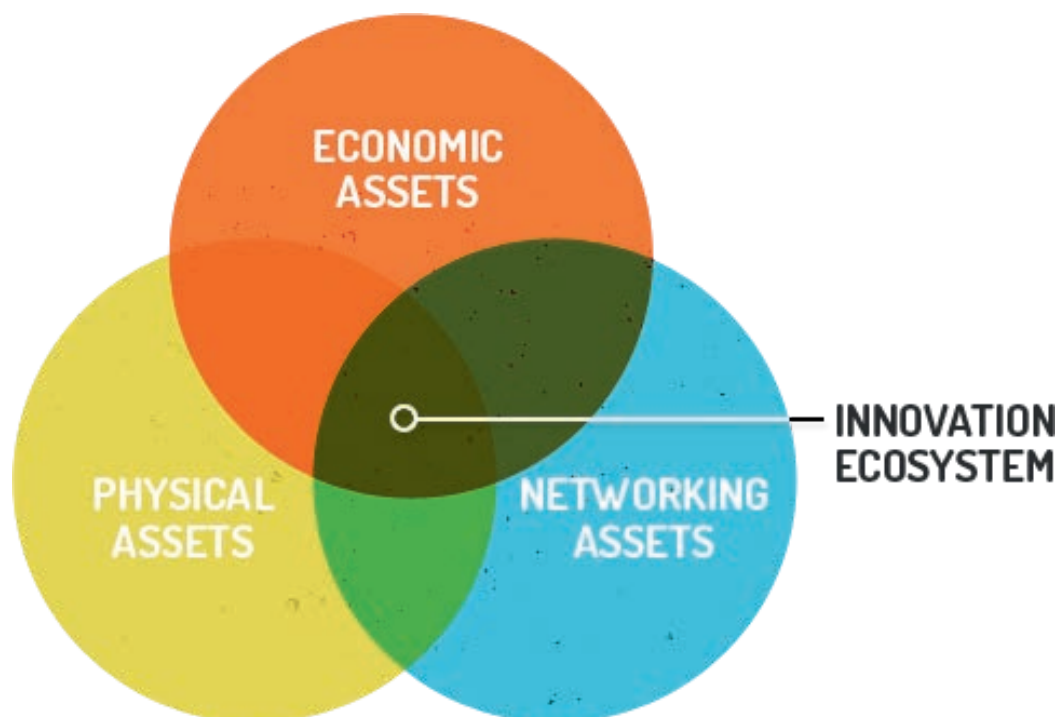
PLACEMAKING: KEY FEDERAL WAY SPACES

In the Federal Way region there are multiple campuses being developed, redeveloped, and activated to empower and serve the needs of the community.

Not only is this incredible, but a major opportunity to support the efforts and incentivize programming that unifies economic and cultural efforts.

A unified events activation plan that networks the facilities together should be explored to create a shared sense of mission and place that spreads across the region and invites the residents and business community to collaborate in the activation process.

Below is an overview of the observed key activations and suggested exploration activities including the establishment of the Innovation + Arts District.



36

PLACEMAKING OVERVIEW: KEY SPACES



- **Chamber-** Continued delivery of programming and training, meeting space, and active convener for business networking. Suggestion to explore 3rd place with business community as network of spaces.



- **The Commons mall-** Explore setting up a pop up coworking space along with event programming to bring in new life. Food and arts could be explored as a complementary theme for The Commons mall.



- **El Centro De La Raza-** It would be good to continue to develop partnership and explore shared programming.



- **TC3-** It is an opportunity to highlight innovation at the intersection of arts, climate, and food. Coworking and 10 x 10 offices should be explored as part of a shared work space for the creative class.



- **Light Rail Property-** Mixed use development with coworking and a food truck park that hosts community events focused innovation in arts and climate should be explored as an optimal use. Leveraging this location as a welcome to Federal Way experience can set the tone for the innovation economy.



- **Woodbridge Corporate Park-** Continued support of the Woodbridge Corporate Park developers as they find highest and best use within the community is key. Leveraging the nature and beautiful spaces will be additive to both the new tenants and the region of Federal Way.

37

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Programming and Training

The Chamber of Commerce enhances the innovation economy through specialized programming and training. By offering workshops, seminars, and courses on emerging trends and skills, the Chamber ensures businesses and individuals stay competitive and prepared for challenges.

Meeting Spaces

The Chamber provides meeting spaces, from the formal boardroom designed to foster collaboration and innovation. The space is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and offered to members.

Business Networking

Active networking is essential for business growth and the Chamber organizes regular networking sessions, industry gatherings, and business experiences, bringing together entrepreneurs, investors, and community leaders to exchange ideas and form partnerships.

Third Place Concept

The Chamber may want to explore creating a network of "open spaces"—social and work environments that would connect under utilized spaces and to the work from home community or small business that doesn't have an office. This can act as a first step to co-working spaces, innovation hubs, and community centers that offer professional and social amenities, fostering spontaneous interactions and building a strong, interconnected business community.

Active Convening

As an active convener, the Chamber brings together businesses, government agencies, educational institutions, and non-profits to address local challenges and opportunities. By facilitating ongoing dialogues through forums, roundtables, and advisory groups, the Chamber aligns efforts and resources towards common goals.



WOODBIDGE CORPROATE PARK

Utilization of the Woodbridge Corporate Park

- The Woodbridge Corporate Park is a site with deep historical roots and architectural acclaim in Federal Way and beyond. Historically, it set the benchmark for green buildings and still holds a strong position in the hearts and minds of environmental advocates around the world. It capitalizes on the community's existing affinity for the space, potentially increasing local support and engagement with the development.
- The community sentiment was that the rhododendron and bonsai spaces were important and that there is a desire to harmonize new development with the existing natural landscapes for which the campus is renowned. This could enhance the aesthetic appeal and environmental quality of the new center, offering a unique blend of urban and natural elements.
- Obviously this space is removed from the walkability of downtown and would be better use as a conference or training center paired with a research lab utilizing the pre-existing infrastructure.
- Ideally an anchor tenant establishes a strong presence with access or events that supports the economic focuses of the region.



TOWN CENTER 3

TC3

- **TC3** is the name for an ambitious and forward thinking public private partnership between the city of Federal Way and One Trent. When completed it is slated to provide 900 housing units (40 townhomes for homeownership), 24,000 sq. ft. of ground floor retail, 100,000 sq. ft. office building, and 1-acre center plaza. The campus could explore inclusive economic programming partnerships, coworking, and offices that are accessibly priced so that local startups can access them. Ideally 10 x 10 offices that have flexible uses are included into a commercial design and a large enough space to host 200 residents in a large hall with a theater style screen.
- The **Current City Hall** facility is being discussed to move to the TC3 area. This should be encouraged as this is obviously the future of civic life in Federal Way. The central location is accessible and known, making it a convenient meeting point for residents, professionals, and visitors. Its symbolic significance reinforces community pride and engagement, creating an environment where ideas can thrive. In the event that the City Hall moves to a new facility, the old facility could be considered as an alternative to the Light Rail campus concept. By repurposing the asset to serve the innovation community would showcase strong government support to the community.



40

THE COMMONS MALL

The Commons mall

- The Commons mall, like many other malls in the nation, are tired and lacking in relevant retail experiences that provide more than a transaction.
- During our time in Federal Way, we were informed that there is a potential plan for a significant redevelopment by the owners which includes an open air component and other opportunities that make this a very attractive next step.
- Integrating co-working, event space, community pop up stores, and education spaces would be of high value to the redevelopment.
- Parking is a key asset to the campus, however it would benefit the community to explore reclaiming some of the spaces for bike storage area, green space and/or a community garden that integrates indoor/outdoor event space.



41

SOUND TRANSIT LAND

The Sound Transit Land

- Sound Transit has 6 acres that will be utilized for a public private partnership to provide housing and light mixed use services.
- The space is required to integrate housing as part of transit oriented development.
- It should be explored to integrate not only housing but also an intentional effort to showcase the food + art innovation economy, host food truck stalls, integrate co-working, and entertainment space with large community seating areas at the Light Rail station.



42

EL CENTRO DE LA RAZA

El Centro De La Raza

- El Centro De La Raza came up in meetings as a possible opportunity for space and partnership programming.
- There were positive comments about what they have accomplished in Seattle and the goal to serve a segment of the community.
- The diverse pursuit of excellence is a logical partner in space and programming as another touch stone to a key part of the community.
- Exploring shared programming around arts and food innovation economy and training a youth focused workforce that can integrate into the industry.



43

FEDERAL WAY PLACEMAKING THE ARTS + INNOVATION DISTRICT

Federal Way Region has the potential to firmly establish itself as a hub for environmental innovation and unique cultural arts led by the strong love of food, leveraging the city's diverse population and unique assets. To realize this vision, exploring the designation of an Innovation District that focuses on these efforts is advised. This would nurture the strategic partnerships, targeted programming, and larger grant opportunities to enhance community engagement and economic development in placemaking.

Suggested Exploration of A District

“The Innovation District- a strategic community and economic effort focused on the intersection of food, art, and the environment”

Designating the area spanning from the Light Rail arrival point to TC3, including The Commons mall, and PAEC as the focal point for the innovation district designation.



44

HOW OTHER ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Here is an example of how others are leveraging placemaking and strategic activation to drive strong engagement and economic growth.

Chattanooga, Tennessee Population: ~180,000

Economic Focus: Technology and Innovation

Placemaking Initiatives:

- **Innovation District:** Chattanooga's Innovation District is a prime example of integrating local economic strengths into placemaking. This district, located in the heart of downtown, is a hub for tech startups, creative professionals, and research institutions. It features coworking spaces, business incubators, and educational facilities, fostering a vibrant ecosystem for innovation.
- **Public Spaces:** The district includes Miller Plaza and Patten Parkway, which host events and activities that promote interaction and collaboration among innovators and the community.
- **Marketing and Experiences:** Chattanooga leverages its high-speed internet infrastructure (the Gig City initiative) as a key marketing point, attracting tech companies and remote workers.



45

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Chattanooga Placemaking Activation Events Strategy:

- **Gig City Elixir:** A conference focused on Elixir programming language and related technologies, often held in Chattanooga due to its tech-friendly environment and fast internet infrastructure.
- **Chattanooga Developer Lunch:** A recurring meetup where local developers and tech enthusiasts gather to discuss trends, share projects, and network in a casual setting.
- **Startup Week Chattanooga:** An annual event that celebrates the local startup community, featuring workshops, pitch competitions, and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators.
- **GigTank Demo Day:** Hosted by The Company Lab (CO.LAB), GigTank Demo Day showcases startups and entrepreneurs leveraging Chattanooga's gigabit internet to create innovative solutions in various industries.
- **Chattanooga Women in Tech:** A meetup group focused on supporting and empowering women working in technology-related fields in Chattanooga through networking events, workshops, and speaker series.
- **Chattanooga Technology Council (ChaTech) Events:** ChaTech organizes various events throughout the year, including conferences, panels, and workshops, aimed at fostering collaboration and innovation within the local tech community.
- **Hackathons and Coding Competitions:** Regular hackathons and coding competitions are held in Chattanooga, bringing together programmers, designers, and innovators to tackle challenges and create new solutions.

These events not only highlight Chattanooga's status as a tech and innovation hub but also leverage its strength of fast internet infrastructure to support digital collaboration and development.

46

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Ann Arbor, Michigan Population: ~121,000 (close to the target range)

Economic Focus: Education and Research

Placemaking Initiatives:

- **University of Michigan:** Ann Arbor's identity is closely tied to the University of Michigan, which drives much of the city's economic and cultural activities. The university's presence influences the development of public spaces, retail, and housing.
- **Downtown and Kerrytown:** These areas are designed to cater to students, faculty, and visitors, with numerous cafes, bookstores, and public spaces that encourage social interaction and cultural events.
- **Research and Innovation:** The city promotes its research and tech sectors through facilities like the Ann Arbor SPARK, a nonprofit that supports local startups with resources and networking opportunities.



47

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Ann Arbor Placemaking Activation Events Strategy:

- **Ann Arbor Tech Trek:** This event showcases the vibrant tech ecosystem in Ann Arbor, with participating companies opening their doors to the public for tours, demonstrations, and networking. It highlights the intersection of technology, innovation, and education.
- **Michigan Robotics Day:** Organized by the University of Michigan Robotics Institute, this event features demonstrations, talks, and discussions on the latest advancements in robotics research and education. It attracts researchers, students, and industry professionals interested in robotics and automation.
- **Ann Arbor Art Fair:** While primarily an arts event, the Ann Arbor Art Fair also includes sections dedicated to the University of Michigan's research and educational programs, showcasing innovative projects and initiatives from the university.
- **Ann Arbor Film Festival:** Known for its focus on experimental and independent filmmaking, this festival often includes screenings and discussions that intersect with research and educational themes, especially in fields like media studies and digital arts.
- **University of Michigan Research Symposiums:** Various symposiums and conferences are hosted by the University of Michigan throughout the year, focusing on cutting-edge research across disciplines such as engineering, medicine, social sciences, and more. These events highlight the university's role as a research powerhouse.
- **Ann Arbor Entrepreneurs Roundtable:** Regular meetups and networking events where entrepreneurs, researchers, and educators come together to discuss innovative ideas, share insights, and explore opportunities for collaboration in the local ecosystem.
- **Ann Arbor SPARK Events:** Ann Arbor SPARK, the region's economic development organization, hosts workshops, forums, and pitch competitions aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic growth through education and research-based initiatives.

These events not only showcase Ann Arbor's strengths in education and research but also foster collaboration, innovation, and economic development within the community.

48

HOW OTHER ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Fort Collins, Colorado Population: ~170,000

Economic Focus: Sustainability and Clean Energy

Placemaking Initiatives:

- **Clean Energy Cluster:** Fort Collins has developed a strong clean energy sector, focusing on sustainable practices and technologies. This cluster includes businesses, research institutions, and government agencies collaborating on clean energy solutions.
- **Public Spaces:** The city has numerous parks and green spaces, such as the Gardens on Spring Creek, which promote environmental education and sustainability. These spaces are designed to support outdoor activities and community gatherings.
- **Marketing and Experiences:** Fort Collins markets itself as a leader in sustainability, with initiatives like bike-friendly infrastructure, renewable energy projects, and sustainable urban planning.



49

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Placemaking Activation Events Strategy:

- **Fort Collins Sustainable Living Fair:** This annual event brings together community members, businesses, and organizations to promote sustainable living practices. It features workshops, exhibits, and presentations on topics such as renewable energy, green building, water conservation, and waste reduction.
- **Colorado Clean Energy Expo:** Hosted in Fort Collins or nearby areas, this expo showcases the latest advancements in clean energy technologies, products, and services. It attracts industry professionals, researchers, policymakers, and the public interested in renewable energy solutions.
- **NewWestFest:** While primarily a music and arts festival, NewWestFest often includes a Sustainability Area that focuses on environmental initiatives, renewable energy demonstrations, and educational workshops related to clean energy practices and sustainable lifestyles.
- **CSU Energy Institute Symposium:** Colorado State University (CSU) hosts symposiums and conferences focused on energy innovation. These events bring together experts, academics, and industry leaders to discuss critical issues in clean energy and sustainability.
- **Sustainable Business Summit:** Organized by local chambers of commerce or business organizations, this summit focuses on sustainable business practices, including energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, and corporate sustainability strategies.
- **Fort Collins Climate Action Plan Events:** The city of Fort Collins hosts public forums, workshops, and community meetings to discuss and gather input on its climate action plan and sustainability goals. These events often include discussions on clean energy policies, initiatives, and community engagement.
- **Fort Collins Earth Day Celebration:** Held annually on Earth Day, this event includes activities, exhibits, and presentations that promote environmental stewardship and highlight local efforts in sustainability and clean energy.

These events not only highlight Fort Collins' commitment to sustainability and clean energy but also provide platforms for education, innovation, and collaboration among stakeholders interested in advancing these economic focuses.

50

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Boulder, Colorado Population: ~108,000

Economic Focus: Outdoor Recreation and Technology

Placemaking Initiatives:

- **Outdoor Industry:** Boulder leverages its natural surroundings to build an economy centered around outdoor recreation. This includes attracting businesses in the outdoor gear, apparel, and adventure tourism sectors.
- **Public Spaces:** The Pearl Street Mall is a pedestrian-friendly area that hosts a variety of events, from street performances to farmer's markets, encouraging community engagement and supporting local businesses.
- **Tech and Innovation:** Boulder's tech scene is supported by coworking spaces and incubators like Techstars, integrating the city's outdoor lifestyle into its innovation culture.



51

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Boulder Placemaking Activation Events Strategy:

- **Outdoor Retailer Snow Show:** While traditionally held in Denver, this major event in the outdoor industry often features brands and companies from Boulder and the surrounding region. It showcases the latest innovations in outdoor gear, apparel, and technology.
- **Boulder Adventure Film Festival:** This annual festival celebrates outdoor adventure through film screenings, speakers, and workshops. It attracts outdoor enthusiasts, filmmakers, and industry professionals interested in adventure sports and outdoor recreation.
- **Boulder Startup Week:** A week-long event celebrating Boulder's vibrant startup community, featuring panels, workshops, pitch competitions, and networking events. It highlights the intersection of technology, entrepreneurship, and outdoor recreation innovation.
- **Boulder International Film Festival (BIFF):** While primarily a film festival, BIFF often includes screenings and discussions focused on outdoor adventure films and documentaries. It provides a platform for filmmakers and outdoor enthusiasts to explore themes related to nature, exploration, and outdoor recreation.
- **Boulder Creek Festival:** Held annually, this festival includes outdoor activities, live music, arts and crafts vendors, and a variety of food options. It celebrates Boulder's outdoor lifestyle and community spirit.
- **Boulder Climbing Series:** A series of climbing competitions and events held at local climbing gyms and outdoor venues in and around Boulder. These events attract climbers of all levels and promote Boulder's reputation as a hub for outdoor adventure and climbing.
- **Boulder Earth Week:** A week-long series of events celebrating Earth Day and sustainability in Boulder. Activities include educational workshops, outdoor recreation opportunities like hikes and clean-up events, and discussions on environmental stewardship.

These events not only showcase Boulder's natural beauty and outdoor recreational opportunities but also highlight its role as a center for innovation and technology in the outdoor industry. They provide platforms for networking, education, and collaboration among outdoor enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, and industry professionals.

52

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Asheville, North Carolina Population: ~94,000

Economic Focus: Arts and Craft Brewing

Placemaking Initiatives

- **River Arts District:** This area has been transformed into a vibrant hub for artists, with studios, galleries, and performance spaces. The district fosters a community of creatives and attracts tourists and art enthusiasts.
- **Craft Breweries:** Asheville is known for its craft beer scene, with numerous breweries contributing to the local economy. The city promotes this through events like Brewgrass Festival and brewery tours.
- **Public Spaces:** The downtown area features numerous public art installations, live music venues, and pedestrian-friendly streets that encourage exploration and support local businesses.



53

HOW OTHERS ARE WINNING PLACEMAKING

Placemaking Activation Events Strategy:

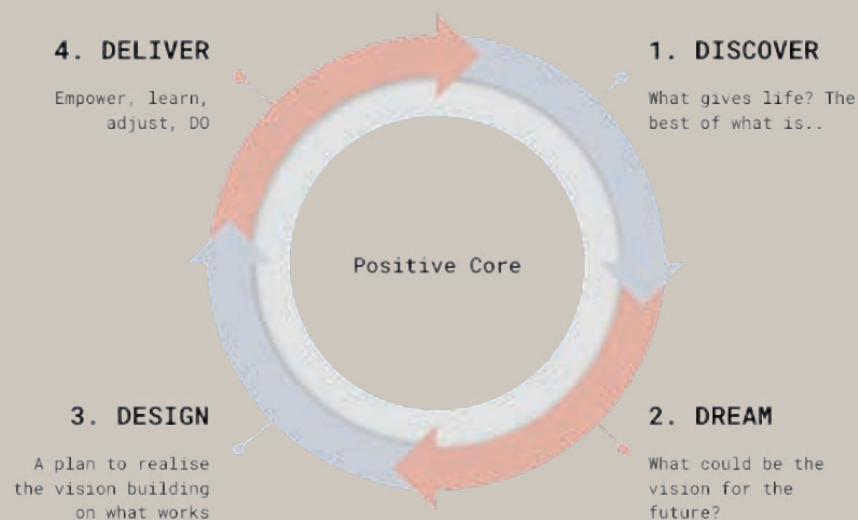
- **Asheville Beer Week:** A week-long celebration of craft beer in Asheville, featuring tastings, tap takeovers, beer dinners, and special events at local breweries, bars, and restaurants. It highlights Asheville's thriving craft brewing scene.
- **Brewgrass Festival:** An annual music and beer festival held in Asheville, featuring live bluegrass music performances alongside tastings from regional craft breweries. It celebrates the intersection of music, community, and craft beer culture.
- **Asheville Art in the Park:** A series of art and craft fairs held in downtown Asheville's Pack Square Park, showcasing the work of local and regional artists and artisans. It includes a variety of visual arts, crafts, and handmade goods.
- **LEAF Festival:** While primarily a music and arts festival, LEAF (Lake Eden Arts Festival) also features local craft breweries and highlights Asheville's vibrant cultural scene. It includes performances, workshops, and activities for all ages.
- **Asheville Wine & Food Festival:** Although wine-focused, this festival often includes tastings and showcases of local craft beers alongside culinary experiences and demonstrations. It celebrates Asheville's culinary and beverage diversity.
- **River Arts District Studio Stroll:** Held twice a year, this event invites visitors to explore Asheville's River Arts District, home to numerous artist studios, galleries, and craft breweries. It offers opportunities to meet artists, view demonstrations, and enjoy local brews.
- **Asheville Fringe Arts Festival:** A multi-day event showcasing experimental and avant-garde performances in theater, dance, music, and more. It highlights Asheville's innovative arts community and includes collaborations with local breweries for special events.

These events not only celebrate Asheville's rich cultural heritage in arts and craft brewing but also contribute to its economic vitality by attracting visitors and supporting local artists, artisans, and breweries. They showcase Asheville as a hub for creativity, craftsmanship, and community engagement.

ACTIVATION OF FEDERAL WAY

THERE ARE MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVATION OF FEDERAL WAY, SPECIFICALLY WITH THE FOCUS ON THE DIVERSITY OF THE COMMUNITY AND HOW IT CAN BE ACTIVATED TO ENCOURAGE **ART, CIVIC LIFE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT**. OUR RECOMMENDATIONS FALL WITHIN THE SCOPE OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY, FOCUSING ON IDENTIFYING AND LEVERAGING THE COMMUNITY'S STRENGTHS, SUCCESSES, AND POTENTIAL TO FOSTER INNOVATION AND COLLABORATIVE GROWTH.

This approach encourages collective storytelling and envisioning of a prosperous future, creating an environment where positive change is not only imagined but actively pursued through shared goals and aspirations. The suggestions in this report will be more impactful and influential if they are pursued through collective efforts and community engagement, rather than solely city leadership.



ACTIVATION IDEAS IN FOOD + ARTS

The food scene in Federal Way is already enthusiastic and well-known but missing a holistic programming approach that opens it up to the whole community to be inspired and co-create with the current leaders of the scene. Through hosting events and experiences around food using the Appreciative Inquiry model it offers a unique value in community activation and engagement efforts as well as leading in **destination management**. The approach creates a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere that encourages open dialogue and fosters a sense of belonging and shared identity. Such gatherings leverage the universal theme of food to break down barriers, making it easier for individuals to share their stories, dreams, and ideas of how food meets arts.

This approach not only nurtures positive relationships and trust among participants but also enhances the collective capacity to envision and co-create a thriving future, aligning perfectly with the principles of Appreciative Inquiry by drawing on the community's strengths and aspirations. This is important for the direct food businesses, but also for support sectors that are looking for opportunities, such as delivery, logistics, processing, and technology.

Following the appreciative inquiry model, the following pages have sample events that meet each phase.



56

DISCOVER

- Highlight the cultural richness of food festivals and diverse restaurants through social media, blogs, and newsletters. Launch a food blog or social media campaign highlighting the best of Federal Way's food scene. Regular features could include restaurant reviews (keep them positive), chef interviews, cooking tips, and announcements of food-related events. This could be a great way to keep the community engaged and attract food enthusiasts from outside the area.
- Empower local restaurateurs and celebrate their stories through Fireside Chats or Story Summits
- Use various media channels (digital, in-person, out-of-home) to reach a wider audience
- Host Food Festivals - Organize a food festival that showcases the best of Federal Way's cuisine. This could include everything from local restaurants, food trucks, and pop-up cafes to home cooks who wish to share their culinary creations. Highlight dishes from the city's diverse communities, such as Korean, Vietnamese, Mexican, and Ukrainian, to name a few.
- Taste of Federal Way - Create a "Taste of Federal Way" event where people can sample small plates or bites from various eateries across the city. Participants can purchase tickets to exchange for food samples, making it an excellent way for restaurants to gain exposure and for residents and visitors to explore the city's culinary diversity.
- Culinary Tours - Develop guided culinary tours that take food lovers on a journey through Federal Way's best eating spots. These tours can be themed around specific types of food (e.g., a tour of the city's best tacos or a journey through Asian cuisines) and include behind-the-scenes looks at kitchens, meet-and-greets with chefs, and of course, plenty of tasting opportunities.
- Restaurant Week - Organize a Federal Way Restaurant Week to encourage residents and visitors to dine out and enjoy special menus at discounted prices. Participating restaurants could offer prix fixe menus that showcase their best dishes, encouraging diners to try new places and experience the full range of the city's culinary offerings. During these tours, having the restaurants take the customers through a story telling journey of how it began would add engagement from the consumers.
- Food and Art Walk - Combine food with culture in a Food and Art Walk event, where attendees can enjoy local cuisine while viewing art displays from Federal Way artists. This could be set up as a walkable event in a central part of town, with live music, street performers, and family-friendly activities.

57

DREAM

- Partner with Innovation Collective Fellow Michael Hebb to leverage his expertise in uniting people through food
- Host bi-weekly meet-ups where people can learn about interesting tech news, be around people who are building ideas; and get help with their own ideas. It encourages people to get their crazy ideas out of their head and into the world so they can ask for help getting them off the ground

DESIGN

- Cooking Classes and Demonstrations - Partner with local chefs and restaurants to offer cooking classes and demonstrations. This could be an opportunity to learn how to make signature dishes from the area, explore international cuisines, or focus on cooking techniques. Classes could cater to various skill levels, from beginners to more experienced home chefs. This is also an opportunity to connect with some of the less fortunate population through education and healthy choices. There could be funding for nonprofits to focus on parents, young children, those on government assistance, etc.

DELIVER

- Support community food initiatives around community spaces or community gardens, such as shared-use kitchens or growing space
- Find and support local individuals like Tucker who are already taking initiative
- Farmers Market and Local Produce Celebrations - Enhance the existing farmers market or create special market days that focus on local produce, artisanal foods, and specialty items from Federal Way. Include cooking demonstrations using local ingredients, workshops on sustainable eating, and booths where local restaurants feature dishes made from market finds.
- Compile a community cookbook that features favorite recipes from Federal Way residents, restaurants, and food personalities. This could be a celebration of the city's culinary diversity, with stories and traditions behind the recipes, and sales could support a local cause or food pantry.

ACTIVATION IN FOOD + ENVIRONMENTAL TECH



Hosting events to encourage the Appreciative Inquiry model within the climate resilience sector with an emphasis on food and packaging waste, offers significant value in fostering innovation and collaboration towards sustainability innovation. These events create a platform for stakeholders from diverse backgrounds—entrepreneurs, investors, environmentalists, and community members—to come together and share positive experiences, successes, and visions for the future. By focusing on what works and exploring potential in these areas, participants can collectively identify innovative solutions and opportunities for growth.

Such gatherings facilitate networking and partnerships that can lead to practical initiatives and projects as well as harness the collective intelligence and creativity of the community, steering the conversation towards constructive and sustainable development. In essence, these events catalyze a shift from identifying problems to co-creating solutions, aligning with the Appreciative Inquiry's core principles of leveraging strengths and envisioning a prosperous, environmentally sustainable future.

By focusing on these specific events, Federal Way can leverage its unique geographical and community assets to promote environmental sustainability and technological innovation. These events not only contribute to the well-being of the local environment but also build a community ethos centered around sustainability and proactive engagement with pressing environmental issues.

DISCOVER

- **Cleanup Events** - Given Federal Way's proximity to forests and the Puget Sound, organizing environmental cleanup days can engage the community in hands-on environmental stewardship while raising awareness about the impact of waste on regional ecosystems. It allows people to identify the challenges that need to be solved. End the day with a zero waste feast at the town square.
- **School Engagement Programs** - Partner with Federal Way Public Schools to introduce programs that educate students about environmental issues and solutions, including food waste management and the importance of recycling. This could also involve student-led projects or competitions on creating sustainable solutions for their schools or community.
- **Environmental Film Series** - Organize a series of documentary screenings at the Performing Arts and Event Center or outdoor venues during warmer months. Focus on films that address global and local environmental issues, followed by panel discussions or Q&A sessions with experts.
- **Environmental Tech Career Fair** - To inspire and inform the community about career opportunities in environmental and blue tech sectors, host a career fair that brings together companies, educational institutions, and job seekers with an interest in sustainability.



60

DREAM

- Environmental Tech Talks - Invite local and regional experts to cover topics like the latest in water purification technologies, sustainable urban development, and innovations in combating ocean pollution.
- Blue Business Networking Events - Facilitate mixers for business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals. These can encourage local businesses to discuss more sustainable practices and foster collaborations that lead to innovations.

DESIGN

- Community Gardening and Composting Workshops - Working with nonprofits or Extension to host composting workshops. These could take place in community gardens or public spaces and teach participants how to reduce food waste

DELIVER

- Innovation Showcase and Expo - An event that allows local startups, entrepreneurs, and researchers to showcase their innovations. This could be held at a public space like Celebration Park or in collaboration with Highline College. It should be fun and feel more like a street fair than a science fair.
- Local Environmental Art Exhibits - Host art exhibits that feature works made from recycled materials or that visually communicate the importance of ocean conservation.
- Eco-friendly Business Awards - Introduce an award system to recognize and celebrate local businesses that are leading the way in sustainable practices or offering innovative sustainable solutions. Have a fireside chat around the business owner, letting them tell their story of how they came up with their idea and why it was important.

61

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS:

A FUTURE THAT LEVERAGES THE STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY AS A FOUNDATION TO INNOVATE IN THE AREAS OF CLIMATE RESILIENCE, ART, AND CIVIC LIFE IS THE STRONG OPPORTUNITY TO EXCEL ON A GLOBAL SCALE.

Looking ahead, there is a clear understanding that Federal Way has an opportunity to reimagine and redesign its city center into a thriving core of authentic community and commerce. The consistent message across all of the conversations was that Federal Way's diversity is the strongest differentiator and asset; a tree from which many different social and economic branches can grow from. Any new designs for downtown should embrace and celebrate the diversity of the area. The city's diversity is seen in the food, the strong ties within ethnic groups, and the overwhelming spirit of unique perspectives and entrepreneurship with everyone we spoke with.

To move Federal Way forward, our recommendation is letting diversity of life and thought drive economic innovation and developments with specific efforts aimed around **art**, the **environment**. Potential ideas to explore along each dimension are included on the next pages for inspiration purposes but can be summarized as:

- **Environment:** Be the world leader in how a community manages food waste from residents and restaurants.
- **Art:** Be the world leader in how ethnic food is used to create multi sensory entertainment and art experiences in art venues and art experiences in restaurants.

62

FOOD

- Revitalize the existing food festivals in the city, but do so in a way that shifts them from a bunch of food trucks in a parking lot to an intentional celebration across cultures.
- Create an event series where chefs speak at their restaurant about the importance of specific dishes or ingredients so that residents can be fed and educated at the same time
- Rotate different restaurants through the PAEK during events to showcase specific cuisines that align to the performances

ART

- Create a more expansive celebration of diversity through art by inviting local ethnic groups to showcase cultural artifacts and art, rotating in public spaces throughout the year
- Invite parents into after-school activities with their children to learn and create art from different cultures, with local residents leading classes

ENVIRONMENT

- Given the unique location and strength of food in the area, explore design contests in schools for more environmentally friendly packaging for to-go containers or school lunches
- Lean into the opportunity provided by the new Sound Transit Light Rail stations to design rich, walkable corridors to invite people to Federal Way

63

MORE ON THE FOOD SCENE

The food industry in Federal Way, Washington, reflects the city's diverse population and its position within the dynamic Seattle metropolitan area. Federal Way's food scene includes a variety of dining options, ranging from fast food and casual dining to international cuisines and specialty food markets.

Here's an overview of the key aspects of the food industry in Federal Way:



PHOTO CREDIT: KELLEN BURDEN
[HTTPS://SEATTLE.EATER.COM/MAPS/BEST-RESTAURANTS-FEDERAL-WAY-SEATTLE](https://seattle.eater.com/maps/best-restaurants-federal-way-seattle)



64

DIVERSE CULINARY OFFERING

Federal Way is known for its ethnic diversity, which is mirrored in its culinary scene. The city boasts a wide range of international restaurants, including Korean, Mexican, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese (including sushi and ramen spots), Thai, and more. This diversity provides residents and visitors with a rich selection of foods and dining experiences.

SPECIALTY GROCERY

The city is home to several specialty grocery stores and markets that cater to its diverse population. These stores offer a variety of international ingredients that are not typically found in standard American grocery chains, allowing locals to shop for authentic ingredients from Asian, Hispanic, Eastern European, and other cuisines. This is not even close to an inclusive list, but some of these include:

- H Mart - A well-known Korean grocery chain offering a wide selection of Asian food products, fresh produce, meat, seafood, and Korean-specific items.
- Marlene's Market & Deli - A health food store offering organic produce, natural groceries, supplements, and body care products, catering to those looking for organic and sustainable food options.
- Euro Food & Deli - A store specializing in Eastern European foods, offering a variety of meats, cheeses, bread, and canned goods from countries like Russia, Ukraine, and Poland.
- Island Pacific Seafood Market - Another market catering to the Filipino community, offering a range of Filipino groceries, seafood, and prepared foods.
- Red Square Euro Foods - a Russian grocery store
- Campeon Market - a Mexican grocery store

65

FOOD FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Federal Way hosts various community events and festivals that celebrate its multicultural identity. These events are an opportunity for food to play a central role. These events are opportunities for local restaurants, caterers, and food vendors to showcase their offerings to the community.

Federal Way has a farmer's market that livens the city in the summertime. Many of the diverse population use food businesses such as grocery stores, restaurants, or specialty stores as a way to gain an economic foothold in the U.S. Because of this, the Federal Way region has been gifted with food from all over the world.



66

LOCAL AND REGIONAL INFLUENCE

The food industry in Federal Way is influenced by trends and movements from the greater Seattle area, including a focus on sustainability, farm-to-table dining, and the craft beverage movement, encompassing craft beer, cider, and coffee. While Federal Way may not have a large number of these establishments compared to Seattle, the influence is felt in local dining options and consumer preferences.

Federal Way has been gaining traction for its food for years. For example, a blog called the Seattle Eater did an article in 2017, where it writes:

“Federal Way is more than just a few exits on the freeway. Federal Way is wild. It’s adventurous. It’s got more nooks and crannies in its many strip malls than an English muffin and they are all brimming with hard-working people making unforgettable meals.”

In 2018, an article made it in the Federal Way Mirror about the food scene as well. The article says, “But instead, Federal Way is magic. The first few times I found myself in this city, it was with people smarter than I. People who saw this place for what it was and what it was going to be. People who wanted me to see it too. I found myself in strange restaurants with unusual names and menus that I didn’t understand. I found myself talking over counters with passionate people who had skills that I hadn’t seen anywhere else. I ate and I ate and I ate. Foods from far flung places that had their own histories and cultures built around them. Food with stories to tell. Somehow, I was lucky enough to get to tell some of those stories.”

67

OPPORTUNITY FOR FOOD WITH THE LIGHT RAIL

Transit-Oriented Development around the Light Rail station is focused on maximizing access to public transport, encouraging a shift away from reliance on personal vehicles. In Federal Way, the areas around the light rail stations are expected to see an increase in developments that include affordable housing, retail spaces, office buildings, and public amenities such as parks and plazas. These developments are designed to enhance the quality of life for residents by providing easy access to transportation, reducing traffic congestion, and promoting sustainable urban growth.

A major focus around the stations should be the walkable community center previously mentioned for building community. Having a space that is near the transit station that is available for the community to gather, encouraging diverse populations to feel comfortable, and shaped around the vertical of food, would be ideal.

Some suggestions for this could be:

- Food set up around commute time for dinner/after dinner gathering of the community to eat together and gather
- Festivals around food, diversity, international cuisine, food art, etc



ENVIRONMENTAL TECH

In December 2023, a report found that Washington state ranks number 15 in the nation for recycling. However, that is still only less than 50% of recycling and that number has been stagnant for years (Department of Ecology).

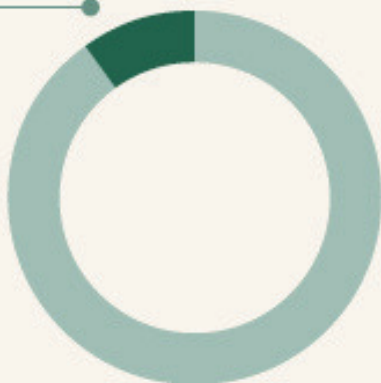
In Federal Way, the convergence of diverse culture, environmental consciousness with technological innovation creates a dynamic framework for addressing some of today's most pressing ecological issues. By focusing on biodegradable food packaging, reducing waste, and combating ocean pollution, the region not only protects its natural beauty but also paves the way for sustainable development models that other communities might emulate.

Over the last few years, there has been a large amount of legislation and laws introduced and/or passed to encourage or mandate higher rates of recycling. This is an opportunity for innovation.

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY, STATE OF WASHINGTON

[HTTPS://WASTEADVANTAGEMAG.COM/30-WAYS-TO-REDUCE-FOOD-WASTE-IN-WASHINGTON](https://wasteadvantagemag.com/30-ways-to-reduce-food-waste-in-washington)

Food waste causes between **8%** and **10%** of greenhouse gases



EXAMPLES IN THE REGION

Efforts to reduce plastic use, clean up beaches, and protect waterways are supported by local non-profits, educational institutions, and businesses. Technologies such as drones and AI are being explored to monitor pollution levels, track waste movement, and identify pollution hotspots. Community education programs aim to instill a sense of responsibility towards marine environments, encouraging practices that prevent waste from reaching the ocean in the first place. Federal Way has an opportunity to be at the forefront of this technology and innovation.

Cities like Seattle and Tacoma have significant maritime industries, including activities related to the Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma, which are among the largest container ports in the United States. These ports and the surrounding region are involved in shipping, fisheries, maritime logistics, and have initiatives towards innovation in sustainable maritime technologies.

For Federal Way and its residents, the proximity to these hubs means there are opportunities for involvement or employment within the broader bluetech sector. Additionally, new technologies can enhance these industries by reducing plastics and waste in the ocean, improving food decomposition processes, and more. Federal Way's strategic location between Seattle and Tacoma offers advantages for businesses and professionals connected to the bluetech industry, providing access to marine research institutions and innovation clusters in the region. This positioning can facilitate Federal Way's emergence as a leader in bluetech, leveraging local resources and initiatives to protect and enhance marine ecosystems.

EXAMPLES IN THE REGION

Washington State University Food Packaging and Processing Research Program

Washington State University (WSU) hosts a cutting-edge food packaging and food processing research program that leverages materials science to develop innovative packaging solutions and enhance the safety and quality of food. The program focuses on several key research areas:

- **Polymeric Packaging for Advanced Food Technologies:** Developing new polymer-based packaging materials to improve food preservation and safety.
- **Microencapsulation and Physicochemical Stability:** Enhancing the stability and functionality of food ingredients through microencapsulation techniques.
- **Food Freezing and Physicochemical Stability:** Investigating methods to improve the quality and stability of frozen foods.
- **Engineering Nanoparticle Interactions with Plant Surfaces:** Studying how nanoparticles interact with plant surfaces to improve food safety and quality.
- **UV-C Light Inactivation of Pathogens on Fruit and Packaged Food Surfaces:** Using UV-C light to inactivate pathogens and enhance food safety.



EXAMPLES IN THE REGION

NextCycle Washington Business Accelerator Program

The NextCycle Washington business accelerator program, funded by the Washington Department of Ecology, the Washington Recycling Market Development Center, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, aims to foster innovative solutions that divert waste from landfills and promote recycling and reuse. This program offers comprehensive support to startup teams over a six-month period, including:

- **Consulting and Technical Assistance:** Providing expert advice and technical support to help refine and develop sustainable business ideas.
- **Business and Marketing Support:** Assisting teams in building effective business models and marketing strategies.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Connecting participants with potential partners, suppliers, and funders to facilitate collaboration and growth.

At the end of the program, teams will compete in a pitch showcase, where they present their ideas to a panel for the chance to win monetary awards. This initiative not only supports the development of environmentally friendly businesses but also contributes to Washington's broader goals of waste reduction and sustainable resource management.

72

BACKGROUND, RESEARCH, AND APPENDIXES

This section of the report includes the comprehensive research and background information that underpins the findings and recommendations presented. The research methodology included a multi-faceted approach. This report includes data gathered during focus groups, stakeholder interviews, community sentiments, desk research, and more.

The inclusion of varied research methodologies ensured a robust and well-rounded approach, allowing for a grassroots and holistic understanding of the subject. The insights gained from this research form the bulk of the report.

73: APPENDIX 1

DEMOGRAPHICS OF FEDERAL WAY

Federal Way, ranked the No. 5 most ethnically diverse small city in America, according to a new study by WalletHub.com, stands at a crossroads of potential transformation. With a population that embodies a rich tapestry of cultural backgrounds, the city boasts unique community assets and an untapped economic landscape ripe for innovation.

Federal Way's demographic profile is a mosaic of diverse ethnicities, making it an ideal incubator for initiatives centered around food diversity and environmental technology. The city's population is a dynamic blend, with substantial representation from Asian, Hispanic, African American, and Pacific Islander communities. This diversity is not just a statistical fact but a living, breathing aspect of daily life in Federal Way, reflected in its culinary scene, cultural festivals, and community interactions.

For all demographical data, the US Census was used unless otherwise noted.

POPULATION

Federal Way has a population of approximately 104,630 people. The city has seen steady growth over the past few decades, driven by its location within the dynamic Greater Seattle area.

74: APPENDIX 1

RACIAL AND ETHNIC

Federal Way is known for its diverse population, with a significant representation of racial and ethnic groups. The racial makeup has been varied, with significant numbers of White, Asian, African American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino residents.

Specifically:

White: 39.2% Historically, the majority, but with decreasing proportion due to increasing diversity.

Asian: 15.3% A substantial portion of the population, with significant communities of Korean, Filipino, Chinese, and Vietnamese residents.

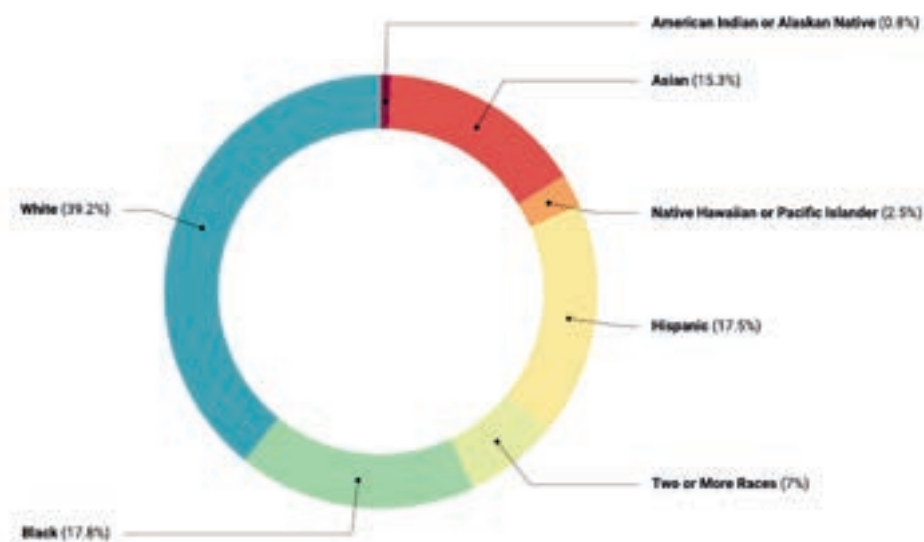
Black or African American: 11.9% A notable percentage of the population, reflecting Federal Way's diversity.

Hispanic or Latino: 17.8% This group has been growing, contributing to the city's cultural and demographic landscape.

Other races and mixed-race individuals: 9.5%

Reflecting a wide range of backgrounds, contributing to the city's multicultural identity.

Population By Race



75: APPENDIX 1

LANGUAGE

Language differences are sometimes a challenge in Federal Way, with around 28% of the population being foreign born and around 38% of the population not speaking English at home and 107 languages being spoken within the school district.

EDUCATION

Federal Way is served by the Federal Way Public Schools district, which operates a number of elementary, middle, and high schools. The city also has access to higher education through The Hub with Highline College and UW. About 90% of adults over the age of 25 have graduated from high school, higher than the national average.

When it comes to college/university education, over 30% of the population over 25 years of age has a bachelor's degree, which is slightly lower than the national average.



76: APPENDIX 1

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS

The city has a range of socioeconomic statuses, with areas of affluence as well as communities facing economic challenges. The median household income is \$81,500, compared to the national average median household income of \$74,580. However, the area still has 11.8% of the population living below the poverty line.

Employment opportunities in Federal Way and the surrounding areas vary, with jobs in Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. The economy of Federal Way employs 51,250 people. During the past five years employment decreased by 13.5% in Federal Way from 41,686 to 36,046. As of January 2024 seasonally unadjusted unemployment was 5.2%.

AGE AND GENDER

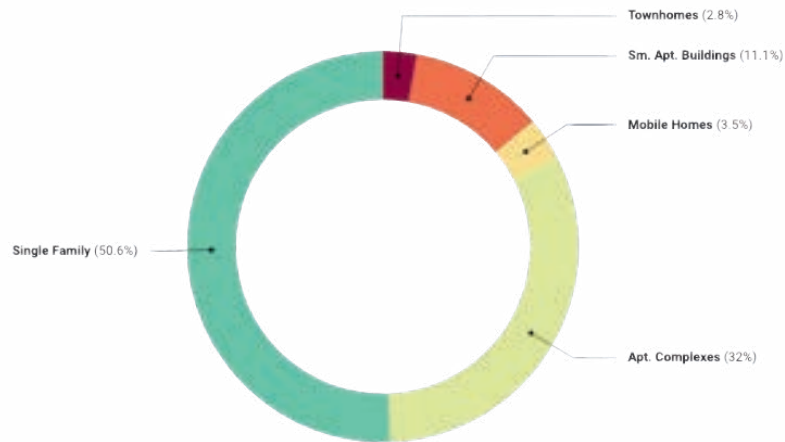
Federal Way has a diverse age distribution, with a mix of young families, working-age adults, and a growing population of seniors. The city's schools, parks, and community services cater to a wide range of age groups. The median age is 36.2 years old. Of the population, 49.3% are female. 14% of the population is over the age of 65.

77: APPENDIX 1

HOUSING

The city offers a mix of housing options, from single-family homes to apartments and condominiums. Housing affordability has been a concern, similar to many parts of the Seattle metropolitan area, influenced by the region's economic growth. The average rent in Federal Way is \$1,660. This rate is more affordable than Seattle which averages \$2,267.

The median value of an owner-occupied home is \$574,170. In homes, 97% of households own a computer. 92% of households have broadband internet.



78: APPENDIX 2

THE LIGHT RAIL: BACKGROUND DATA

This new project extends light rail from Angle Lake Station in the city of SeaTac to the Federal Way Transit Center. The 7.8-mile extension includes three stations in Kent/Des Moines near Highline College, South 272nd Street and the Federal Way Transit Center. All three stations add parking for a total of 3,200 spaces along the route. The train will leave every 6-8 minutes during peak hours.

Sixty percent of workers residing in the corridor of the Light Rail worked in retail and in manufacturing, warehousing, transportation, communications, and utilities, according to the Census. Retail and manufacturing work schedules typically do not conform to peak-hour commute transit service. For instance, about 13 percent of 2010 Census respondents in the FWLE corridor began their commute between 4 PM and 5 AM.

Highline College employs approximately 1,100 people and has approximately 16,500 students per year, 65 percent of whom come from the four cities within the FWLE corridor. Classes occur throughout the day and evening, and students and employees depend on reliable off-peak transit to get to and from the college.

The corridor has a higher proportion of low-income residents than King County as a whole. The Census reported that nearly 16 percent of the population in the FWLE corridor had incomes at or below the federal poverty level, compared to less than 11 percent for King County. At 14 of the 15 elementary schools in the study area, the majority of students qualified for free or reduced lunches.



79: APPENDIX 3

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

House Bill 1799

Enacted to reduce organic waste disposal by 75% by 2030 and significantly expand waste collection efforts. The law defines organic waste as manure, yard debris, food waste, food processing waste, wood waste, and garden waste.

This represents an advancement in the management of organic materials, transforming what was once waste into resources. The law sets two major targets:

- Reduce organic waste disposal by 75% by 2030
- Increase the volume of edible food recovery by 20% by 2025

Starting January 1, 2027, most jurisdictions with a population over 25,000 must provide organic waste collection services. Businesses, depending on the amount of organic waste they produce, will face phased compliance deadlines starting in 2024.

Key provisions of the law include the establishment of a compost reimbursement program for farmers, requirements for cities and counties to adopt ordinances for compost procurement, amendments to product degradability labeling standards to aid in identifying compostable products, and regulations to facilitate the siting of organic material management facilities. The law also amends the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act to encourage more food donations and establishes a new Center for Sustainable Food Management to assist in managing and distributing surplus food.

80: APPENDIX 3

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

House Bill 2144

Would create a beverage container recycling program. Supporters claim it works in other states by providing an incentive for people to turn in their cans or collect them from the street.

House Bill 1900

Introduced this year, mandates that manufacturers label packaging as recyclable only if it can largely be recycled within Washington state. Additionally, it aims to increase the amount of recycled content used in new packaging products. The bill also requires producers to register their products with the state Department of Ecology to gain a better understanding of the materials entering the state for recycling, composting, or waste disposal.

House Bill 2049

known as the Washington Recycling and Packaging Act, proposes a shift in the financial responsibility for curbside recycling services. Under this bill, companies supplying packaging and paper products would fund the statewide recycling program through "extended producer responsibility programs," rather than placing the burden on residents. This legislative effort highlights the importance of advancing environmental technology to ensure a sustainable future for Federal Way's ecosystem

81

ABOUT INNOVATION COLLECTIVE

Innovation Collective is a human and economic performance company. Flat out, we are not doing great at this “humaning” thing and it is negatively impacting companies and cities. We are here to lead the charge of human and community flourishing.

- 85% of employees are not engaged at work costing an estimated \$7.8 trillion.
- 58% of Americans experience loneliness which carries the same health impacts as smoking a pack of cigarettes per day.
- 70% of Americans feel financially stressed.
- Depression is the leading cause of disability globally.

We designed our companies in a way that unleashes the best in people and drives strong, vibrant economic outcomes. Our approach has the power to harmonize the economic and strategic goals of companies and cities with the profound human cravings that are currently going unmet in cities around the world. We are deploying a better way for people to plan and live their lives, for companies to design impactful employee programs, for real estate developers to rethink amenities, and for communities/governments/chambers to approach economic development by looking at their communities from the bottom up rather than the top down.

It is time for a better story and we are writing it.

Together, we are here to reclaim culture and build a future of a work-live-play-learn-create engine that empowers the creator in each of us as we build the tomorrow we want through community, today.

82**THE SOFTWARE**

helps people build and find networks in cities around their dreams, connect with skilled neighbors who can provide help, and find or host community gatherings to experience the journey of creating a better tomorrow with like-minded people.

THE CONSULTING FIRM

assists real estate developers, corporations, governments, and foundations in designing and implementing strategies and tools to engage their target audience in a way that builds strong and deeply bonded communities working together to accomplish clients' goals. This results in occupied and energized real estate campuses, an engaged and loyal workforce, and empowered, happy, and productive residents.

THE VENTURE FUND

is not your typical fund. We are a network of over 150 scientists, inventors, entrepreneurs, and corporate executives who actively travel to communities worldwide to participate, mentor, and speak at gatherings focused on unleashing stronger communities and economies. The fund takes an approach where we invest wisdom, access, and money in that order as we seek to empower the next batch of world changing startups

THE REAL ESTATE COMPANY

is unique in that we often work with large family offices, governments, or funds to design plans to activate networks of facilities into vibrant work, live, play, learn, create environments.

Sponsored in part by



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Sustaining Investors

Cornerstone Investors



Champion Investors

