

Date: March 5, 2025
To: Alan Peters, City of Camas (cc:ed Nicole McDermott, WSP)
From: Tyler Bump, Jennifer Cannon, and Mary Chase, ECONorthwest
Subject: DRAFT Proposed Economic Development Element Updates, City of Camas Comprehensive Plan Update

Proposed Revisions to Economic Development Element

Introduction

The updated City of Camas Comprehensive Plan refined the **Economic Development Element** vision, goals, and policies to be relevant for the next two decades from 2025 to 2045. The Comprehensive Plan is a foundational document that provides a vision and policy direction for managing growth and development while considering effects on the built and natural environment and public facilities. This guiding document provides clear linkages with future investments, priorities, land use changes, and can lead to revisions of codes and regulations. The updated plan must be responsive to changing community dynamics, the strategic vision established by the City Council and include focused goals to address social inequities and climate change.

The current Economic Development Element aims to include goals and policies that help ensure the economic development in the City of Camas provides a range of employment opportunities throughout the City. The economic health and well-being of the City are tied to commitments to promote a wide range of employment opportunities for the citizens of the community and to provide a setting and quality of life that attracts businesses and residents.

The approach for updating the Economic Development Element was informed by community input (outlined below), state legislation requirements, priorities for the city, a comprehensive economic profile based on the best available data. This Economic Profile Analysis integrated the best available information from public and private data sources to assess the city's economic trajectory, opportunities, challenges, and economic conditions and competitiveness. The insights from this analysis help build a factual basis for the economic development goal and policy updates.

Community Engagement Findings

The project team held interactive open houses and interviewed stakeholders to learn about economic development strengths, challenges, opportunities, and actions in Downtown Camas and other areas in the City. Engagement activities identified the following themes that could contribute to future decision-making related to economic development in Camas.

Economic Development Insights

- ◆ **North Shore:** Need infill development.
- ◆ **Grass Valley:** Needs mixed/light industrial park with athlete fields/parks. Why no Grass Valley Subarea Plan? Be clear on what kinds of businesses would be most beneficial to Camas in Grass Valley to build awareness when talking with prospective businesses.
- ◆ **General:** Need more commercial space, more manufacturing jobs, and a dedicated economic development director or staff person (apply for grant), and plan. Focus on tourism and bring in money. Are there model cities Camas would strive to look like? (Lake Oswego, Bend, etc.) Compare plans with cities that have experienced similar growth? What did they do well?
- ◆ **Housing:** Allow work/live housing along and around UGA/schools and major transportation corridors. Ensure workforce housing is available for current and future workers. Having diverse housing options will lead to a more diverse city.

Downtown Strengths

- ◆ **Strong sense of place:** Downtown stakeholders feel supported by Camas community. They discussed the quaint, small-town character, with unique features attracting visitors and services and how the mix of new and old/established businesses contributes to vitality of Downtown.
- ◆ **Positive support for businesses:** Good interactions with the DCA, overall good experience working with the City and business owners cultivate a collaborative environment.
- ◆ **Increases in housing density seen as a positive direction:** New housing is opportunity for more amenities to support the growth and expansion of amenities can make Downtown more walkable.

Downtown Opportunities

- ◆ **Improvements to public realm** to increase / improve street lighting, address issues with street trees (some interfere with sidewalks, other infrastructure), improve the civic area of Fire Dept. plan, add connectivity to adjacent residential neighborhoods, and open spaces, and provide outdoor dining spilling out onto sidewalk.
- ◆ **Community gathering spaces:** Need more meeting places indoor/outdoor and outdoor spaces for children/families, should expand Downtown Core beyond 4th Ave, support redevelopment of underutilized land on 3rd and 5th Ave, and should create more spaces for retail that extends walkability of Downtown, cohesiveness.
- ◆ **Development potential:** Explore more ways to activate ground floors and embrace walkability / modern parking standards.



Downtown Challenges

- ♦ **Parking is a concern for some:** Two-hour duration (especially difficult for employees) and Mill property / parking lot.
- ♦ **Pace of development:** Concern over what new development will mean for current businesses and need for balance between new development and preserving historic structures in Downtown.
- ♦ **Growth opportunities are limited:** Need to expand the definition of Downtown (beyond just 4th Ave) to expand and provide more amenities. There is limited space on 4th Ave where businesses would like to locate.
- ♦ **Barriers to development and safety issues for pedestrians:** Height restrictions and fees are challenging, since rents are lower it is harder to make a project pencil, and need for safer crossings on 3rd Ave and difficult to cross 5th in some areas.

What can the City do?

- ♦ **Responsive permitting,** ongoing maintenance to public realm supports success of Downtown.
- ♦ **More partnerships between City and Downtown businesses:** City can increase interaction and build relationships with business / property owners.
- ♦ **Identify ways to keep local presence and restore historic structures:** Some expressed concern over losing historic structures and asked for ways to balance preservation with new development. The City could provide incentives for existing business owners who would like to expand or stay in Downtown Camas as new development continues.
- ♦ **Explore ways to address underutilized property:** For example, opportunities at GP parking lot.
- ♦ **Pedestrian Safety and Connectivity:** Address 3rd and 5th Avenue pedestrian safety and improve connections to and from Downtown. Focus on pedestrian activation through plazas and public spaces. Address accessibility needs both with ADA and beyond.
- ♦ **Improvements:** Expand character of Downtown to the broader boundary defined in the plan. Accommodate a flexibility of spaces and variety of uses through use of public space (sidewalks, parking, etc.). Define the historic character of 4th Avenue through specific streetscape elements.



City of Camas Competitive Position

Given the characteristics of Camas described in the preceding profile, the city's competitive position can be summarized in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). These represent internal and external factors that can have positive or negative impacts on economic outcomes in Camas. Several ideas added to the summary below are based on feedback received through community engagement activities. Exhibit 1 below outlines key findings for these factors in Camas when considering potential economic growth and development.

Exhibit 1. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Summary Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality of life amenities like parks and recreation opportunities including new City investments in capital projects.• Downtown experiencing high visitation and high demand for retail spaces (increasing rents, low vacancy).• Responsive permitting, ongoing maintenance of the public realm.• No Washington State income tax.• Proximity to Portland International Airport.• Well regarded public schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rising housing costs, purchasing a home is unaffordable for those under 120% AMI.• High industrial rents and very low industrial real estate vacancies.• Development standards related to height was cited as a barrier by stakeholders.• Need Downtown development to be feasible to build (pencil).• Highly constrained lands may be difficult to develop for commercial or industrial land uses (such as in Washougal).



OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract highly skilled workers with locational flexibility. • Develop pathways for youth to gain skills and seek jobs in Camas. • Identify target industries for managing land capacity and expected growth. • Incentives for existing business owners, wishing to expand their operations. • Opportunities for Downtown redevelopment and partnerships with Downtown businesses and nonprofits (such as the Downtown Camas Association, the Port, Chamber, Farmers Market, and more). • Develop mill ditch into a compelling, easy, and beautiful trail system that is clear to connect with from Downtown and improve the trails to encourage local resident activity and to attract visitors. • Need more hotels and conference space. • City should partner more with the Downtown Camas Association (DCA) on incentive programs supporting vibrancy. • Improve pedestrian safety throughout downtown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal rates of homeownership by race and ethnicity indicating unequal economic opportunities. • Disparities between remote and non-remote workers. • Anchor employer changes. • Safety threats that could be supported by better lighting, street tree improvements, safer crossings for pedestrians in the Downtown. • Need to balance preserving historic features with new development in Downtown.

Planning Context

Growth Management Act Requirements for Economic Development

Comprehensive planning in Washington is guided by the Growth Management Act (GMA), a series of statutes first adopted in 1990 which requires cities and towns within the state's most populous counties to fully plan for future growth (RCW 36.70A) and develop mandatory comprehensive plan elements. State provisions set limits on what actions cities and counties can take to support economic development. Article 8, Section 7 of the state constitution specifies that "No county, city, town or other municipal corporation shall hereafter give any money, property, or loan its money, or credit to or in aid of any individual, association, company or corporation, except for the necessary support of the poor



and infirm.”¹ Given this limitation, cities generally cannot directly use public funds to attract private development and instead target policies that facilitate economic growth through land use, infrastructure, tourism, marketing, and partnerships with nonprofit community-based organizations.

Regional Economic Development Planning

Cities in Washington also coordinate with county-level Associate Development Organizations (ADOs) that represent each of Washington's counties, funded in part by the state Department of Commerce. The Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) represents Clark County and presents a baseline of goals and objectives for the region. Their former 2018-2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Plan outlined goals and actions based on a vision and set of values and guiding principles identified through extensive engagement with local partners, which have carried through and expanded with the more recent 2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Plan with new supplemental actions to encourage economic development for communities within Clark County.




New objectives in CREDC's regional economic development plan expand on support for entrepreneurship, placemaking investments, fostering development and redevelopment projects, and expanding equitable employment opportunities. The Plan also recognizes the growing role of smaller cities like Camas outside of Vancouver which are seeing fast population growth and opportunities to develop their own employment bases.

¹ RCW 35.21.703 does allow cities to contract with nonprofit corporations to advance economic development.



Exhibit 2. Goals and Objectives from 2018-2023 CREDC Comprehensive Economic Development Plan

Source: CREDC

	2018 Plan Objectives	2024 Update Objectives
 Expand the Existing Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Become Industry Experts ◆ Strategically Market Industry Clusters ◆ Build a Start-Up Ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reduce Site Infrastructure Hurdles ◆ Grow Start-Up Ecosystem ◆ Support Permitting Consistency ◆ Explore Commercial Code Flexibility ◆ Foster Small Business Networking
 Support People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Foster Skills Development ◆ Prepare Youth for Economic Opportunity ◆ Launch a Brain Gain Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Align Workforce with Employer Needs ◆ Enhance Access to Career Pathways ◆ Support Talent Retention
 Create Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Each Community Creates a Placemaking Strategy ◆ Embrace Economic Opportunity in Urban Center ◆ CREDC Tells the Story of Place ◆ Make Areas Desired by Industry Clusters Shovel-Ready ◆ Determine All Transportation Needs on a Regional Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Leverage Placemaking Investments ◆ Encourage Infrastructure Investments That Cross Municipal Boundaries

Buildable Land Capacity and Employment Capacity

Cities fully planning for adequate land capacity to meet the needs of the community must understand their current employment base, development trends, workforce housing availability, income segments of the population, and future projections. State statute requires that land use elements must *"[designate] the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of land, where appropriate, for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, open spaces and green spaces, urban and community forests within the urban growth area."* (36.70A.070(1)) *This includes population densities, building intensities, and estimates of future population growth.* To fully plan for growth and meet community needs in compliance with state provisions, more suburban cities like Camas that are growing in terms of employment must understand the dynamics of the local and regional economy, consider where employment is concentrated and how residents and workers

access employment opportunities, what industries are growing or declining, and whether there is sufficient space to fulfill anticipated employment land needs alongside other uses.

Washington's Review and Evaluation Program (the Buildable Lands Program, RCW 36.70A.215) requires certain counties, including Clark County, to establish their own buildable lands programs and review past development and density patterns to see if local policies are effective and prepare to plan for the next 20 years of growth, through a "Buildable Lands Report" released before a Comprehensive Plan update. Washington legislature E2SSB-5254 (2017) amended the buildable lands statute in an attempt to improve the overall accuracy accounting for changes in growth patterns and land status classifications.² RCW 36.70A.215 also includes provisions about determining the development capacity of land and identifying sufficient land for employment. Specifically, jurisdictions should identify the *"amount of land developed for commercial and industrial uses within the urban growth area since the adoption of a comprehensive plan... [and] the amount of land needed for commercial, industrial, and housing for the remaining portion of the twenty-year planning period."*³

Clark County has updated its Vacant Buildable Lands Model (VBLM) as a part of their 2025 periodic update of their Comprehensive Plan. This VBLM provides a basis for the available employment capacity in the City of Camas based on available buildable land (including both vacant and underutilized land), current zoning, and market and employment density assumptions. Exhibit 3

Exhibit 3 below shows the County's current allocation of jobs for the City of Camas and the Camas Urban Growth Area (UGA) and the 2023 Vacant Buildable Lands Model (VBLM) capacity and yield calculations.⁴

This analysis shows that the City of Camas has a job target of 13,658 jobs, with a preliminary estimated capacity showing availability for 11,363 jobs, as well as additional assumptions for work from home, construction, and government jobs which have specific land need considerations documented in Clark County's 2025 Population, Housing and Employment Allocation memorandum.⁵

As shown in the following section, additional analysis was completed by the project team to refine the land capacity analysis and determine employment capacity based on key City of Camas zoning and UGA modifications. Evaluating employment capacity is necessary to determine whether the job growth allocation (determined by the county) can be accommodated within the City of Camas and Camas UGA(s). Sufficient capacity is available if employment growth capacity is equal to or greater than the City's allocation. If sufficient capacity is not available, the shortfall must be addressed by rezoning, or revising allowable density, or by modifying or creating a new UGA or annexed area to provide additional area for employment growth capacity. To help provide geographic context for this analysis, a map of the City of Camas and its existing and proposed Urban Growth Areas was created (see Exhibit 4).

² RCW 36.70A.215 (1)a: Determine whether a county and its cities are achieving urban densities within urban growth areas by comparing growth and development assumptions, targets, and objectives contained in the countywide planning policies and the county and city comprehensive plans with actual growth and development that has occurred in the county and its cities.

³ The state's methodology used to evaluate employment land does not differentiate land by any market criteria such as size, infrastructure presence, cost, ownership, or availability.

⁴ This has been modified since the County's 2020 Buildable Lands Report, which identified 963 net buildable acres (296 on commercial land, 667 on industrial land) in the Camas UGA (Clark County Buildable Lands Report, 2023).

⁵ Clark County Community Planning, 'Clark County Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update 2025 Population, Housing and Employment Allocation – Issue Paper 5,' April 2024, https://clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/2024-04/issue_paper_5_pop-emp_alloc_4_17_24.pdf.

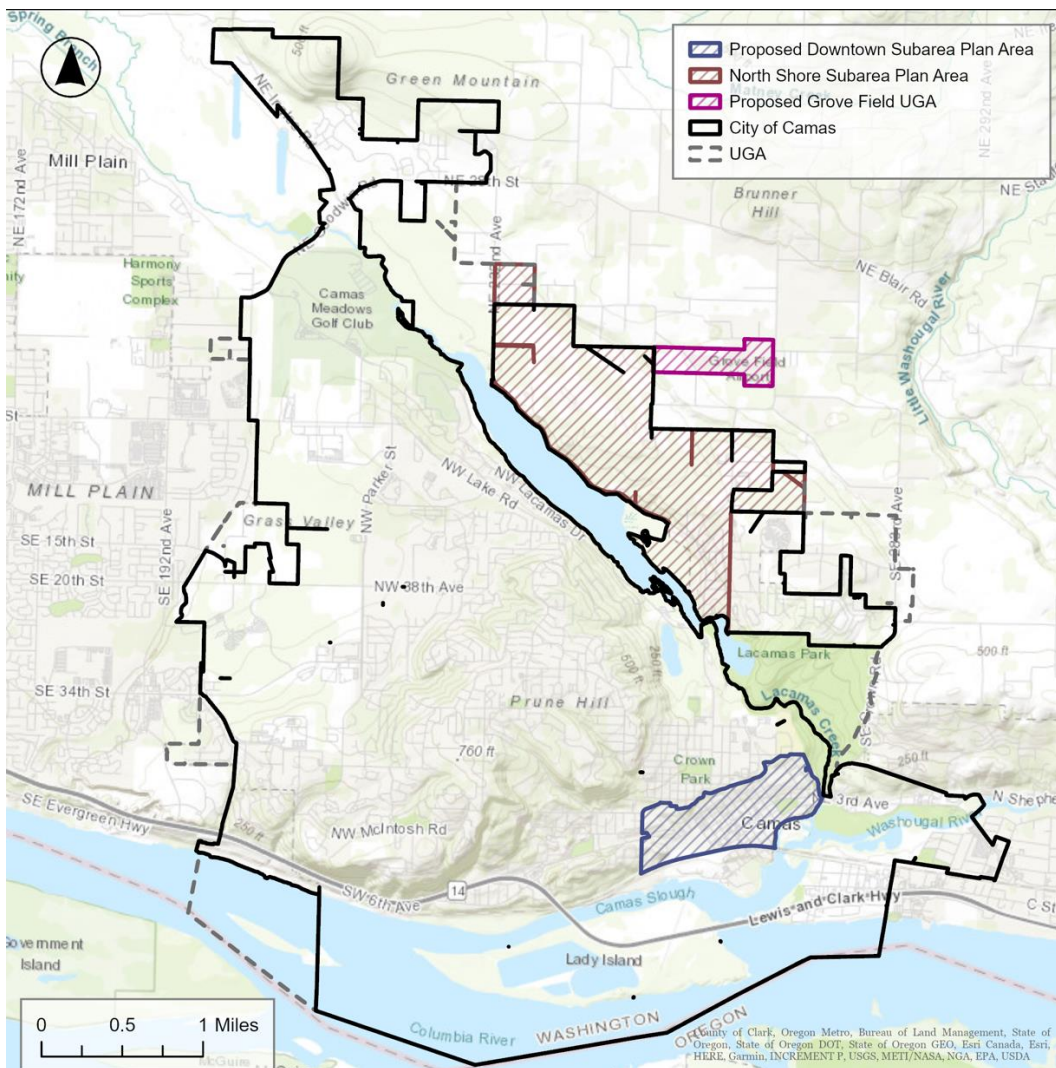


Exhibit 3. Employment Capacity and Allocation by UGA, Clark County

Source: VBLM 2023, Capacity and Yield by Jurisdiction. Note: The County total estimate is 88,100 jobs accounting for government, construction, rural, and work from home jobs.

JURISDICTION	2023-2045 EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATION	2023 VBLM CAPACITY	ASSUMPTIONS		
			WORK FROM HOME	CONSTRUCTION	GOVERNMENT
City of Camas and Camas UGA	13,658 jobs	11,363 jobs	615 jobs	879 jobs	549 jobs
Total Clark County UGAs and Cities	83,695 jobs	65,091 jobs	3,524 jobs	5,038 jobs	8,600 jobs

Exhibit 4. Map of the City of Camas, Existing and Proposed UGAs



The City of Camas is considering zoning modifications and the addition of a new UGA that would allow for additional employment capacity. Consequently, another analysis was completed to consider future modifications. Considering these modifications, the total available buildable acres and employment

growth are shown below in Exhibit 5. **According to the employment capacity estimates, Camas would have capacity for 13,803 jobs which would result in a surplus of around 145 jobs over the 2045 employment target of 13,658 jobs. Results (summarized below) from the updated capacity analysis show sufficient employment growth capacity to meet the 2045 employment target.**

Exhibit 5. Commercial and Industrial Land Supply and Job Capacity Estimates for Camas, under Alternative 1

Source: Clark County Buildable Lands Report, [VBLM 2023](#), Capacity and Yield by Jurisdiction. Source of Work from home, construction, and government jobs is from the [Clark County Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update, 2025 Population, Housing, and Employment Allocation – Issue Paper 5](#).

SELECT COMMERCIAL, MIXED USE, AND INDUSTRIAL ZONES	BUILDABLE ACRES	JOBS
Community Commercial (CC)	10	193
Downtown Commercial (DC)	5	66
Mixed Employment (ME)	241	2169
Mixed Use (MX)	115	1154
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	10	198
North Shore Commercial (C-NS)	25	499
North Shore Mixed Employment (ME-NS)	95	590
North Shore Mixed Use (MX-NS)	74	740
Regional Commercial (RC)	191	3825
Business Park (BP)	13	116
Heavy Industrial (HI)	216	1948
All Zones	995	11,498
Work from Home	N/A	615
Construction-Field	N/A	879
Government	N/A	549
Total Jobs		13,541
Job Surplus		117

Clark Countywide Planning Policies

The Clark Countywide Planning Policies provide guidance on economic development across incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County (the County also distinguishes policies specifically for unincorporated areas, but not for jurisdictions and their UGAs). These policies (adopted in 2015) are currently being updated. The updated version will be reviewed as a part of the policy and goal development stage of the Comprehensive Plan update.



CLARK COUNTY'S BUILDABLE LANDS REPORT, 2023, KEY FINDINGS

Clark County's Buildable Lands Report was adopted in June 2022 to update the methodology and Vacant Buildable Lands Model (VBLM) and updated with 2023 data.

- » **The Clark County Buildable Lands Report and employment allocations and City of Camas estimates indicate that there is sufficient employment capacity for employment growth in the county through 2045.**
- » Camas has the second largest share of total projected jobs in Clark County (17.5%) after the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Unincorporated Urban Area (U). The City of Camas is expected to have capacity to accommodate 11,363 jobs, with about half (55%) of new employment on commercial land and half on industrial (45%).

City of Camas Profile

More than 10,000 years ago, Native Americans occupied the Columbia River Valley in the area where Camas is now situated. Before Camas was incorporated, a paper mill owned by the LaCamas Colony Company was established in 1883 to help supply newsprint for The Oregonian. Shortly thereafter, the City of Camas became an incorporated city in 1906. The City is named after the camas lily, a deep blue flowered plant with edible onion-like bulbs valued by various Columbia river Native American Tribes.⁶ The paper mill expanded in the early 20th Century playing an important role in the local economy and grew to become Clark County's largest manufacturing company with 2,700 employees by 1971.⁷ Located in the western edge of Downtown Camas along the Columbia River, the mill then experienced a downturn beginning in the 1980s that continued into the 21st Century, resulting in a reduced workforce. More recently, in 2018, the mill now owned by Georgia-Pacific, shut down several facilities and all but one of its paper machines and downsized its workforce to roughly 150 workers. In 2024, the mill continues to operate with a reduced workforce.

The early economy in Camas was at first dominated by manufacturing but has shifted and diversified over time. The 2015 Comp Plan describes a transition where the City's past economic health was closely tied to the paper mill and then shifted to become more diversified supporting many technology and manufacturing firms, as well as a growing school system and professional offices. In the last four decades, the family-friendly City with close ties to the Portland Metropolitan Region has continued to attract more residents especially from 1990 to 2000 by almost doubling in size to almost 13,000 people, increasing to a little over 19,000 people in 2010, and then reaching 27,420 people by 2023. Similar to the

⁶ City of Camas history: <https://www.cityofcamas.us/community/page/camas-history>

⁷ Source: <https://www.camaspstrecord.com/news/2023/sep/07/camas-mill-celebrates-its-140th-birthday/#:~:text=An%20entire%20wall%20of%20photos,built%20the%20mill%20to%20produce>



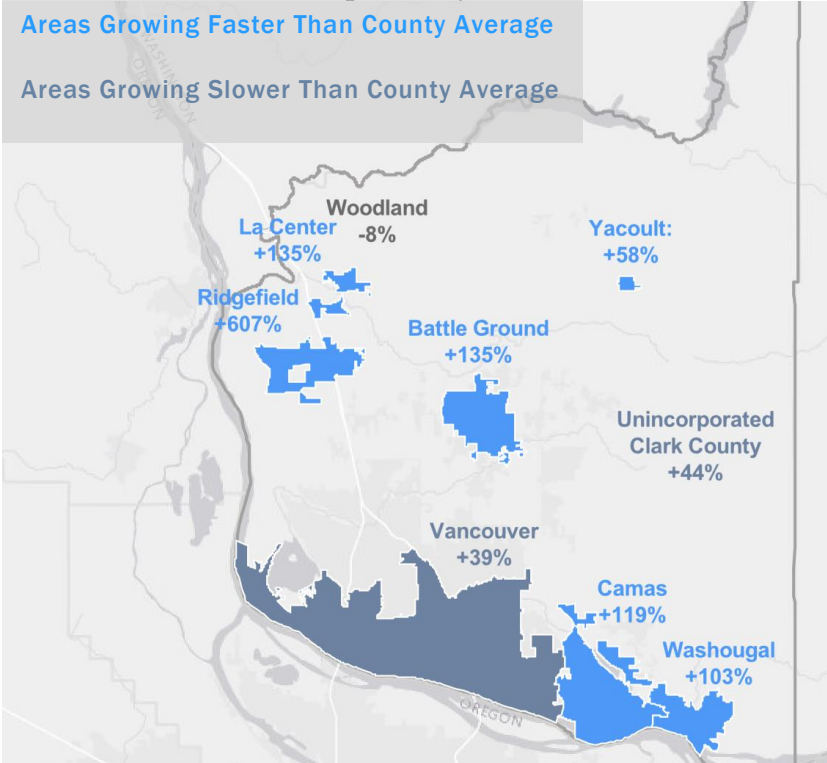
City of Vancouver, Camas has experienced high population growth over the last two decades, with an average annual growth rate of 5.2% which is double the rate in Clark County and Washington State.

Today, the City of Camas is a highly desirable place to live, offering a prime location nearby the growing cities and employment centers of Vancouver and Portland, and the smaller cities of Washougal and Battle Ground in south Clark County. The City of Camas is sandwiched between the City of Vancouver (sharing a border on the west side of Camas) to the west and the City of Washougal to the east. At a regional level, the City is interconnected to the Portland Metropolitan region, located northeast of Portland (see map below).

Camas has been working to advance its economic development goals in recent years while investing in quality-of-life amenities that make it as competitive location for attracting workers and residents. Recently, the City adopted a North Shore subarea plan (2022) to support community vibrancy and economic development strategies and the City is working to adopt a new Downtown subarea plan as a part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update project. The City has also been expanding its inventory of parks space by leveraging the County's Legacy Lands program to expand its offerings of natural areas and recreation facilities. As larger economic trends increase locational flexibility (especially for professional services and traditionally office-based jobs), these types of investments will be critical for cities in the region to continue drawing in and retaining a residential base and workforce. The Port of Camas-Washougal manages an airport that is outside City limits, but most of the developable land in the North Shore area is within the airport influence area.

Exhibit 6. Camas Compared to Clark County Cities

Source: Office of Financial Management Population Estimates



Economic Development Overview

Economic development for the City of Camas is the creation and sustenance of a diverse array of employment opportunities, ensuring the tax base currently enjoyed by the City endures and is strengthened. The economic health and well-being of the City are tied to commitments to promote a wide range of employment opportunities for the citizens of the community and to provide a setting and quality of life that attract businesses and residents.

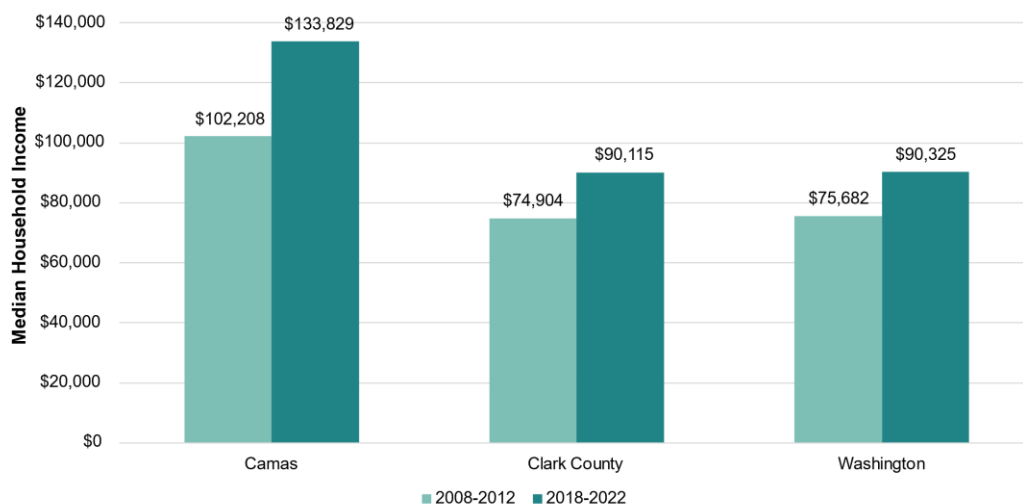
Planning a diverse and vibrant economy must start by understanding current economic conditions in the City and Clark County. While the City's past economic health was closely tied to the paper mill, in more recent years, the City's economy has diversified and now supports many technology and manufacturing firms, as well as a growing school system and professional offices. The figures below compare the median household income for Camas, Clark County, and Washington as well as employment and related trends over time.

As illustrated in Exhibit 7, when compared with Clark County, wages in Camas are higher and have grown over the last decade. Higher wages can have positive impacts on other aspects of the economy, and community members have expressed their desire to support living-wage jobs, particularly in healthcare and high technology.

Exhibit 7. Median Household Income, Camas, Clark County, and Washington

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Note: 2008-2012 values are adjusted for inflation. Median household incomes are shown in 2022 \$.



Growth in employment, population, and housing are interconnected. In general, communities with a high ratio of population to jobs can be characterized as “bedroom” or commuter communities, where there are fewer jobs than residents in the city. In Camas, there are roughly three residents for every one employee, indicating a continued trend from the past decade.

The ratio of jobs to housing has slightly increased from 0.9 to 1.0, indicating a healthy balance of housing units in comparison with employment and meeting the jobs-to-housing ratio of 1:1 adopted



by Clark County (Resolution 2016-03-01). As the City grows, maintaining this trend can help to ensure that there is adequate housing for those who work in Camas.

Exhibit 8. Population, Employment, and Jobs Comparison Ratios, Camas, 2010-2021

Source: OFM, LEHD-LODES

Note: Employment data is currently only available at the City level through 2021.

	TRENDS			RATIOS	
	POPULATION	EMPLOYMENT	HOUSING UNITS	POPULATION : JOBS	JOBS : HOUSING
2010	19,355	6,508	7,072	3.0	0.9
2021	26,870	9,558	9,586	2.8	1.0

Clark County overall has seen fluctuations in employment change since 2000, with the most notable decreases in employment in the wake of the 2008 recession and at the onset of the COVID-19 in 2020. However, the County has also seen a fast rebound from pandemic trends, with sharp growth in employment after 2020. The City of Camas has generally seen positive growth in employment over the last two decades. The City also saw less of a decrease during 2020 than Clark County overall, which may reflect Camas's growth in remote workers during this period (Exhibit 9,



Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 9. Total Covered Employment Change YOY, Clark County (2001-2022)

Source: Washington Employment Security Department

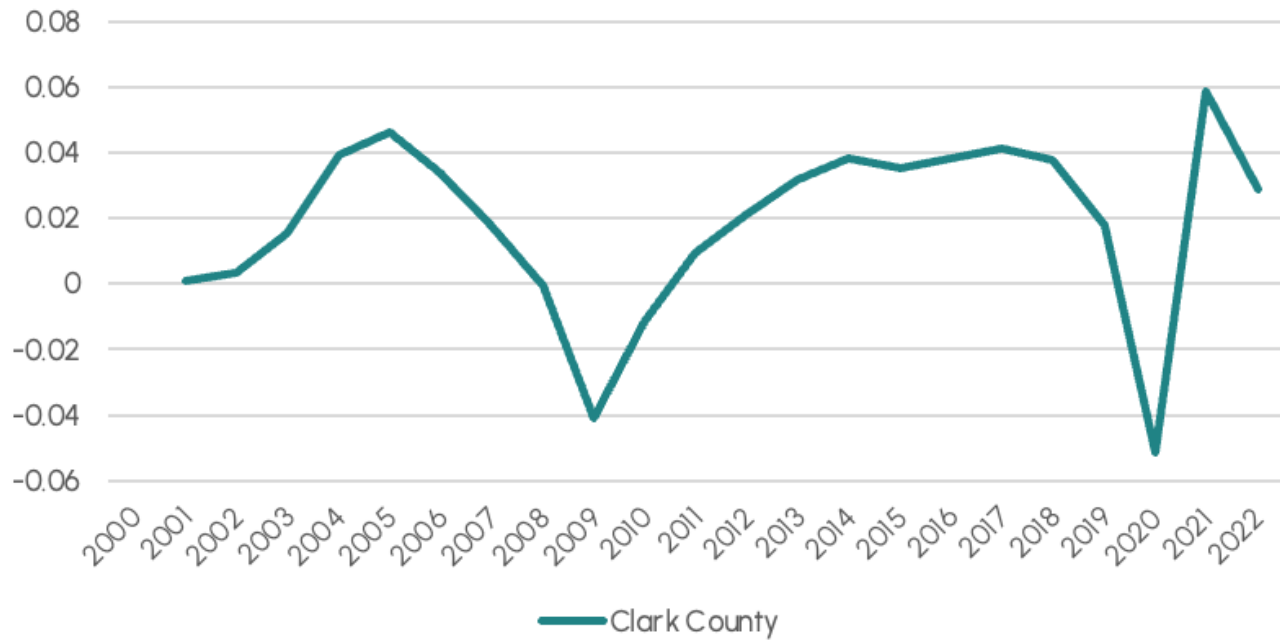
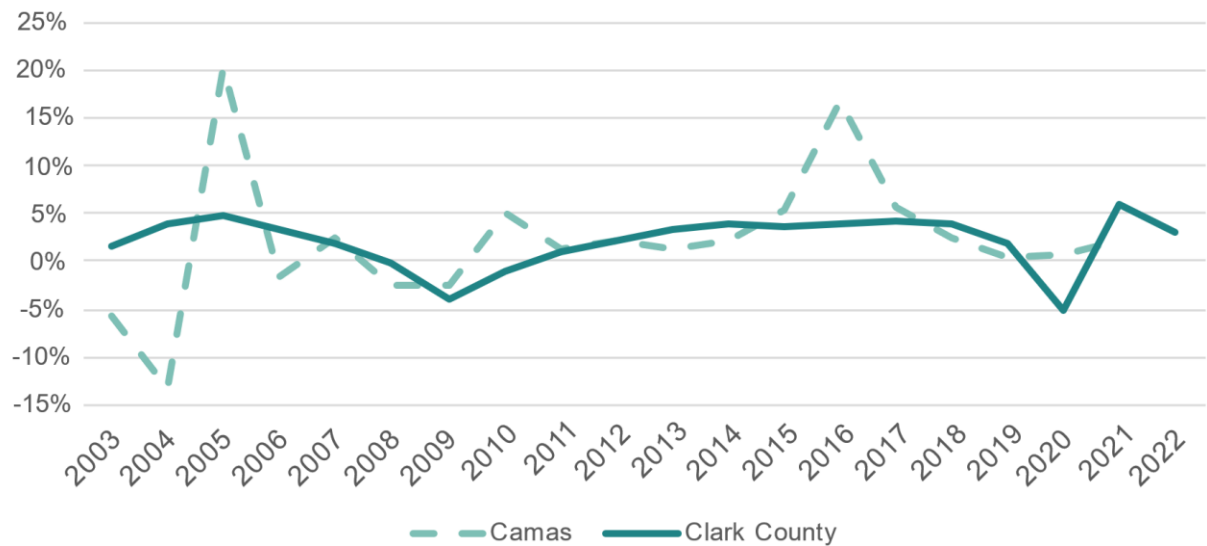


Exhibit 10. Total Employment Change YOY (Primary Jobs), Camas Clark County (2011-2022)

Source: Washington Employment Security Department, LEHD-LODES. Note: LEHD-LODES data for the City of Camas only available through 2021

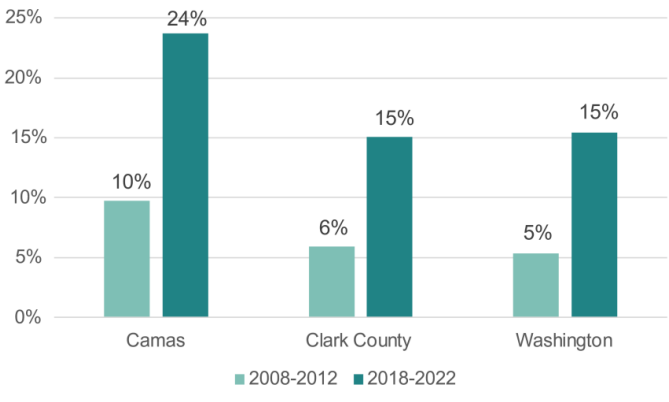


The Economic Development Element establishes goals and policies that seek to maintain the diversification of employment opportunities and support the continued growth of the Camas economy and attainment of the jobs target by 2045.

The City is targeting businesses that provide a greater proportion of living-wage jobs. Increasing retail services in support of residential, industrial, and professional business growth is highly desirable. Camas is also seeing an increasing share of remote workers at a higher rate than the County or State, with nearly a quarter of workers falling into this category in 2022.

Exhibit 11. Share of Remote Workers, Camas, Clark County, and Washington, 2012-2022

Source: ACS, 2008-2012, 2018-2022



Summary of Demographic and Economic Trends

A summary of key findings from this Economic Development Element analysis is provided below to help describe key insights regarding the economic context, economic opportunities and challenges, and to inform Comprehensive Plan policy updates (Appendix provides the full findings).

- » **Camas has an aging population with a median age of 40 years in 2022 and a growing share of residents aged 60 years and over.** This group typically represents late-career workers or retirees. Median age in Camas is higher than Clark County overall and quickly growing since 2012, likely indicating a combination of natural growth and in-migration of older adults.
- » **Camas has a higher share of residents 25 or older with at least a college level bachelor degree compared to Clark County or Washington State,** with 79% of residents holding these degrees in 2022. This share of residents rose quickly from only 37% in 2012.
- » **Median household income for all households in Camas was nearly \$134,000 in 2022, higher than Clark County or Washington State.** Since 2012, median income for residents of Camas increased by about 30% (in nominal dollars, not adjusted for inflation), more than either the County or State.
- » **The City of Camas has seen generally positive trends in employment growth over the last two decades,** with notable increases in the number of workers in 2005, 2010, and 2016. **The City of Camas employment grew from approximately 6,584 to 9,558 between 2011 and 2021.**
- » **The current employment to housing ratio in Camas was 1.0 in 2021, meaning that there is about one employee working in the City for every housing unit.** This ratio indicates that Camas has a well-balanced housing stock to accommodate workers in the City.
- » **In 2021, the top five industries by employment in Camas were Finance and Insurance; Manufacturing; Educational Services; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Wholesale Trade.** Four of these five top industries paid above average wages (all except Educational Services paid below average wages). Finance and Insurance was the City's fastest growing industry (with an average annual growth rate of about 33%).
- » **Top employers also reflect many of the County's largest industries, including professional services like finance and insurance, technology, manufacturing, and health care. Four of the City's top ten employers were in the manufacturing industry as of 2020.** Within Camas, employment has concentrated at two nodes, including the Downtown area to the southeast and corporate campuses in the Grass Valley near the border with the City of Vancouver.
- » **Camas is part of an interconnected region, with more residents commuting out of Camas for work (8,159) than employees commuting in (6,982) as of 2021. Approximately 9,102 people are employed in Camas and among this total nearly 90% live in Camas (8,159) but work outside of the city and the remaining 10% live and work in Camas (943 people).** Top commuting destinations for Camas residents are primarily nearby, larger cities with employment hubs like Vancouver and Portland, while only 10% remained in the City. Nearly 59% commute less than 10 miles. The fourth most common destination for residents was Seattle, likely indicating remote workers at companies based in the Puget Sound area. Workers commuting to Camas originated from similar destinations, with one quarter coming from Vancouver.



- » Washington State Employment Security Department projections for future employment growth estimated that the Southwest Washington region will grow by about 19% overall by 2031. The sectors expected to see the greatest increase in their share of employment are Professional/ Business Services, Leisure/ Hospitality, Education/ Health Services, Information, and Other Services.
- » Camas has a larger share of remote workers compared with Clark County and Washington State. In 2022 **one in four workers in Camas was a remote employee**, compared to 15% in both the County and State overall. The share of remote workers in Camas has grown since 2012.
- » Since 2020, the City has issued 8,652 new business permits, with the largest volume of new permits in 2020 and a decreasing amount annually since. General business establishments accounted for the largest portion of these permits (74%), followed by home occupations (25%), and nonprofits (1%).
- » Camas's taxable retail sales were higher than those in most comparable jurisdictions in Clark County over the past decade, competing primarily with the City of Battle Ground for the highest annual sales. In 2022, total taxable retail sales reached an all-time high of over \$600 million.
- » **Retail rents in Camas had slight upward growth since 2014 while vacancies trended downward, indicating increasing demand for retail.** Industrial real estate in the City of Camas is also performing well compared to Clark County in 2024 YTD. The City is home to only about 3.9% of Clark County's industrial real estate in square footage but saw a sharp increase of industrial rents PSF in 2022, growing by over 200% year-over-year (YOY) to \$23. Vacancy rates for industrial real estate were also extremely low in Camas in 2024 YTD at 1.7%, indicating high demand in the industrial market.



Vision

In 2045, Camas has cultivated a diverse and thriving economy with stable employment opportunities and living-wage jobs across various sectors, including technology, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, recreation, and professional services. Camas residents have access to a wide range of services and amenities in their community, while benefiting from excellent regional connectivity and the city's proximity to Portland International Airport. Camas is a gateway to nature and recreational opportunities, supporting regional tourism in the area. Camas is home to a thriving economy and diverse businesses, affording residents ample employment opportunities. Neighborhood commercial hubs connect residents to daily services and amenities through a network of sidewalks and bike lanes, improving access and connectivity. Professional office, medical, and industrial uses typify western Camas, with retail businesses supporting these firms and nearby residents. The North Shore area will fulfill the employment and retail needs of the growing population on the northeast side and reduce trips outside the city. Downtown Camas anchors the community with a dynamic economic landscape and retains its historic atmosphere as a walkable, attractive place to shop, dine, and gather. Inclusive housing options within the city's core contributes to a town center that supports local businesses.

Organization of Economic Development Element

- ◆ Economic Development Overview
- ◆ Goals and Policies by Area
 - Citywide
 - Mixed Use and Commercial Areas
 - Mixed Employment and Industrial Areas

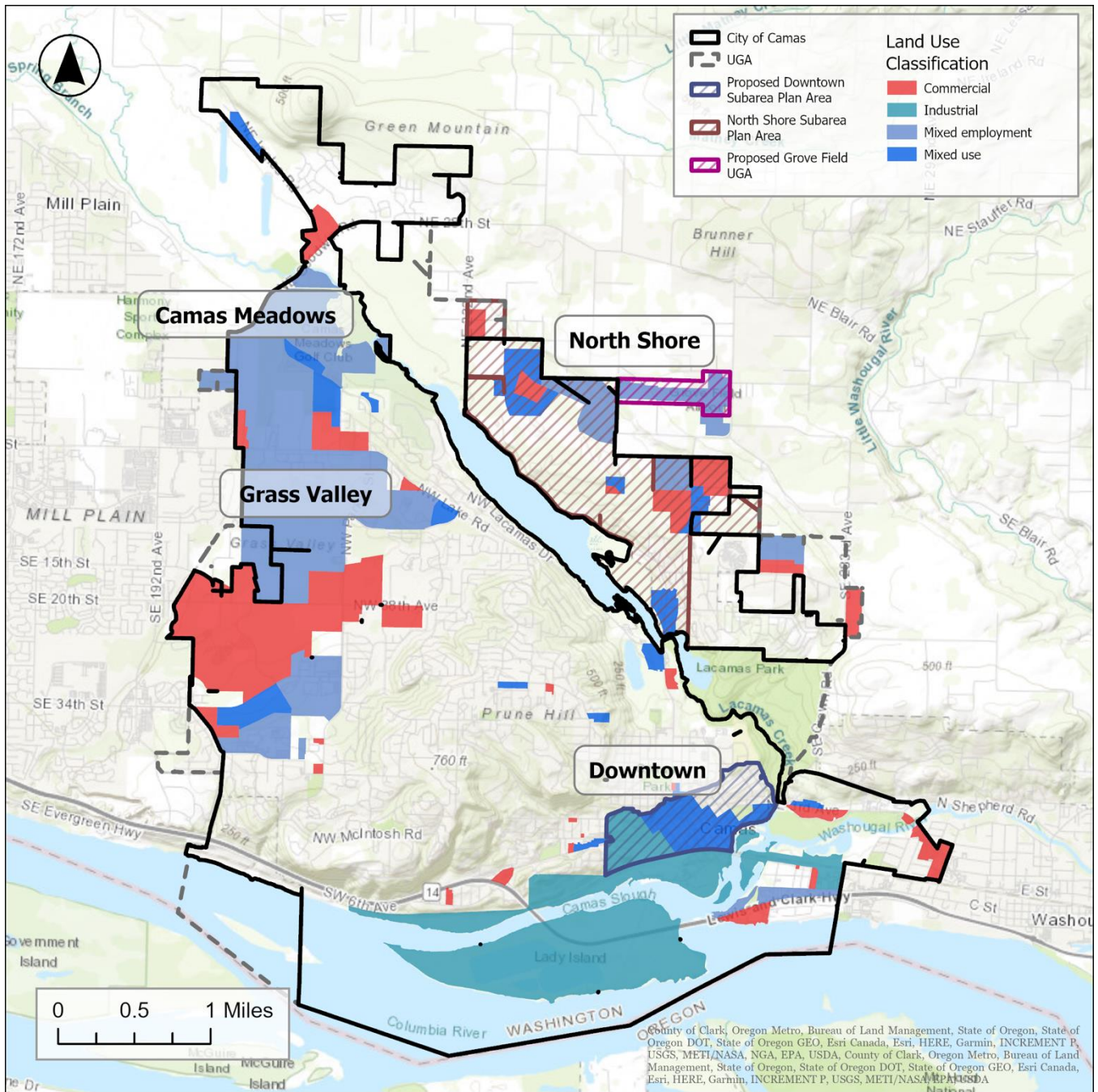
Goals and Policies

Economic development goals and policies are established to ensure economic development in the City of Camas is consistent with the Camas 2045 Vision and provides a diverse range of employment opportunities throughout the City. Goals and policies are presented for citywide economic development and for various areas of the City (see Exhibit 12) that contribute particular attributes to the City's overall economy.

The economic health and well-being of the City are tied to commitments to promote a wide range of employment opportunities for the citizens of the community and to provide a setting and quality of life that attract businesses and residents.

Exhibit 12. Economic Development Areas





Citywide Economic Development

Citywide Economic Development Goal

ED-1: Maintain a diverse range of employment opportunities to support all residents and provide a setting and quality of life that attract and retain businesses and living-wage jobs throughout the community.⁸

Citywide Economic Development Policies

- ◆ ED-1.1: Work with partners to identify strategies to proactively recruit and ensure that tools and incentives are in place to attract healthcare and high-tech, sustainable, and innovative industries to expand and provide stable living-wage employment.
- ◆ ED-1.2: Work with partners (such as the Chamber of Commerce, education programs) to encourage apprenticeships, internships, vocational training schools, entrepreneurship programs, equitable opportunities, and on-the-job training in targeted industry sectors.
- ◆ ED-1.3: Encourage appropriate reuse, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment of older and deteriorating commercial areas and industrial brownfield sites, identifying opportunities to support place-based economic development, provide connections to the waterfront, diversify the economy, and support mixed-use development.
- ◆ ED-1.4: Foster and expand year-round recreational services, lodging, conference spaces, dining, and retail options that will capture tourism and benefit residents and employers and leverage Camas's strong parks and open space assets and opportunities to connect to the waterfront.
- ◆ ED-1.5: Ensure adequate infrastructure is identified (such as the capital facilities plan) and planned or in place to nurture and incubate new businesses. Explore financing tools such as tax increment financing to fund infrastructure to support development and investment in targeted areas.
- ◆ ED-1.6: Remain active in regional recruitment organizations to ensure the availability of an adequate supply of commercial and industrial employment land to support the City's economic development goals. Evaluate city resources to support economic development planning and implementation by designating a point-of-contact for economic development programs and serving as a liaison to the business community.
- ◆ ED-1.7: Support retention, expansion, and recruitment of local businesses with a commitment to the community.
- ◆ ED-1.8: Ensure that development standards are balanced to promote high-quality building and site design and encourage businesses to operate in a sustainable and environmentally responsible manner, integrating energy efficient design features.

⁸ A living-wage job is one that pays an income sufficient to cover basic living expenses without financial hardship, allowing an individual or family to afford essential needs such as housing, food, healthcare, transportation, childcare, and other necessities without relying on public assistance. MIT Living wage calculation (2024): <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/53053>.

- ◆ ED-1.9: Prolong support for the Commute Trip Reduction Program and encourage businesses to support remote work when possible and to reduce travel times and trips through implementation of a trip reduction program, which includes incentives for carpooling, transit ridership, and other options beyond single-occupancy vehicles.
- ◆ ED-1.10: Encourage mixed-use development and complementary businesses throughout the City to support industry clusters and leverage resources.
- ◆ ED-1.11: Review regulatory design standards and planning procedures for industrial and commercial facilities and provide further economic incentives, as needed, to promote private investment in start-up, incubator businesses, and businesses relocating to Camas.
- ◆ ED-1.12: Collaborate with partners and agencies (such as the CREDC and the Port of Camas Washougal) to develop economic strategies that promote diversification of business and industry in the city and facilitate opportunities for entrepreneurship.
- ◆ ED-1.13: Work with partners to proactively recruit and promote the growth of target businesses and industries that provide, at a minimum, cost-of-living wages and economic diversity in alignment with the CREDC regional economic development plan.⁹
- ◆ ED-1.14: Coordinate with Clark County and evaluate adding a Grove Field Urban Growth Area (UGA) for employment purposes to support employment targets.
- ◆ ED-1.15: Explore ways to support remote workers such as through code revisions in support of co-working spaces and by supporting the addition of community hubs, public spaces, and businesses (third place).
- ◆ ED-1.16: Explore the creation of an economic development grant program for local businesses, connecting with potential partners such as the Chamber of Commerce.
- ◆ ED-1.17: Implement the Downtown Camas subarea plan and the associated goals and actions.
- ◆ ED-1.18: Promote the growth of residential development in the North Shore as described in the Camas North Shore Subarea Plan.
- ED-1.19: Facilitate an environment for the success and growth of small businesses to maintain a strong, diverse, and resilient local economy.
- ED-1.20: Encourage investments and programs that provide resources and support to minority-owned and woman-owned businesses.
- ED-1.21: Increase the number of neighborhood business districts to expand local access to goods and services.
- ED-1.22: Consider expanding mixed-use zoning options with ground floor commercial uses that allow residents to walk from home.
- ED-1.23: Encourage shopping local and support for Camas businesses.

⁹ In 2024, the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) regional economic plan identified key industry clusters including Computer and Electronics, Clean Technology, Software, Technology and Enhanced Production, and Life Sciences.

Mixed Use and Commercial Areas

Mixed Use and Commercial Areas Goal

ED-2: Encourage efficient and innovative development that thoughtfully mixes commercial and residential land uses that are pedestrian-friendly and are considerate of the context of the surrounding area.

Mixed Use and Commercial Areas Policies

- ◆ ED-2.1: Develop commercial and mixed-use areas that are safe, comfortable, and attractive to pedestrians.
- ◆ ED-2.2: Encourage efficient land use in the mixed-use land use designation by facilitating compact, high-density development and minimizing the amount of land that is needed for surface parking.
- ◆ ED-2.3: Promote the growth of businesses such as grocery stores, medical offices, and restaurants that will meet the retail and service needs of the population.
- ◆ ED-2.4: Encourage new developments to include provisions for neighborhood parks that are within walking and biking distance of a person's home or work to encourage greater physical activity, including shared-use paths (or trails) that link homes, work and commercial centers, public transit, and community facilities.

Mixed Employment and Industrial Areas

Mixed Employment and Industrial Areas Goal

ED-3: Maximize opportunities and partnerships by providing a mix of traditional industrial and non-industrial land uses, to facilitate employers to remain, expand, or locate in Camas.

Mixed Employment and Industrial Areas Policies

- ◆ ED-3.1: Evaluate the costs and benefits associated with adding the Grove Field Urban Growth Area to the North Shore Subarea Plan.
- ◆ ED-3.2: Preserve large tracts of land for large industry and master-planned commercial development within mixed employment land use areas.
- ◆ ED-3.3: Support a mix of light industrial, research and development, manufacturing, and office spaces through flexible zoning that allows for evolving business needs.
- ◆ ED-3.4: Support the development of business parks, incubators, and innovation hubs that integrate industrial and high-tech employment uses.
- ◆ ED-3.5: Ensure zoning and development regulations support both large-scale employers and small businesses, including start-ups and maker spaces.



Implementation Tools and Strategies

Realizing the City of Camas economic development goals requires building on the city's potential while overcoming existing constraints. The following implementation strategies will generate positive momentum toward creating a more balanced and healthy economy.

Programmatic Strategies

- **Economic Development Committee:** Establish a Mayor-appointed committee to help refine and implement Camas's economic development goals and strategies. The committee will:
 - Convene government, private sector, and nonprofit partners to leverage resources or secure financial support for economic development initiatives that benefit Camas and the broader region. In addition, this committee would help provide input on the Economic Development Strategy.
- **Economic Development Strategy:** Create an Economic Development Strategic Plan involving the Economic Development Committee, local businesses, community groups, school districts, and city leadership that further identifies priorities for job creation in targeted industries, infrastructure needs, reducing regulatory barriers, and incentives to attract needed and desired businesses.
 - Promote the development of an economic development strategy that will capitalize on the creation and retention of industries that provide living-wage jobs.
 - Future economic development strategy planning should capitalize on existing facilities and infrastructure and include a mix of uses that are trail- and transit-oriented and designed with high-quality streetscape appeal.
 - Lead an economic development strategy update every 1 to 3 years.

Financial Strategies

- **Leverage Grant Dollars:** Utilize federal, state, and county grants to support the establishment and expansion of small local businesses and infrastructure improvements benefiting economic development areas.
- **Incentives:** Explore incentives to encourage mixed-use development and provide affordable housing options (such as TIF, LID, MFTE changes).
- **Partnership:** Coordinate with the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) or other relevant organizations, to explore collaborative opportunities in promoting regional workforce development.
- **Opportunity Site Inventory:** Identify sites where the city can participate in cost-sharing mechanisms for infrastructure development.
 - Establish a policy that prioritizes capital investments to or on opportunities sites or other capital projects that better connect commercial nodes. This could include sidewalks, trails, bike paths, etc.



Regulatory Strategies

- **Code Audit:** Ensure the zoning code supports/incentivizes a broad range of needed and desired businesses in various zones.
 - **Study Allowed Uses:** Ensure needed and desired businesses are allowed in certain zones, including accessory uses which can support home-based businesses.
 - **Design standards:** Consider revisiting existing design standards to ensure they adequately support efforts to maintain and enhance existing character without compromising development feasibility.
 - **Flexible parking standards:** Develop flexible parking standards that can respond to site conditions.
 - **Revised Gateway Corridor Design Standards:** Update the design standards and allowed uses for gateway corridors to enhance its natural beauty but deemphasize its auto-oriented environment.

Procedural Strategies

- **Capacity Building:** Leverage increased tax revenue from population growth to support Camas' economic development strategy.
- **Clear and Objective Development Standards:** Establish clear and objective development standards for all development types, reducing the need for conditional use processes or other discretionary review processes.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the performance of economic development such as with business retention and attrition, changes in tax revenues, and permitting of employment facilities. Monitor the financial impact of new programs, policies, and regulatory requirements on development feasibility by providing a report update every 1-3 years describing key metrics such as development changes and infrastructure projects.



Economic Development Appendix

Community Demographic Trends

Population growth, demographic composition, and income distribution can all have important implications for a city's economic development. Key characteristics such as population growth over time, age of residents, median income, and disparities by race and ethnicity provide useful context about Camas's households and recent trends. The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the socioeconomic conditions that will influence demand for different land uses and shape the economic opportunities in the city over the current comprehensive plan horizon. This information can also help to identify which communities in Camas are not benefiting from current efforts and inform the City's work to address current gaps for equitable economic development as part of the comprehensive plan update.

This section provides an overview of key socioeconomic conditions in Camas that are useful for evaluating economic opportunities and challenges. To better understand the City's standing within the region, the analysis also includes comparisons to Clark County and other geographies such as Washington State and surrounding cities as needed to contextualize conditions in Camas.

Population Growth, Age, Race and Ethnicity

As cities grow, planning for economic development is important to help ensure opportunities for economic prosperity to all residents. See the Camas Housing Inventory Analysis for details about projected population and household growth.

Camas had a median age of 40 in 2022, higher than Clark County and quickly growing since 2012, likely indicating a combination of natural growth from the 40- to 59-year-old age group as well as in-migration of older adults.

Exhibit 13. Median Age, Camas, Clark County, Washington, and Comparison Geographies 2012 -2022

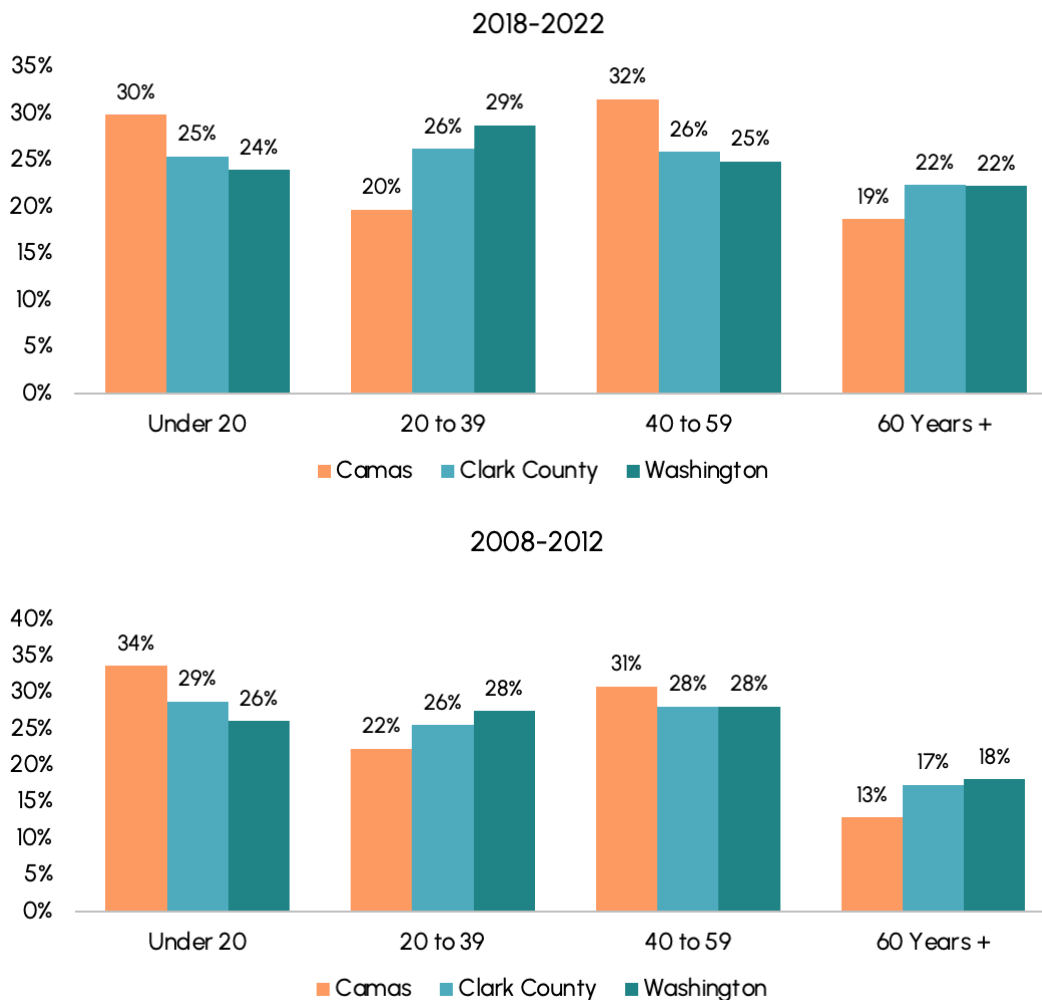
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

JURISDICTION	2008-2012	2018-2022	CHANGE
City of Camas	36 years	40 years	+4.3
Clark County	37 years	39 years	+2.0
State of Washington	37 years	38 years	+0.8

The distribution of age categories in the City shows that it has a growing share of residents aged 60 years and over (typically either late-career workers or retirees), although still lower compared to the County and the State (Exhibit 14).

Exhibit 14. Age Distribution, Camas, Clark County, and Washington, 2012 -2022

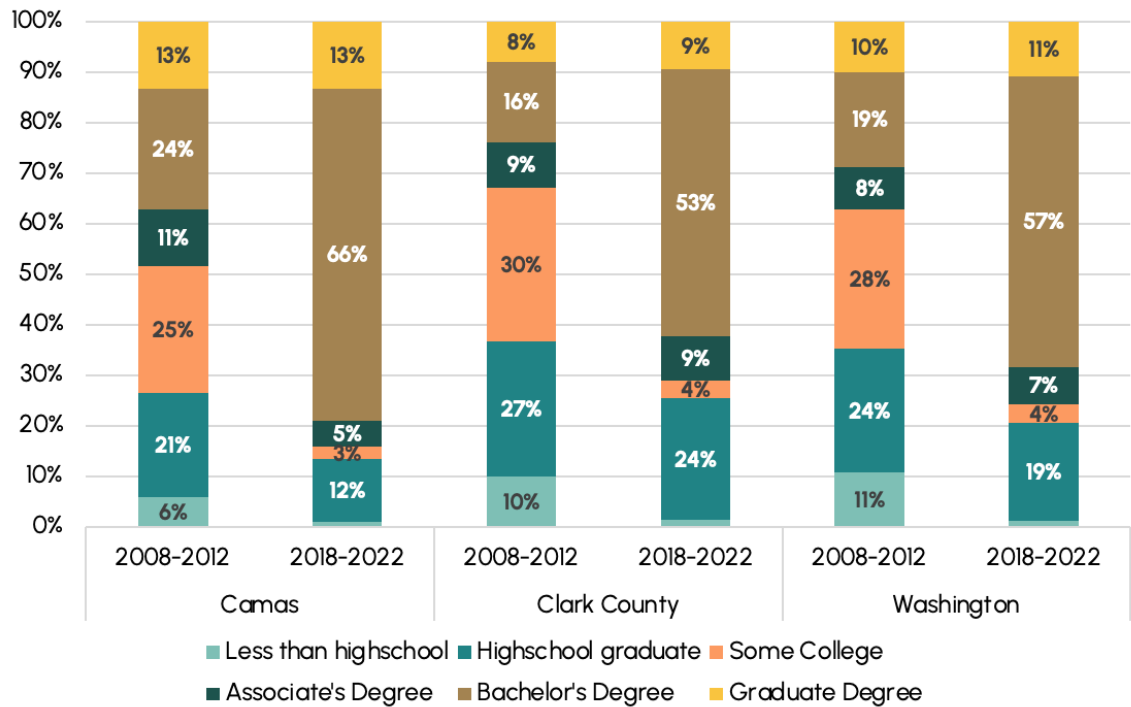
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates.



Educational attainment is an important indicator for economic opportunities and the type of available workforce in an area. Economic development strategies may target different types of skill development, industry pipelines, or training programs depending on the existing level of education among residents. Between 2012 and 2022, Camas saw a sharp increase in residents with bachelor's degrees and higher, as well as a quick decrease in those with some college, a high school degree, or less than a high school degree. Educational attainment in the City is generally higher than the County as a whole, as well as Washington State.

Exhibit 15. Educational Attainment, Camas, Clark County, and Washington, 2012 -2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates.
Note: Values less than or equal to 1% not shown on chart.



Economic Context

A number of factors can indicate changes in economic conditions for cities, their residents, and their workforce. This section provides context about current conditions and recent trends in Camas related to household income, employment, commuting, and wages.

Income

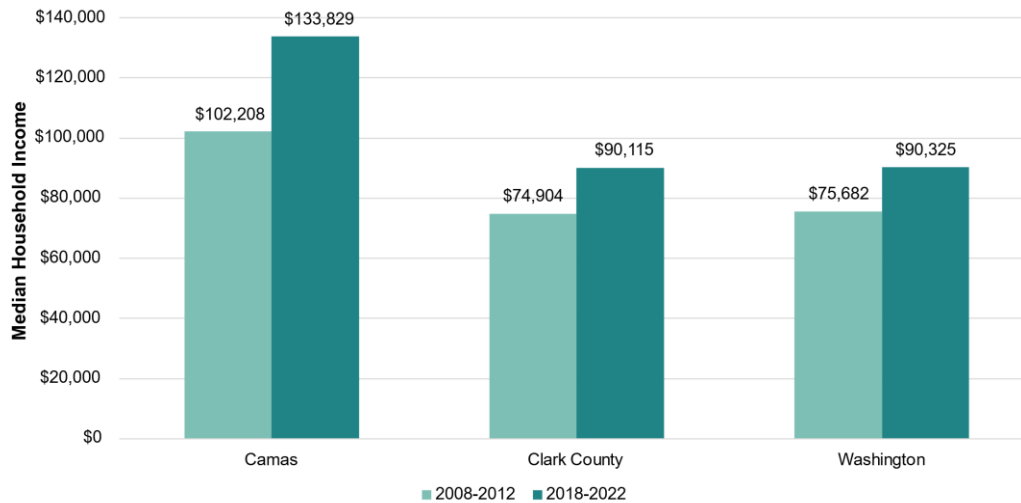
Overall income levels and distribution are critical indicators of economic prosperity for cities. Income levels directly reflect the purchasing power and standard of living of individuals and households; higher incomes generally enable people to afford better education, healthcare, and access to essential goods and services, contributing to overall well-being and productivity. The distribution of income and disparities between demographic groups are also critical considerations for addressing economic inequality and reducing concentrations of poverty. Median household income in Camas is higher than both Clark County overall and the state of Washington at \$133,000 in 2022. Adjusting for inflation, median income in the City still increased by 31% since 2008-2012. This increase is primarily due to grown in households earning over \$100,000 per year (Exhibit 16).



Exhibit 16. Median Household Income, Camas, Clark County, and Washington (2022\$)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

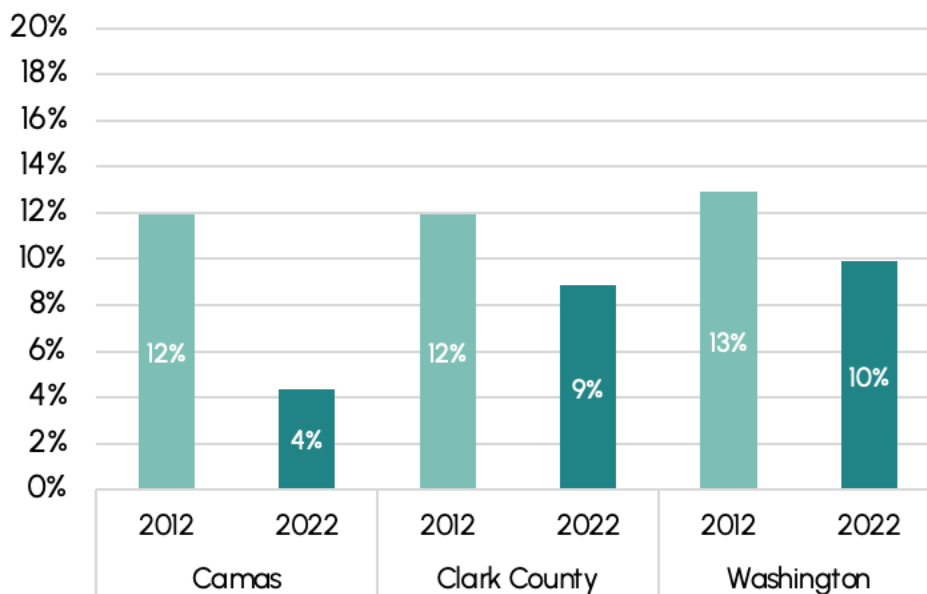
Note: 2008-2012 values are adjusted for inflation



The share of residents living below the poverty was also about the same in the City of Camas compared to Clark County and Washington in 2012 at 12% but decreased by 8 percentage points by 2018-2022. This change likely reflects new growth in high-income households earning \$150,000 or more during this period (indicated in the Camas Housing Inventory Analysis).

Exhibit 17. Percent of Population with Income Below Poverty Level in the Last 12 Months, 2012 -2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2018-2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates



Employment Trends

Clark County overall has seen fluctuations in employment change since 2000, with the most notable decreases in employment in the wake of the 2008 recession and at the onset of the COVID-19 in 2020. However, the County has also seen a fast rebound from pandemic trends, seeing roughly 6 % positive growth between 2020 and 2021. The City of Camas has generally seen positive growth in employment over the last two decades, with notable increases in the number of workers in 2005, 2010, and 2016. The City of Camas employment grew from approximately 6,584 to 9,558 between 2011 and 2021. The City also saw less of a decrease during 2020 than Clark County overall, which may reflect Camas's growth in remote workers during this period (Exhibit 29).

Exhibit 18. Total Covered Employment Change YOY, Clark County (2001-2022)

Source: Washington Employment Security Department

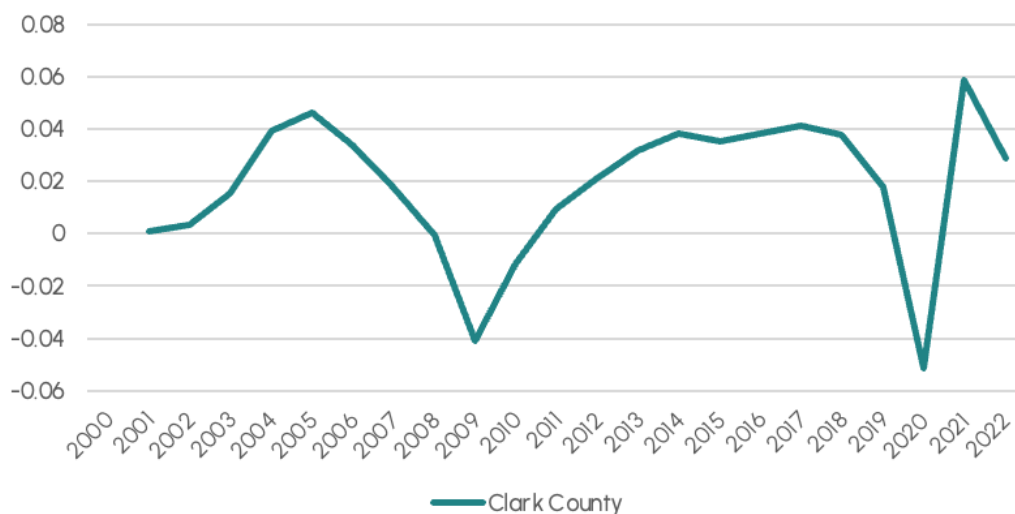
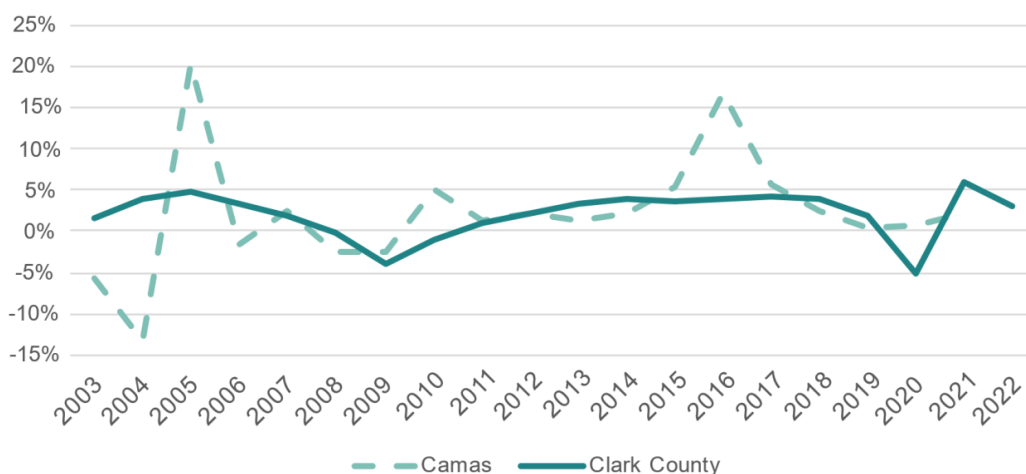


Exhibit 19. Total Employment Change YOY (Primary Jobs), Camas and Clark County (2011-2022)

Source: Washington Employment Security Department, LEHD-LODES. Note: LEHD-LODES data for the City of Camas only available through 2021



Growth in employment, population, and housing are interconnected. In general, communities with a high ratio of population to employment can be characterized as "bedroom" or commuter communities, where there are fewer jobs than residents in the City. In Camas, this ratio has changed only slightly since 2010, with the number of persons per job decreasing from 3.0 in 2010 to 2.8 in 2021. In the same period, the ratio of jobs to housing has slightly increased from 0.9 to 1.0, indicating a healthy balance of housing units in comparison with employment. As the City grows, maintaining this trend can help to ensure that there is adequate housing for those who work in Camas. Clark County adopted a jobs-to-housing ratio of 1:1 (1 job for every housing unit) via Resolution 2016-03-01 (2016).

Exhibit 20. Population, Employment, and Jobs Comparison Ratios, Camas, 2010-2021

Source: OFM, LEHD-LODES

Note: Employment data is currently only available at the City level through 2021.

	TRENDS			RATIOS	
	POPULATION	EMPLOYMENT	HOUSING UNITS	POPULATION : JOBS	JOBS : HOUSING
2010	19,355	6,508	7,072	3.0	0.9
2021	26,870	9,558	9,586	2.8	1.0

In Camas, top employers reflect many of the County's largest industries, including professional services like finance and insurance and technology, manufacturing, and health care. Four of the City's top ten employers were in the manufacturing industry as of 2020.

Exhibit 21. Top 10 Employers, Camas, 2020

Source: Camas Housing Action Plan, Washington Employment Security Department, Columbian Newspaper

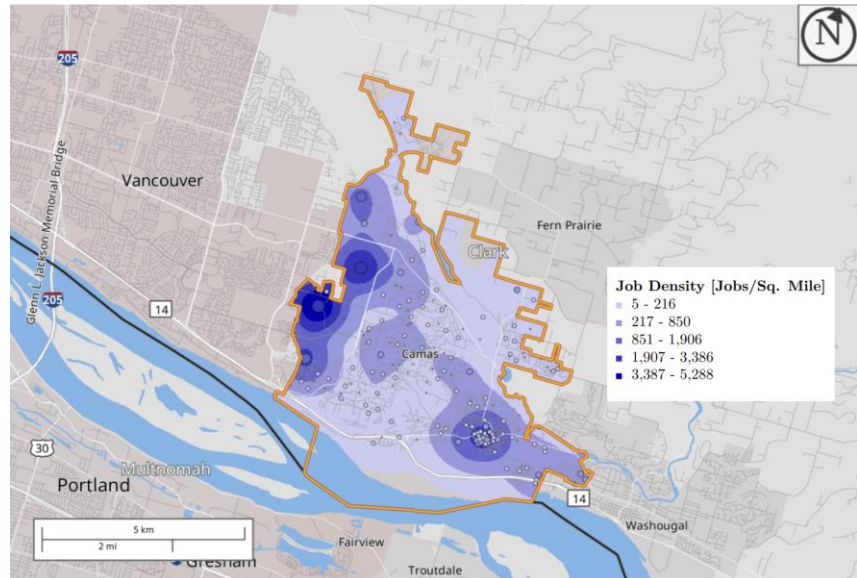
EMPLOYER	EMPLOYEES	PERCENT OF TOTAL CITY EMPLOYMENT	INDUSTRY
Fisher Investments	1,725	20.2%	Finance and Insurance
Wafertech	1,000	11.7%	Manufacturing
Camas School District	800	9.4%	Education
Linear Technology (Analog)	340	4.0%	Manufacturing
Sigma Design	273	3.2%	Technology
City of Camas	226	2.6%	Government
Georgia Pacific	150	1.8%	Manufacturing
Fuel Medical	150	1.8%	Health Care
Plexys	91	1.1%	Technology
Bodycote	50	0.6%	Manufacturing



Employment locations plays an important role in where people live and vice versa it can influence where people choose to relocate. Within Camas, employment is concentrated at two nodes, including the Downtown area to the southeast and corporate campuses on the northwest side along the border with the City of Vancouver (Exhibit 22).

Exhibit 22. Employment Density, Camas, 2021

Source: LEHD-LODES



Approximately 9,102 people are employed in Camas (as of 2021 according to LEHD-LODES data) and among this total nearly 90% live in Camas (8,159) but work outside of the city and the remaining 10% live and work in Camas (943 people). Around 6,982 people commute to Camas for work and live outside of the City of Camas (2021, LEHD-LODES data). Top commuting destinations for Camas residents are primarily nearby, larger cities with employment hubs like Vancouver (26%) and Portland (17%), while only 10% remained in the city. The fourth most common destination for residents was Seattle, likely indicating remote workers at companies based in the Puget Sound area. Workers in Camas commuted from similar destinations, with one quarter coming from Vancouver, as well as shares coming from Portland (8%) and Washougal (6%).

Exhibit 23. Top Destinations Where Camas Residents Worked, 2021

Source: LEHD-LODES

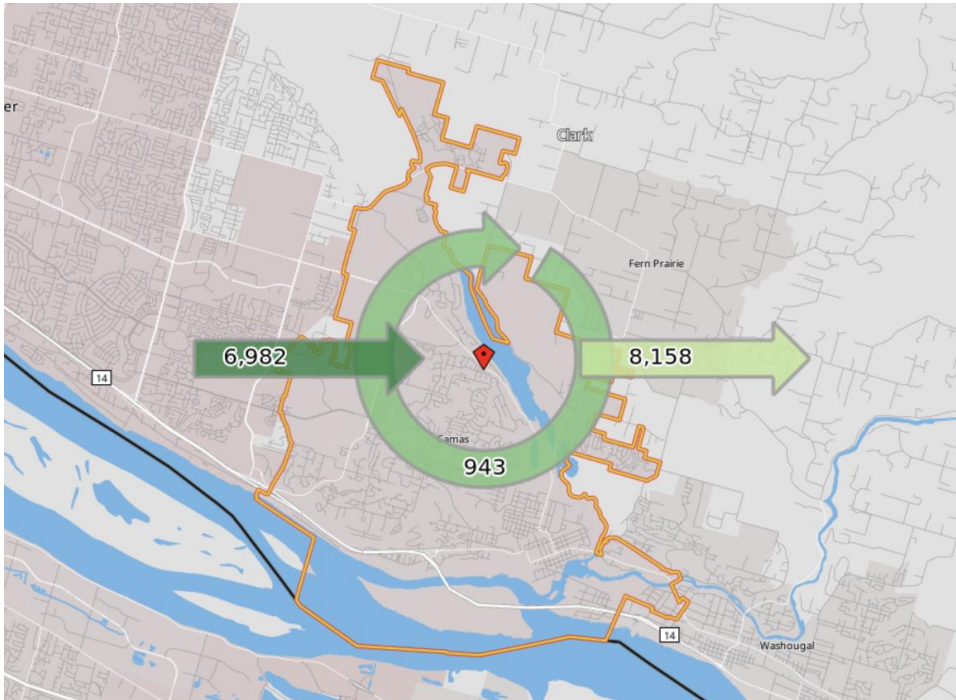
2,411	1,592	943	319
(26%)	(17%)	(10%)	(3%)
Vancouver	Portland	Camas	Seattle

Exhibit 24. Top Locations Where Camas Workers Lived, 2021

1,995	943	629	593
(25%)	(12%)	(8%)	(6%)
Vancouver	Camas	Portland	Washougal

Exhibit 25. Camas Commuting Inflow and Outflow, 2021

Source: LEHD-LODES. Disclaimer Note: The arrows are conceptual graphics showing employees commuting into and outside of the City of Camas generally and are not representing the exact direction of commuting.



Industry data from the Washington Employment Security Division (ESD) is not available at the city level but given the city's interconnected relationship with surrounding jurisdictions a County and regional perspective provides relevant insights on industry growth and wage trends.

In Clark County, the industries with the largest employment in 2022 were Healthcare and Social Assistance; Government; Retail Trade; Construction; and Accommodation and Food Services. Of these industries, Government and Construction had average wages per employee above the average wage for all covered employment across the county, while Retail and Accommodation and Food Services paid below average wages. Healthcare and Social Assistance paid roughly equivalent wages with the county average.

Exhibit 26. Covered Employment Change, Clark County, 2012-2022

Source: Washington Employment Security Division

Note: The top five industries with the highest share of covered employment in 2022 are shown in **bold** and those paying above the county average wage in 2022 are highlighted in green

Sector	2012	2022	Share of Total Jobs (2022)	Average Wage (2022)	Change 2012 to 2022		
					Difference	Percent	AAGR
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,193	3,576	2.0%	\$111,725	2,383	200%	11.6%
Construction	7,964	16,986	9.7%	\$71,499	9,022	113%	7.9%
Finance and Insurance	3,781	6,451	3.7%	\$112,277	2,670	71%	5.5%
Educational Services	951	1,613	0.9%	\$38,791	662	70%	5.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	18,074	27,639	15.7%	\$64,412	9,565	53%	4.3%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	6,692	10,169	5.8%	\$99,988	3,477	52%	4.3%
Information	2,540	3,856	2.2%	\$107,469	1,316	52%	4.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	10,241	14,831	8.4%	\$27,491	4,590	45%	3.8%
Administrative and Waste Services	6,777	9,719	5.5%	\$58,585	2,942	43%	3.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,158	3,078	1.8%	\$59,398	920	43%	3.6%
Retail Trade	14,646	19,139	10.9%	\$42,261	4,493	31%	2.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	2,917	3,548	2.0%	\$72,086	631	22%	2.0%
Manufacturing	12,072	14,333	8.2%	\$71,970	2,261	19%	1.7%
Wholesale Trade	6,042	6,953	4.0%	\$92,968	911	15%	1.4%
Government	23,026	25,856	14.7%	\$71,555	2,830	12%	1.2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	631	594	0.3%	\$48,781	-37	-6%	-0.6%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,268	2,001	1.1%	\$32,835	-267	-12%	-1.2%
Other services, Except Public Administration	7,760	5,374	3.1%	\$49,730	-2,386	-31%	-3.6%
Not Elsewhere Classified	109	136	0.1%	\$178,803	27	25%	2.2%
Total	129,842	175,852	100%	\$66,824	46,010	35%	3.1%

At the city level, data is not available from ESD about employment and wages. However, the US Census provides estimates through its Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LEHD-LODES) data. This data is generated by merging previously collected survey and administrative data on jobs, businesses, and workers to understand commuting.¹⁰ It provides an approximate picture of employment by industry locally but does not include information about wages.

In 2021, the top five industries by employment in Camas were Finance and Insurance; Manufacturing; Educational Services; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Wholesale Trade. In the County overall in 2021, four of these five top industries paid above average wages (only Educational Services paid below average wages). Finance and Insurance was the city's fastest growing industry, gaining over 2,000 new employees over the last decade (with an average annual growth rate of about 33%). Other top industries saw more moderate increases except for Manufacturing, which remained among the city's top sectors but lost over 350 employees (or about 15% of workers) between 2011 and 2021. Despite low overall employment in Camas, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing as well as Construction had high growth rates between 2011 and 2021, more than doubling the number of employees in that time period.

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, 'LEHD Data,' <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ces/data/restricted-use-data/lehd-data.html>, November 7, 2022.

Exhibit 27. Primary Jobs Change, Camas, 2011-2021

Source: LEHD-LODES

Note: The top five industries with the highest share of covered employment in 2021 are shown in **bold** and those paying above the county average wage in 2021 are highlighted in **green**.

Timelines for LEHD-LODES data releases are different than the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data used by ESD for County-level data. 2021 is the most recent year currently available. Due to confidentiality restrictions in QCEW data some points on County wages and employment are not available.

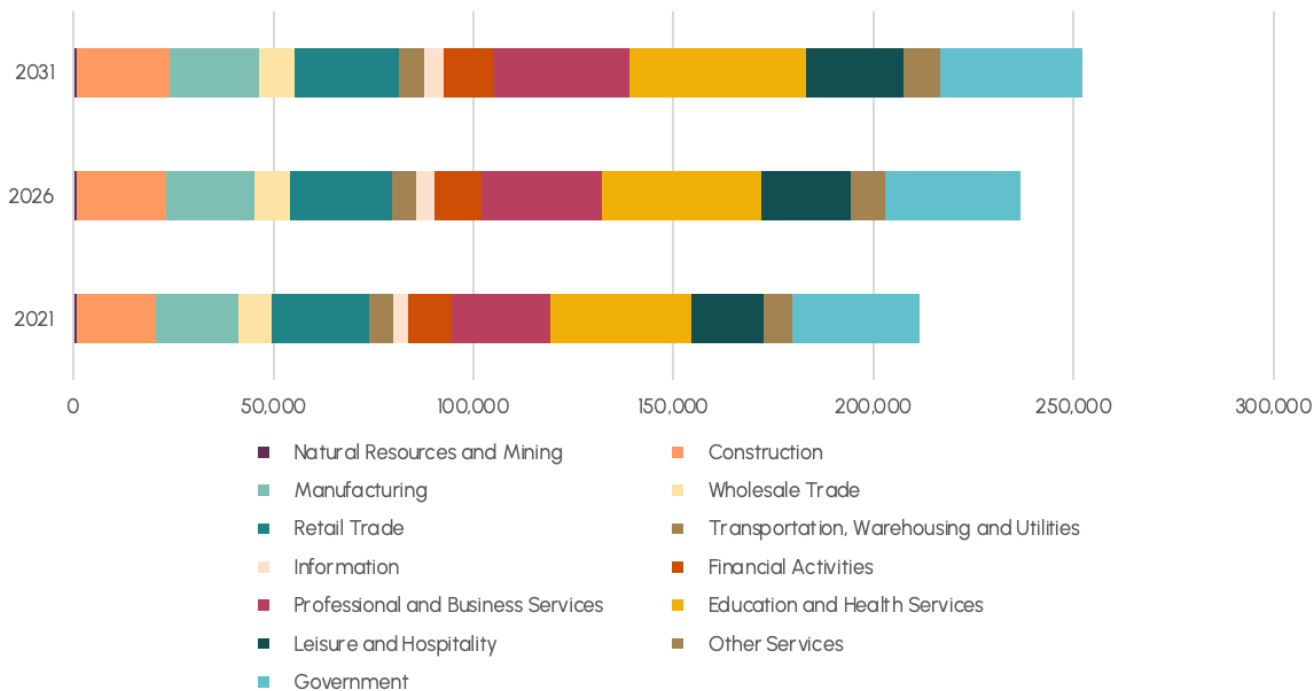
Sector	2011	2021	Share of Total Jobs (2021)	Average County Wage (2021)	Change 2011 to 2021		
					Difference	Percent	AAGR
Management of Companies and Enterprises	55	11	0.1%	\$111,912	-44	-80%	-14.9%
Utilities	1	2	0.0%	Not available	1	100%	7.2%
Construction	112	276	3.0%	\$68,866	164	146%	9.4%
Finance and Insurance	126	2,259	24.4%	\$123,062	2,133	1693%	33.5%
Educational Services	1,003	1,325	14.3%	\$34,372	322	32%	2.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	222	329	3.6%	\$60,878	107	48%	4.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	709	1,142	12.3%	\$99,125	433	61%	4.9%
Information	83	89	1.0%	\$102,172	6	7%	0.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	257	364	3.9%	\$25,734	107	42%	3.5%
Administrative and Waste Services	107	130	1.4%	\$51,277	23	21%	2.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	19	95	1.0%	\$55,215	76	400%	17.5%
Retail Trade	622	330	3.6%	\$40,032	-292	-47%	-6.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	65	31	0.3%	\$65,184	-34	-52%	-7.1%
Manufacturing	2,341	1,987	21.5%	\$69,195	-354	-15%	-1.6%
Wholesale Trade	187	478	5.2%	\$96,010	291	156%	9.8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2	0	0.0%	\$46,736	-2	-100%	-100.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	78	78	0.8%	\$28,010	0	0%	0.0%
Other services, Except Public Administration	115	115	1.2%	\$47,881	0	0%	0.0%
Public Administration	187	213	2.3%	\$70,893	26	14%	1.3%
Total	6,291	9,254	100%	\$65,009	2,963	47%	3.9%

Regionally, the Washington State Employment Security Department provides projections for future employment growth. In 2021, ESD estimated that Southwest Washington was expected to grow by about 19 % overall by 2031 (Exhibit 26). The sectors expected to see the greatest increase in their share of employment were Professional and Business Services, Leisure and Hospitality, Education and Health Services, Information, and Other Services. This increasing share of many service businesses aligns with high-wage opportunities in Clark County (such as Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services and Information). However, both Education Services and Accommodation and Food Services paid well below the County average as of 2022.



Exhibit 28. Growth Target by Sector, Southwest Washington, 2021-2031

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department



Remote Workers

Camas has a larger share of remote workers compared with the County and State, which has grown since 2008-2012 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic influencing this trend in many industries nationwide. In 2018-2022, one in four workers in Camas was a remote employee, compared to 15% in the County and State overall (

Exhibit 29). Median wages for remote workers were about on par with the workforce as a whole in Camas in 2018-2022, despite larger gaps between remote and non-remote workers in the County and State (

Exhibit 29).



Exhibit 29. Share of Remote Workers, Camas, Clark County, and Washington, 2012-2022

Source: ACS, 2008-2012, 2018-2022

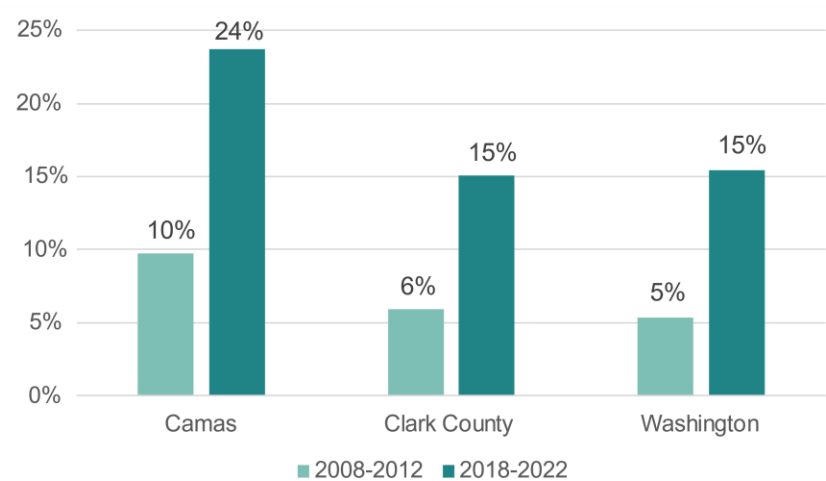
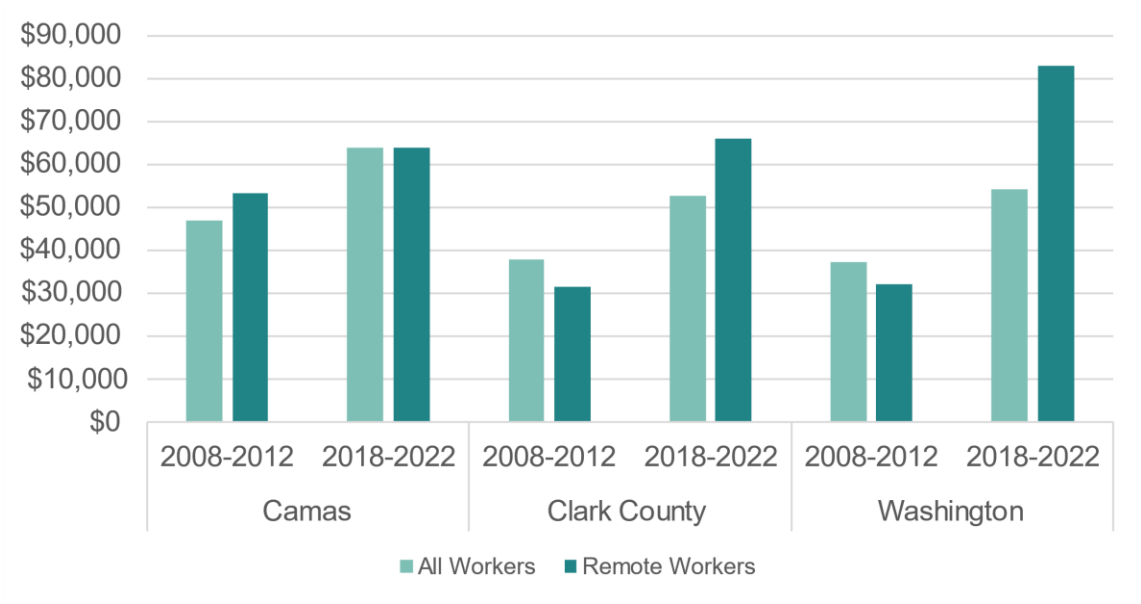


Exhibit 30. Annual Median Earnings for Remote and Non-Remote Workers, Camas, Clark County, and Washington, 2012-2022

Source: ACS, 2008-2012, 2018-2022



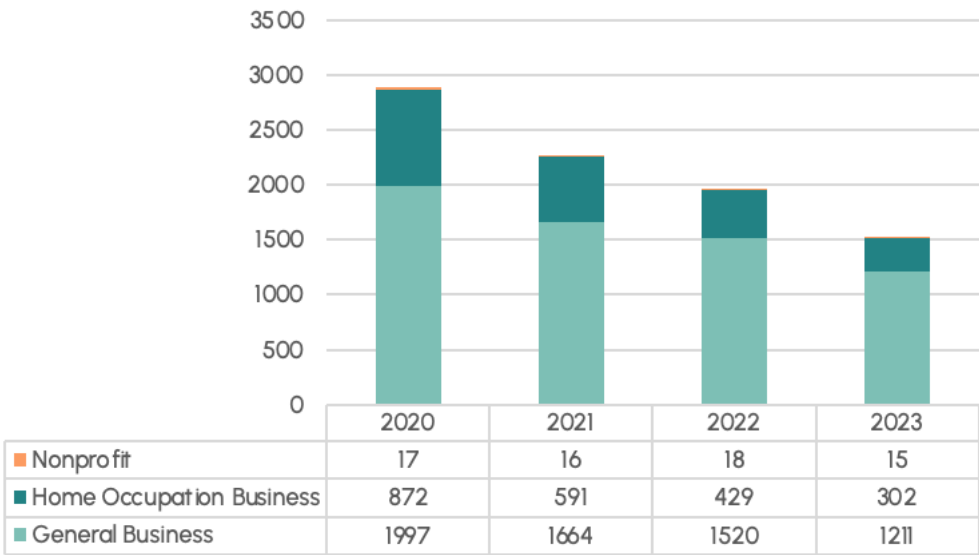
Business Changes

The City of Camas began requiring business licenses in 2019, so while local data does not have a long history it does help to capture post-pandemic trends in new establishments. Since 2020, the city has issued 8,652 new business permits, with the largest volume of new permits in 2020 and a decreasing amount annual since. General business establishments accounted for the largest portion of these

permits (74%), followed by home occupations (25%). Nonprofit organizations were a very small share of new establishments (less than 1%).

Exhibit 31. Business Permits, City of Camas, 2020–2023

Source: City of Camas

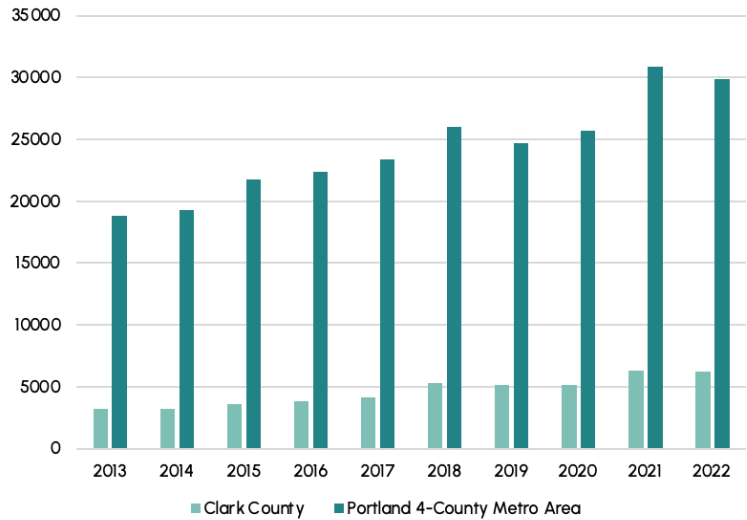


In a regional context, 6,241 new business applications were filed in Clark County in 2022, growing steadily by more than double (106%) from the 3,031 business applications filed in 2012. The growth rate for the four-county area over this time period was only 58%, potentially indicating that Clark County has been successfully growing in their ability to attract new firms relative to the region.

Applications in Clark County accounted for approximately 26% of all new firms started within the four-county metro area (including Clark, Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties) in 2022.

Exhibit 32. Annual Business Applications, Clark County and 4-County Portland Metro (Clark, Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties), 2012–2022

Source: US Census Bureau, Business Formation Statistics. Note: This data is only available at the county level.



Fiscal Conditions

Fiscal conditions are critical indicators for economic development, which have implications for jurisdictions' capacity to invest in essential services and growth. In Washington state, the lack of income tax makes sales and other tax trends particularly important for understanding economic trends and impact on local budgets.

The City of Camas's taxable retail sales were higher than those in most comparable jurisdictions in Clark County over the past decade, competing primarily with the City of Battle Ground for the highest annual amounts.

On a per capita basis, Camas had higher taxable retail sales than unincorporated areas of the County, but slightly lower sales than the Cities of Battle Ground or Washougal. In 2022, total taxable retail sales reached an all-time high of over \$600 million (

Exhibit 34). In Clark County overall, the City of Vancouver and unincorporated areas had by far the highest volume of taxable retail sales, with Vancouver reaching over \$6.3 billion in 2022 (

Exhibit 35).

Exhibit 33. Per Capita Taxable Retail Sales by Clark County Jurisdictions, 2012-2022 (in 2022\$)

Source: WA Dep. of Commerce, US Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation Calculator. Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR).

<i>JURISDICTION</i>	<i>2012 (IN 2022\$)</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>% CHANGE 2012-2022 (ADJ.)</i>	<i>AAGR</i>
<i>City of Camas</i>	<i>\$12,986</i>	<i>\$19,214</i>	<i>48.0%</i>	<i>4.8%</i>
<i>Unincorporated Clark County</i>	<i>\$8,333</i>	<i>\$13,860</i>	<i>66.3%</i>	<i>6.6%</i>
<i>City of Battle Ground</i>	<i>\$13,241</i>	<i>\$27,629</i>	<i>108.7%</i>	<i>10.9%</i>
<i>City of Washougal</i>	<i>\$9,845</i>	<i>\$20,295</i>	<i>106.1%</i>	<i>10.6%</i>



Exhibit 34. Total Taxable Retail Sales for City of Camas and Comparison Geographies, 2012-2022

Source: Washington Department of Commerce

Note: Total amounts for by year are in nominal dollars (not adjusted for inflation).

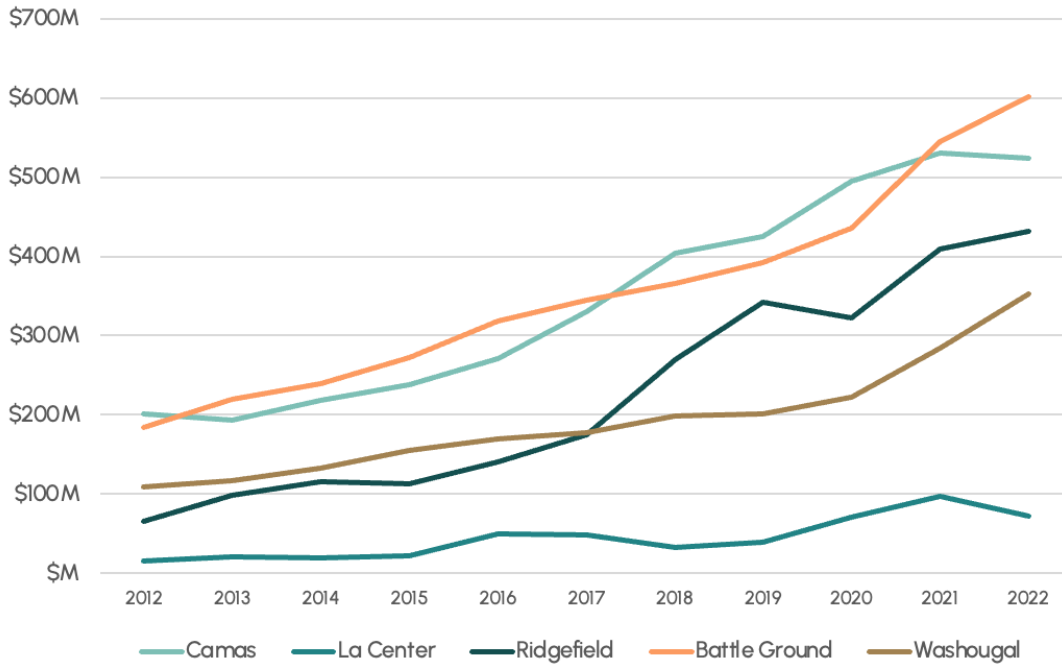
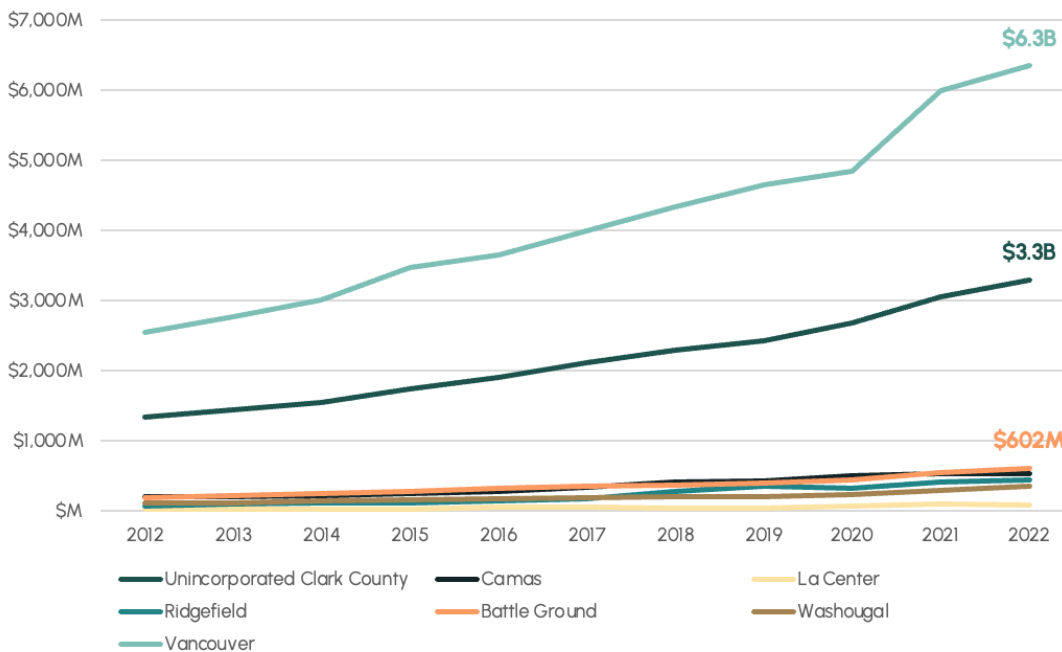


Exhibit 35. Total Taxable Retail Sales for City of Camas and Clark County, 2012-2022

Source: Washington Department of Commerce

Note: Total amounts for by year are in nominal dollars (not adjusted for inflation).



Economic Opportunities

Real Estate Market Conditions and Trends

Understanding Camas's real estate market opportunities can indicate what industries might locate and grow in the City, based on historic and current demand patterns across different real estate types. This section details Camas's commercial real estate conditions and identifies market drivers and trends that will influence the market appeal and viability of commercial uses in the area.

This report primarily covers nonresidential commercial real estate including office, industrial, and retail building types, as well as multifamily trends to illustrate opportunities for mixed-use development. The Housing Needs Assessment portion of this Comprehensive Plan Update covers the residential real estate market in greater depth. The exhibits in the section below show historical trends in the average effective rent rates and average annual vacancy rates for the analysis. In general, the analysis shows trends in Triple-Net (NNN) rents, vacancy rates, and deliveries (these are described below). This section also looks back to trends in the past decade years, capturing a longer cycle of real estate trends.

- ♦ **Triple-Net (NNN):** Represents annual rents on a per-square-foot (PSF) basis, not including any pass-through expenses such as taxes, insurance, and utilities or maintenance costs.
- ♦ **Vacancy Rates:** Represents how much space per-square-foot (PSF) is vacant in a submarket.
- ♦ **Deliveries:** Represent the total amount of new square feet of each product type that has been added to the market on an annual basis.
- ♦ **Net Absorption:** Represent annual net square feet of new occupancy or vacancy of space accounting for deliveries.



Office Market

Office space in the City of Camas made up about 6.5% of Clark County's overall office stock in 2023.

Rents PSF for office space grew in both the City and the County since 2014. The average rent in Camas fluctuated over the past ten years and were slightly below the County average in 2024 year-to-date (YTD) at \$22.67 and \$25.46 PSF respectively.

Vacancy rates in Camas also fluctuated over the last ten years, falling from a high of nearly 16% in 2015. In comparison, Clark County's office vacancy rates steadily fell in general since 2014, with a slight increase in 2020.

While many places throughout the United States saw spiking office vacancies in 2020 with, the City and County avoided this trend.

Exhibit 36. Average Office Rent per Square Foot, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar

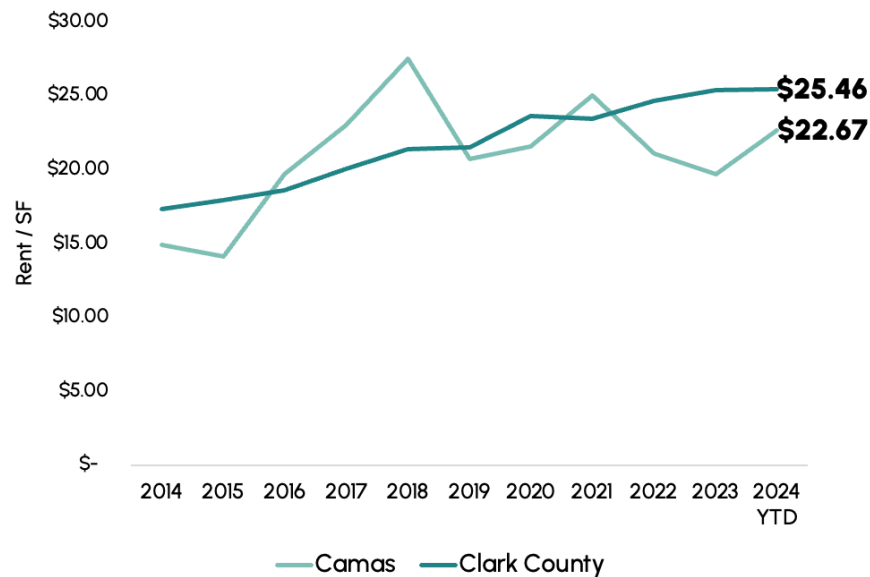
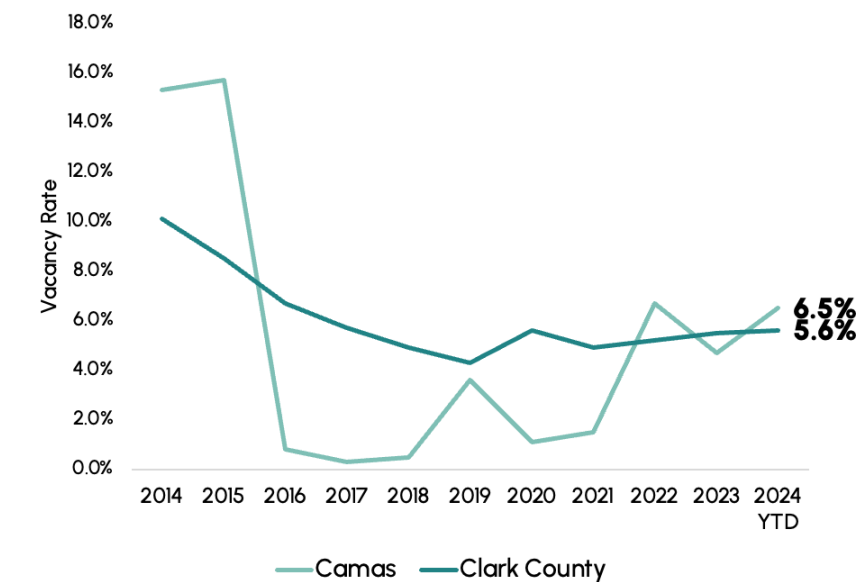


Exhibit 37. Average Office Vacancy Rate, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

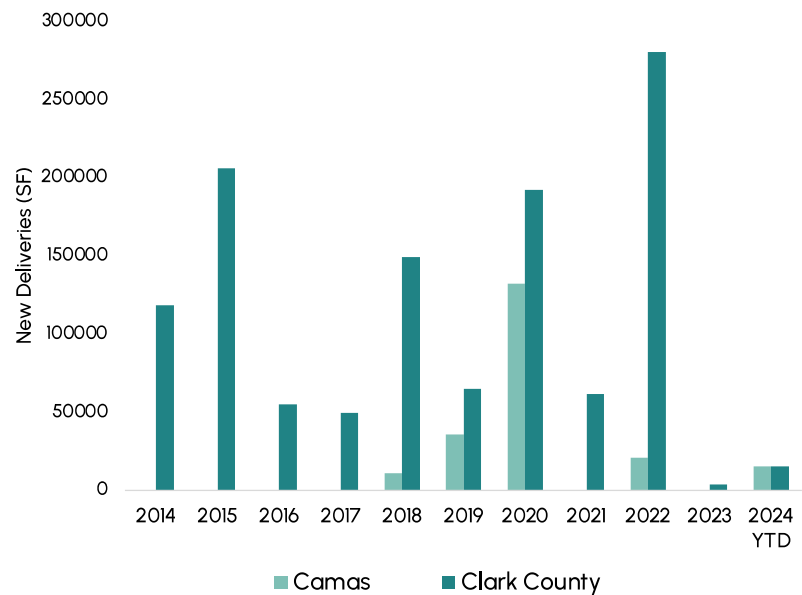
Source: CoStar



The City of Camas had its largest delivery of new office space in the last decade in 2020, adding approximately 132,000 new square feet to the market. Other areas of Clark County saw larger deliveries in 2022 and 2015.

Exhibit 38. Office Deliveries, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

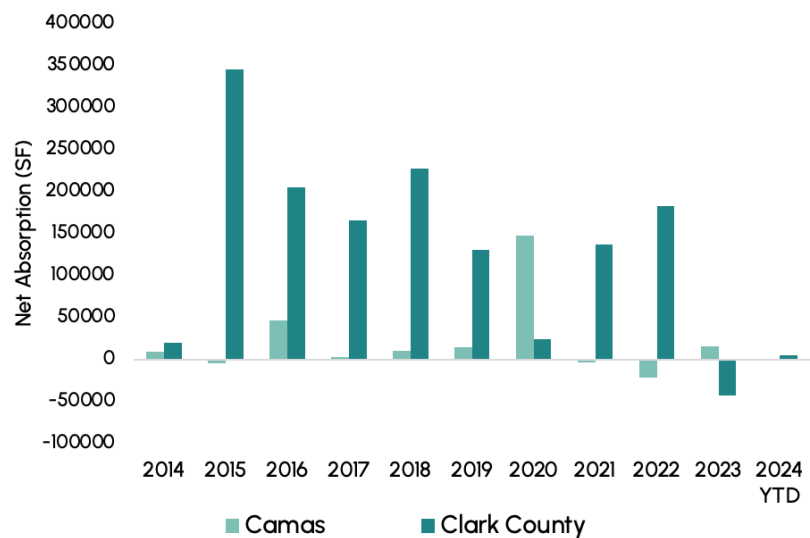
Source: CoStar



The City and the County have generally had positive net absorption of office space since 2014, with some negative absorption in the City in 2022 (approximately 21,000 SF).

Exhibit 39. Office Net Absorption, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar

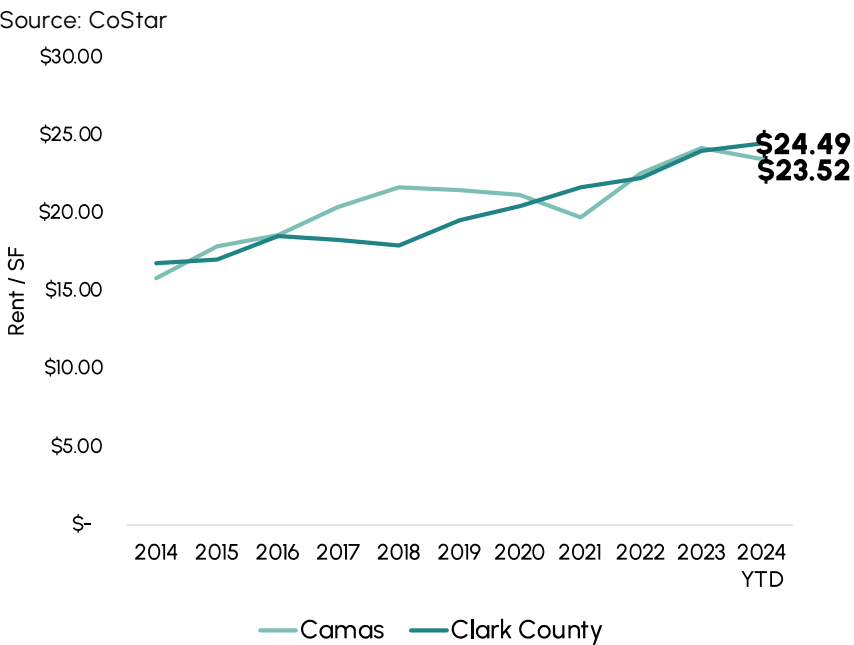


Retail Market

Camas's square footage of retail space made up about 4.2% of Clark County's overall inventory.

Retail rents PSF in Camas generally tracked closely with Clark County trends since 2014, showing slight upward growth. Rents in the City were slightly lower than the County in 2024 YTD at \$23.52 PSF compared to \$24.49.

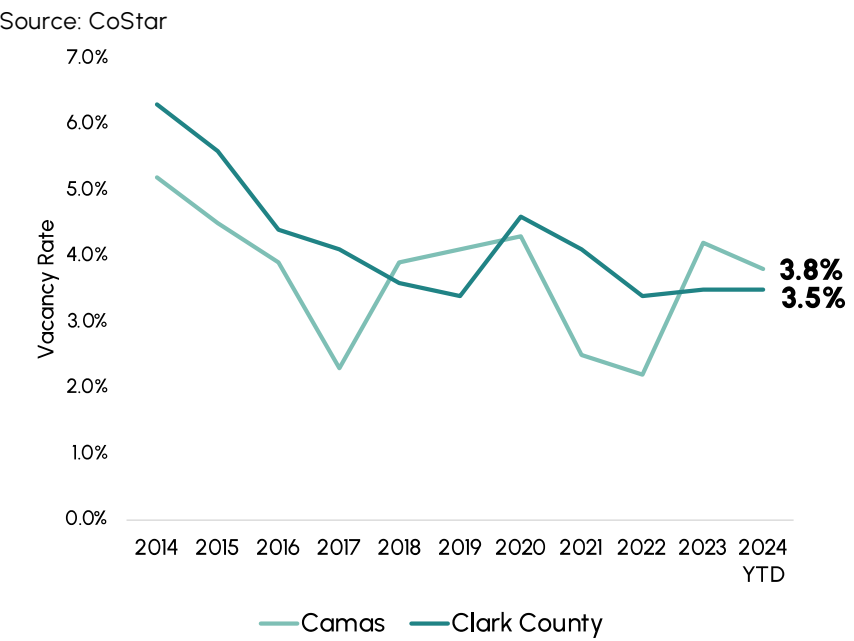
Exhibit 40. Average Retail Rent per Square Foot, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD



Retail vacancies have fluctuated in Camas and Clark County over the past decade, with a general downward trend since 2014. Retail vacancies were slightly higher in Camas than Clark County in 2024 YTD at 3.8% compared to 3.5%.

Rising rents PSF coupled with falling vacancy rates indicate increasing demand for retail in both areas. However, some level of vacancy is indicative of a healthy market with natural turnover.

Exhibit 41. Average Retail Vacancy Rate, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD



Clark County has seen large deliveries of new retail space primarily in 2014 and 2015, as well as additions of square footage in 2018 and more recently in 2023.

In Camas, there have been some years with small spikes of deliveries in the last decade, with the largest increase of about 27,000 SF in 2018 and 15,000 SF in 2023.

Retail absorption has also been generally positive since 2014 in both the City and County, with the notable exception of about 229,000 square feet of negative absorption in Clark County in 2020. This is likely due to challenges in the wake of the 2020 pandemic.

Exhibit 42. Retail Deliveries, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar

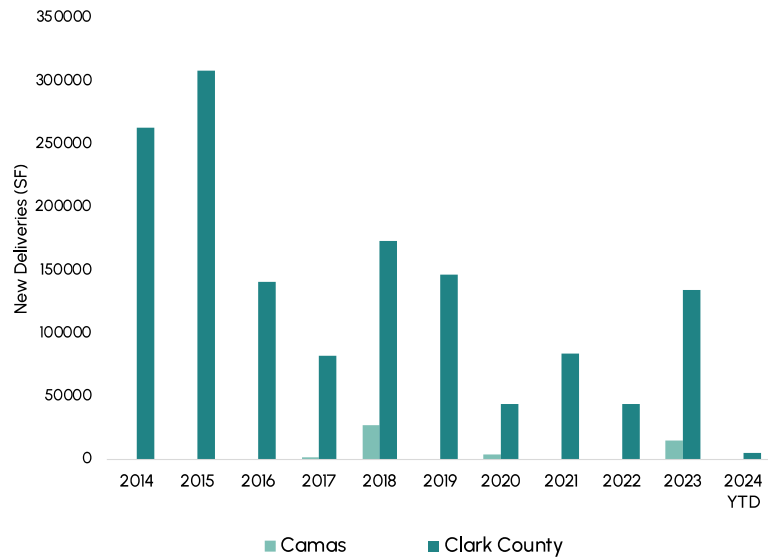
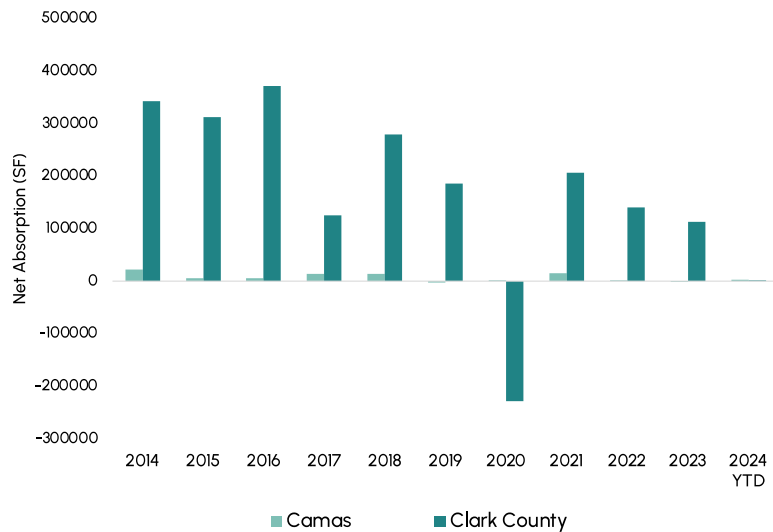


Exhibit 43. Retail Net Absorption, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar



Industrial and Manufacturing Market

The City of Camas is home to about 3.9% of Clark County's industrial real estate in square footage.

Since 2014, the County has generally had slow growth in industrial rents PSF, with an increase in 2022 and an average of \$11.04 PSF in 2024 YTD.

The City of Camas saw a sharp increase of industrial rents PSF in 2022, growing by over 200% year-over-year (YOY). In 2024 YTD, industrial rent in Cams was \$23.00 PSF.

Vacancy rates for industrial real estate were extremely low in Camas in 2024 YTD at 1.7%, indicating high demand in the industrial market locally. Since 2015, industrial vacancies have generally been very low in the City with the exception of 2021.

In comparison, industrial vacancies in Clark County have been generally low and steady, standing at 5.2% in 2024 YTD.

Exhibit 44. Average Industrial Rent per Square Foot, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar

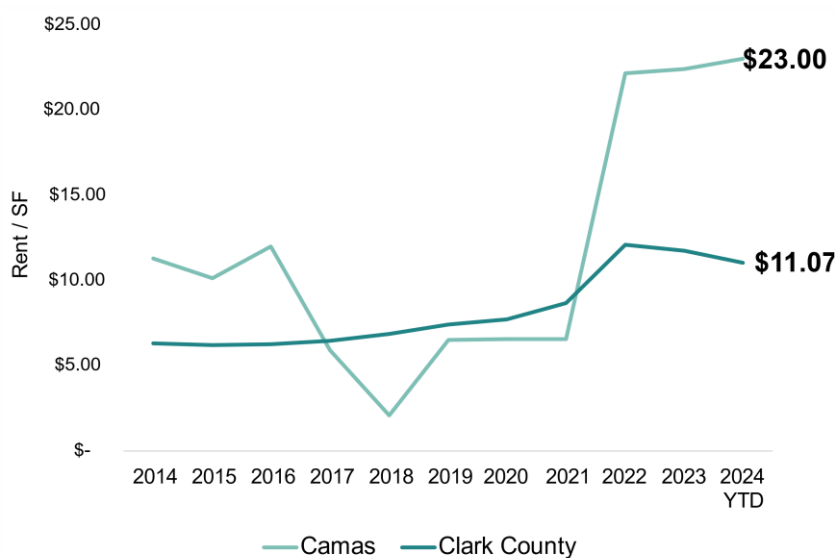
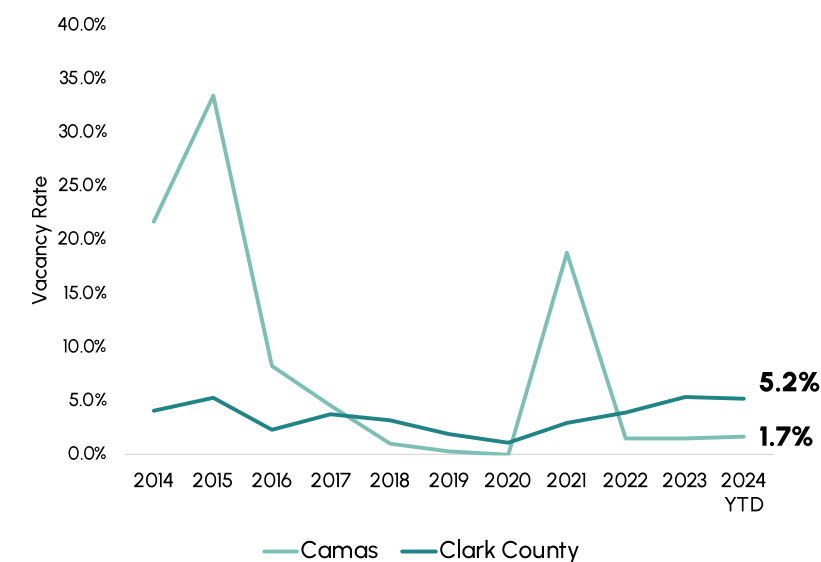


Exhibit 45. Average Industrial Vacancy Rate, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar



Clark County has seen growing industrial deliveries in the latter half of the 2010s and early 2020's, with large additions of new industrial space in 2017, 2020, and 2022.

Camas has seen fewer new deliveries but had its largest amount of new square footage added in 2020 (75,000 SF).

New industrial space has also generally had positive absorption in the City and County, although new deliveries from 2020 had negative absorption initially in 2021.

Exhibit 46. Industrial Deliveries, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar

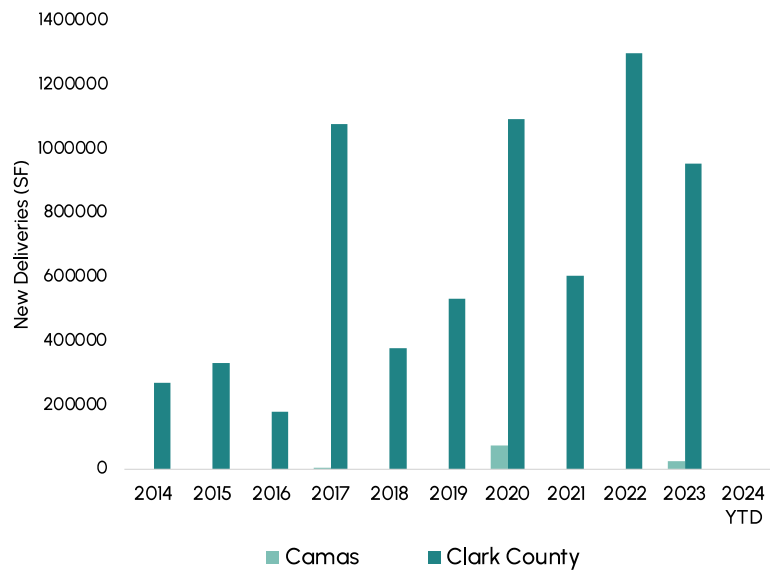
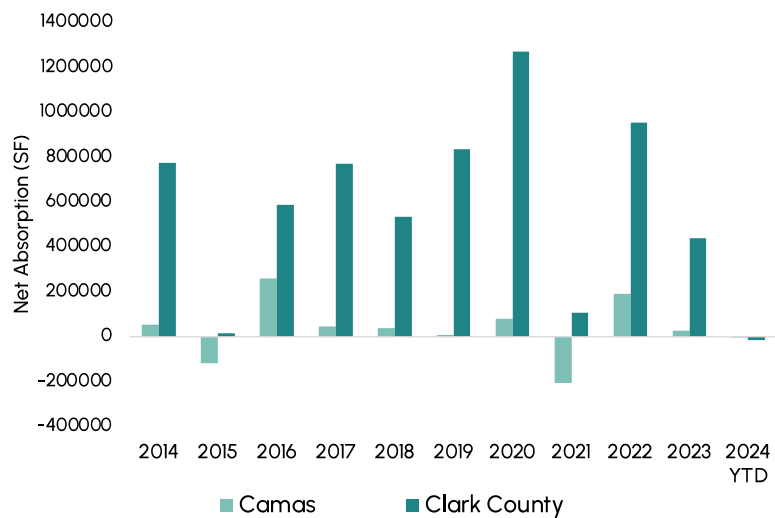


Exhibit 47. Industrial Net Absorption, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar



Mixed Use Development Opportunities

Mixed-use development with commercial and residential retail has seen growing demand nationally in recent years, as demand grows for dense, walkable areas. Trends in multifamily real estate in Camas show potential for combining demand for rental units with increases in the City's office or retail inventory.

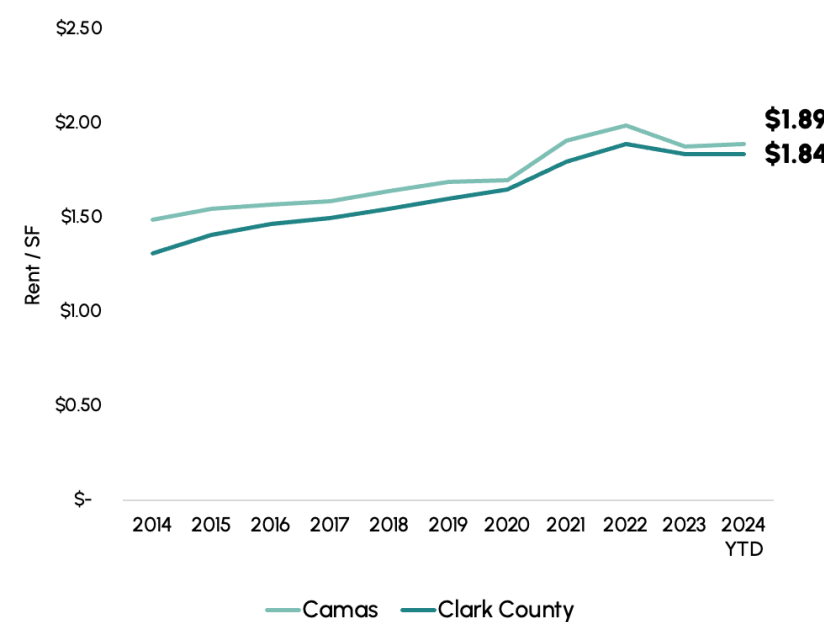
Multifamily Residential Market

Camas's multifamily units make up about 4 % of units in the County.

Camas's multifamily rents PSF have closely followed Clark County overall, remaining slightly lower over the past decade. In 2024 YTD, multifamily rents in the City were \$1.84 PSF compared to \$1.89 PSF in the County.

Exhibit 48. Average Multifamily Rent per Square Foot, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar

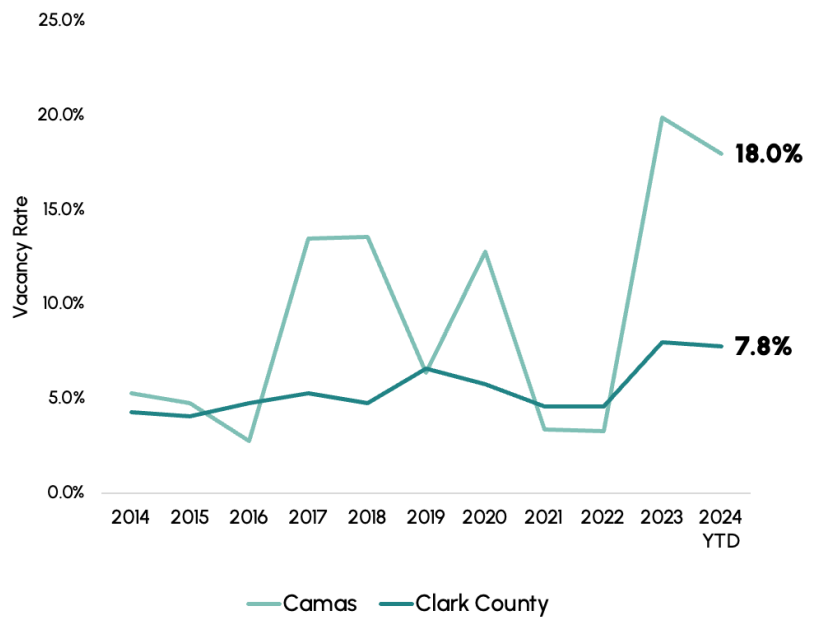


Multifamily rents were high in 2023 and 2024 YTD in Camas County, although this spike corresponds with a recent delivery of 389 units in 2023 (the largest annual number of units delivered in the past ten years). Increasing vacancies in 2017 and 2020 also track with new multifamily units delivered.

Multifamily vacancies were 7.8% in Clark County overall in 2024 YTD, also indicating increasing vacancies over time.

Exhibit 49. Average Multifamily Vacancy Rate, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

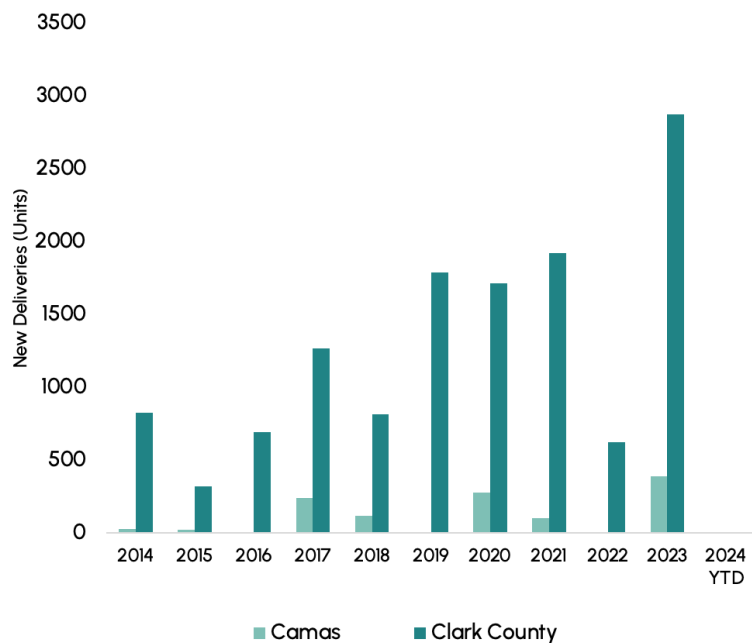
Source: CoStar



Clark County has seen an increase in multifamily deliveries in the past ten years, with the largest number of new units in 2023 (2,872 units).

Exhibit 50. Multifamily Deliveries, Camas and Clark County, 2014-2024 YTD

Source: CoStar



Downtown Camas Analysis

The following charts measure visitation by visitors, employees, and residents in Downtown Camas from 2017 to 2024. Visitation trends help in providing insights into how the city is rebounding after the COVID-19 pandemic, using Placer.ai's foot traffic analytics platform integrating proprietary artificial intelligence to estimate the number of visits based on GPS data.¹¹ Visitor and employee visits have increased to pre-pandemic levels and visitation by residents has been trending upward in recent years. Overall, this indicates a healthy level of foot traffic in the Downtown area showing an upward trajectory with visitors, employees, and residents coming to the Downtown area for shopping, work, or other purposes. Market analysis of retail activity in Downtown Camas shows retail rents increasing rapidly from approximately \$15 per square foot in 2022 to almost \$35 per square foot in 2024, the highest rate measured from 2017 to 2024. In addition, the vacancy rates for retail have remained very low below 1.5% since 2014 which is lower than the retail vacancy rates in both the City of Vancouver (3.7%) and Clark County (3.7%) in 2023, likely indicating increased demand for retail space above the available supply.

Exhibit 51. Downtown Camas

Source: EConorthwest, SERA Architects



¹¹ Placer.ai uses anonymous mobile phone location data to estimate visitation. A "visit" is triggered in Placer.ai's database when a cell phone seeks two Wi-Fi signals five to fifteen minutes apart (this range differs by cell phone operating system; e.g., an Android phone scans for Wi-Fi every three to seven minutes). While this means that visitors may be counted multiple times, this data is useful to provide a relative picture of trends over time.

Exhibit 52. Downtown Camas Visitor Visits, 2017-2024

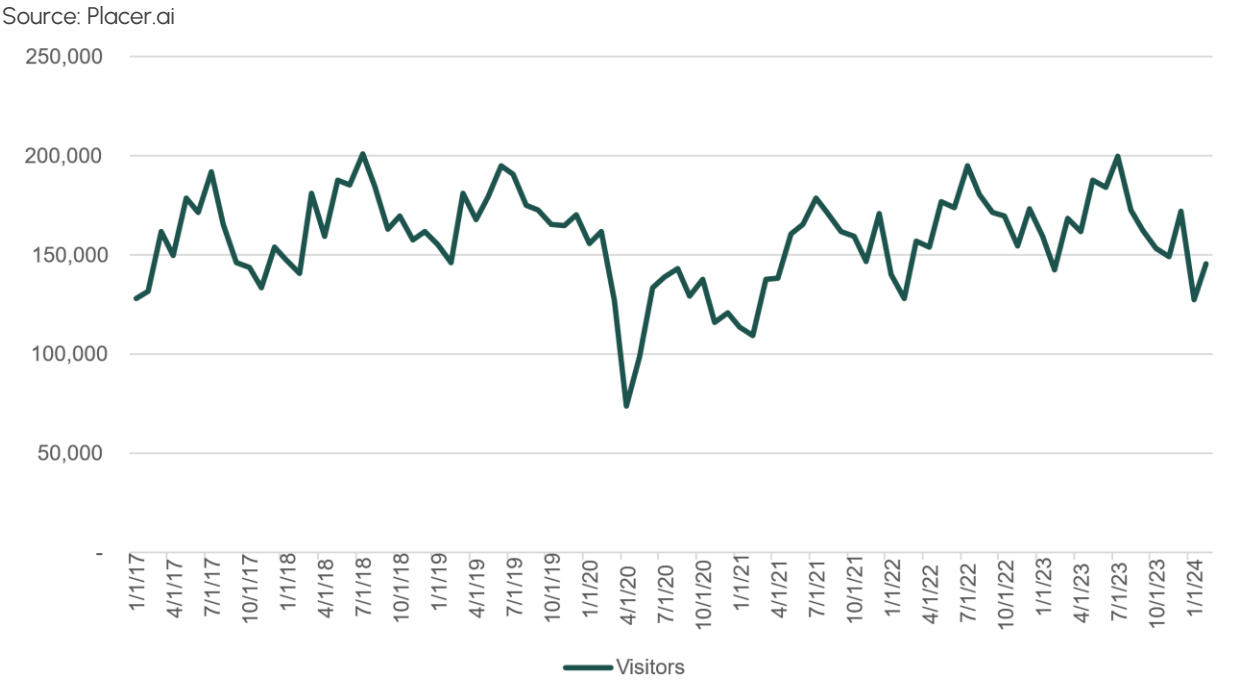


Exhibit 53. Downtown Camas Employee Visits, 2017-2024

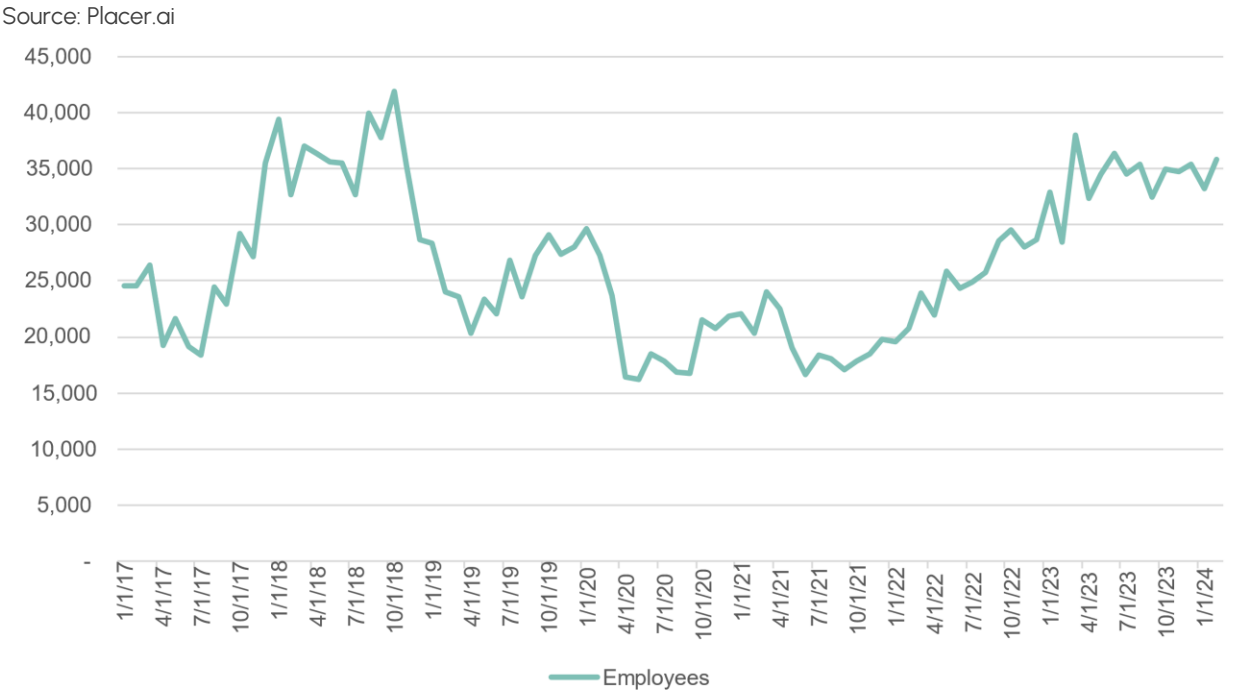


Exhibit 54. Downtown Camas Resident Visits, 2017-2024

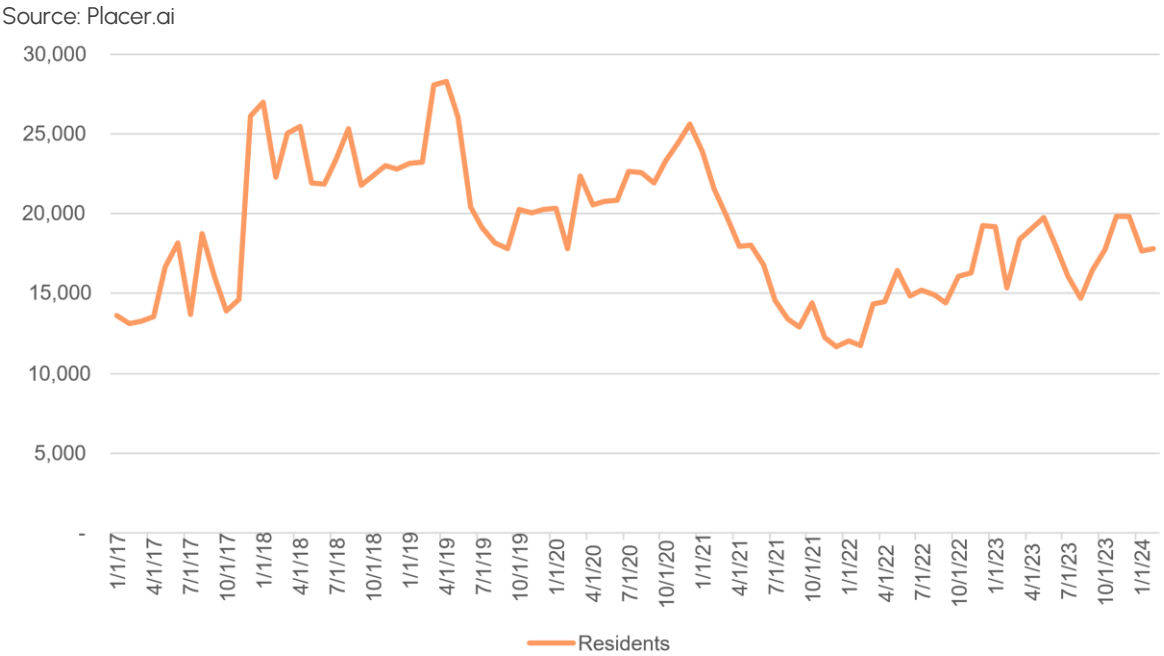


Exhibit 55. Average Retail Rent per Square Foot and Average Retail Vacancy Rate (%) in Downtown Camas, 2014-2024 Year to Date (YTD)

