

Part of the local infrastructure utilized by companies in the industrial area is the city's system of industrial roads built to Canadian heavy-haul standards. The presence of these roadways allows loads that are too heavy to travel on typical state highways in the U.S. to move between the industrial area and the international border without needing to unload and reload due to weight limitations.

Other factors that impact economic development in Sumas include the availability of relatively inexpensive water and electricity, both of which are public utilities owned and maintained by the city. The availability of these resources serves to attract businesses to town. Sumas also maintains some of the lowest utility connection charges in Whatcom County.

Future conditions

Sumas will continue to attract businesses through the planning period that benefit from a location near the Canadian border and that, in some cases, require access to an industrial site by way of a heavy haul road. Future upgrades to the regional rail system will also support increased rail traffic and businesses that rely on access to rail to transport their goods. The fluctuation of the Canadian dollar will have a strong effect on the expansion or contraction of businesses such as commercial fueling stations and food markets that rely heavily on customers coming down from Canada.

The planned increase in industrial jobs will support more local citizens being able to work locally and avoid needing to travel to other parts of the county for employment.

Goals and Policies

Goal: Maintain and increase access to the city's commercial area for local residents and those travelling through town.

Policy: The city should work with WSDOT and federal agencies to reduce back-ups at the international border crossing that block access to local businesses.

Policy: The city should work with WSDOT to ensure adequate room for vehicle queuing is provided.

Policy: Regulations limiting blockage of intersections should be enforced to ensure safe access to areas on both sides of SR 9.

Policy: The city should encourage new businesses serving local residents to locate along Sumas Avenue to avoid impacts associated with the state highway.

Policy: The city should continue to expand the local sidewalk system to increase safe access from residential areas to existing and future commercial areas.

Goal: Maintain and increase access to the city's industrial area.

Policy: The city should maintain existing roadways built to heavy-haul standards.

Policy: The city should consider options for generating revenue necessary to maintain the heavy-haul road network.

Policy: The city should work with property owners in the industrial area to expand the heavy-haul road network as part of proposed industrial developments.

Goal: Attract new businesses that provide jobs and serve the local and travelling public.

Policy: The city should work with local property owners to develop a regional truck stop to serve freight traffic moving through the international border.

Policy: The city council should continue to support new businesses or business expansion through the Economic Development fund.