October 26, 2026

ICG Partner Organizations
Five organizations funding EDC Team Jefferson

Re: Recommendations for the EDC leadership transition

Dear ICG Members,

As President of the PNW Business Resource Collective (PNW-BRC), and drawing on my experience providing economic development services to Jefferson County businesses, I am submitting the attached recommendations for the EDC leadership transition.

Three Executive Director transitions in five years make this an important opportunity to prepare the organization for stable leadership and clarify the capacity and support the ADO needs to serve Jefferson County. I recommend that an external interim ED's first 90- to 120-day plan include the EDC board and a countywide community advisory group. Together, they could draw on staff knowledge and available research to consider existing economic development activity in Jefferson County, staff strengths and service capacity, and approaches used by other ADOs. This work can help inform whether the current ADO model fits Jefferson County and what support the permanent ED will need.

The attached recommendations outline a time-limited process during the interim period that can include staff, the five-party agreement partners, and countywide business and community perspectives. The EDC board would guide the process and retain final authority over the permanent Executive Director appointment. The findings can help clarify countywide priorities and the authority, resources, and first-year expectations needed for stable leadership.

A capable ADO can strengthen countywide economic development services and support small businesses, young people, and rural communities throughout Jefferson County. I offer these recommendations in support of this place; where my family and I call home.

Sincerely,

Patty Schmucker
President
PNW Business Resource Collective

Attachment: EDC Leadership Transition Recommendations
Cc: Organizations participating in the five-party agreement; Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners; local partner organizations

EDC Leadership Transition Recommendations

From Patty Schmucker | PNW Business Resource Collective (PNW-BRC)

To ICG Partner Organizations | Five organizations funding EDC Team Jefferson

Date October 26, 2026

PNW-BRC recommends that the five ICG member organizations work with EDC Team Jefferson to use this leadership transition for a 90- to 120-day, community-led organizational assessment during the interim period. The external interim ED's first 90- to 120-day plan could include the EDC board and a countywide community advisory group. Together, they could draw on staff knowledge and available research to consider existing economic development activity in Jefferson County, staff strengths and service capacity, and approaches used by other ADOs. This work can help inform whether the current ADO model fits Jefferson County and what responsibilities, authority, resources, and support the permanent ED role will require. The board would guide the process and retain final authority over the permanent Executive Director appointment.

Why this transition is an opportunity

Three Executive Director transitions in five years make it important to prepare carefully for a neutral bridge to permanent leadership. A focused planning process can help the EDC and its partners clarify countywide service needs and how they align with the organization's priorities, staffing capacity, and services, while improving the experience of future applicants and staff. Staff can provide firsthand insight into day-to-day operations and service demands; business and community partners can help identify countywide needs and opportunities. Past recruitment and employment experiences also point to the value of clarity and consistency in the next process.

The purpose is to build a shared understanding of the work ahead: which services should be prioritized, how the organization is positioned to provide them, and what authority, resources, and support the Executive Director will need. The process should be forward-looking and focused on staff opportunity for success and organizational readiness.

The ADO responsibilities

Washington's Department of Commerce identifies EDC Team Jefferson as Jefferson County's Associate Development Organization (ADO). State law defines an ADO as a local economic development nonprofit corporation broadly representative of community interests. It describes two broad areas of contracted service: direct assistance to businesses and support for regional economic research and planning.

Direct business assistance. Provide or coordinate business planning, retention and expansion support, information about permitting and other operating resources, relocation

assistance, and export assistance. Work with partners so businesses across the county can access support.

Regional research and planning. Support regional economic research and strategies, coordinate with workforce and education partners, and participate with local jurisdictions and institutions in developing a countywide economic development plan.

State law also calls for broad community representation and inclusion of public, private, and nonprofit partners. Commerce and each ADO develop specific performance measures, data standards, and definitions through the contract; the department and ADO agree on target levels, and performance is compared with those targets annually. Statutory reporting includes employment and economic information, funding from Commerce and all sources, employment impacts, and best practices shared and implemented. Required business-system tracking includes recruitment, retention, expansion, and trade data (RCW 43.330.010, .080, and .082).

Interim period: readiness and search planning

The EDC has announced an interim ED search, which is underway. PNW-BRC recommends that the external interim ED's first 90- to 120-day plan includes the EDC board, staff and a countywide community advisory group for planning process. The board and advisory group could draw on staff knowledge and available research to consider existing economic development work going on in Jefferson County, staff strengths and service capacity, and approaches used by other county's with their ADO resources. The findings can inform discussion about whether the current model fits Jefferson County and how to prepare for a permanent ED search.

External interim leader. A qualified person who is not a current EDC staff member or board member could serve in a defined, time-limited assignment: maintain essential operations, support staff continuity, document key services and partnerships, and cooperate with the planning process. A community advisory panel could provide input on candidates and recommend finalists; the board would retain the appointment decision and publish the role and criteria.

Independent facilitation. Choose a facilitator with rural economic development experience and knowledge of Jefferson County. In partnership with the interim leader, the facilitator should gather staff input through a process that explains how confidentiality will be handled, along with appropriate feedback from partners, businesses, current and former board members, and prior candidates where available. The facilitator team could help synthesize operational needs, service priorities, and lessons for the next recruitment process. The review could also identify practical conditions that support staff retention and a respectful, safe workplace, including clear ways for staff to raise concerns and a reliable process for addressing them.

Shared understanding of the work. Provide staff briefings and operational orientations for board members so planning reflects the services, workload, systems, partnerships, and constraints involved. Coordinate the process with staff workloads.

Comparing needs and service models. Assess current EDC services, capacity, and partner coordination, along with ADO approaches in similar rural counties. Consider whether EDC's

current service model, governance arrangements, and partner representation align with its ADO responsibilities and Jefferson County's needs.

Scope and progress. Sharing the planning scope, timeline, and nonconfidential findings with staff, partners, and the community can support participation. The process should explain how staff input will be handled and any limits on confidentiality and candidate privacy, consistent with applicable requirements.

Permanent search preparation

The planning findings can inform the board's and participating partners' discussions of the organization's priorities and operating needs as they prepare for a permanent search. Key topics include:

The Executive Director role. Define responsibilities, decision-making authority, resources, the board relationship, first-year expectations, and evaluation measures.

A funded first-year work plan. Identify priority services, responsible leads, timelines, and measurable targets aligned with the Commerce contract and local partnership commitments.

A clear search and transition process. Published qualifications, selection criteria, recruitment steps, and a timeline can support a consistent process with meaningful input from a broad range of business and community leaders, along with an onboarding and evaluation plan.

Potential first-year priorities

The board and partners can use the planning process to identify first-year priorities. PNW-BRC recommends considering the following areas:

Implement countywide economic development priorities. Build on the ICG Economic Development framework with countywide partners, including NODC, and turn adopted priorities into coordinated actions.

Strengthen direct business support. Help businesses address financial performance, customers, pricing, staffing, operations, marketing, and investment needs. Assess the capacity and baseline for business advising, then set a resourced target. A fivefold increase in businesses receiving direct support could be considered as an aspirational goal after defining the baseline, the timeframe, what counts as direct support, and the resources needed.

Serve rural communities and young people. Ensure South County and other rural communities can shape priorities and access services. Connect young people with local careers, workforce learning, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Report on results. Track business assistance and follow-through, retention and expansion, partner coordination, youth opportunity, and countywide access, alongside the measures and targets agreed with Commerce.

Requested action

PNW-BRC recommends that the ICG members work with the EDC on the following steps:

- Appoint an external interim Executive Director through a transparent, time-limited process with published criteria and community input.
- Support a 90- to 120-day community-led assessment during the interim period, with an independent facilitator and input from staff, partners, businesses, and community leaders.
- Use the findings to inform the ADO's priorities and operating needs, along with the permanent Executive Director's role, authority, resources, and first-year expectations.
- Incorporate the planning findings into the permanent search, with published criteria, a clear timeline, meaningful business and community input, and an onboarding plan.

A capable ADO can strengthen countywide economic development services and support small businesses, young people, and rural communities throughout Jefferson County. I offer these recommendations in support of this place my family and I call home.

Sources

Washington State Department of Commerce, "Associate Development Organizations (ADOs)," https://www.commerce.wa.gov/small-business-services/ado/. Washington Revised Code: RCW 43.330.010 (definition), RCW 43.330.080 (services and partner coordination), and RCW 43.330.082 (performance measures and reporting), https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.330.

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October 27, 2026

Honorable Pam Petrakek
Honorable Carol L. Hasse
Honorable Peter W. Hanke
Port of Port Townsend

Dear Port of Port Townsend Commissioners

I write to provide input on your deliberations regarding Port of Port Townsend continued funding for EDC Team Jefferson, and a separate topic regarding seeking to replace EDC Team Jefferson as the ADO for Jefferson County.

Economic development is a "team sport." No one organization can perform all the roles that contribute to effective economic development, which include strategy, analysis, infrastructure, workforce development, workforce housing, financing, support services for small businesses, marketing, and more. Effective teams are ones where each member performs their task well, and in harmony with other team members. Team members who don't harmonize with other team members or take on roles beyond their expertise lead to underperforming teams. The Port has, and I expect will continue to do an outstanding job of building the infrastructure for economic development in Jefferson County. It is part of your mission. But does the Port have the staff and capability to take over the roles of ECD Team Jefferson, particularly those services related to nurturing and supporting small businesses? And does it fit with the Port's mission?

I am an active investor with LION and volunteer in several LION roles that support the needs of the network. EDC Team Jefferson provides administrative support to LION. As such I have interacted with EDC Team Jefferson over many years. Sometimes these services have been ragged and not met my expectations. However recently the performance of the EDC Team Jefferson staff has been the best I have seen. You may know that LION members have invested in over 132 (I expect the number is now closer to 150) local entities, almost all being businesses or affordable housing. The cumulative impact on our local economic development is very significant. EDC Team Jefferson has been an important enabler to achieve these results.

More important than the administrative support for LION are the technical services EDC Team Jefferson provides to our entrepreneurs and small businesses. The EDC Team Jefferson staff offers an open door for anyone wanting advice on how to start or grow a small business. Recently they have developed a team of fifteen one-on-one business advisers. This is a huge force

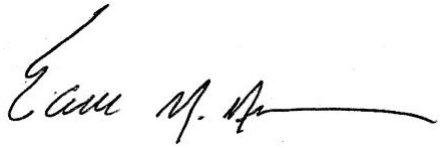
multiplier for deploying their services. And it is a huge force multiplier for our entrepreneurs and business owners to have a better shot at being successful. Could EDC Team Jefferson do more? Unequivocally yes. Could Port of Port Townsend do as well? I don't see evidence that it can. I say this recognizing that each of you are successful small business owners. But does the port staff and experience align with this need?

As you will gather from these remarks I think we do better at economic development when the various team members are pulling their oars together. Let me cite two examples where the Port, EDC Team Jefferson and LION investors came together to establish successful business enterprises in Jefferson County. One is ACI Boats which has a highly successful enterprise on Port property that employs 50 or so people making family supporting wages. The other is the newly formed Jefferson Timber Cooperative located on Port property at the airport. Its impact is yet to unfold, but all indications point to this being one of our crown jewels.

You may decide the funds you provide to EDC Team Jefferson would be better spent on Port related infrastructure or other efforts related to economic development. EDC Team Jefferson will lose some of its financial support which will impact its progress. But I ask you to think deeply about moving the ADO status from EDC Team Jefferson to the Port. Think bigger than what is best for the Port to what is best for Jefferson County. And do that now. Your current posturing is destabilizing our local economic development.

Let's do more of pulling the oars together and less of poking at each other.

Thank you for considering this input and thank you for service to our community.



Earll M Murman

From:	Bill Wise
To:	Public Comments
Subject:	Updated Public Comment for the 10/28/26 Meeting
Date:	Tuesday, October 27, 2026 9:32:52 AM
Attachments:	Updated POPT - Public Comment 10-28-26.pdf

Greetings Joanna, nice to meet up this morning.

I've updated my earlier public comments submission with the attached. If possible, please replace my earlier submission with this one.

Thanks
Bill Wise

Full disclosure: I am a member of LION and co-founder and former Chair of Team Jefferson,

I thank the Port of Port Townsend for its support of Team Jefferson. In our early years, Port leadership regularly attended our meetings. You helped us financially. The Port helped us relocate from Hadlock to 2410 Washington Street. As Chair during those years, I can attest it was a collaborative and productive partnership.

Unfortunately, that dynamic has shifted. What was once an engaged positive relationship, no longer exists. I don't know why the Port's stance toward Team Jefferson has cooled. But I am deeply saddened by this turn.

Over the years, Team Jefferson's business advisory function has been and is a positive force helping businesses get started, improve and discouraging some not ready for primetime. Through Team Jefferson's Re-Compete Grant, we now have 16 business advisors across the County.

With Team Jefferson's business vetting process, LION has invested over $13 million directly into our County—and that figure doesn't include 2025 and 2026 numbers.

LION has invested more than $1 million in our local maritime sector—some investments reach well into six figures. These businesses are current tenants of this Port. Several have grown into major job creators.

Given these deliverables, I must ask: why the resistance toward the Team Jefferson?

I've heard concerns raised about transparency and reporting—but these are administrative, solvable problems.

There are discussions suggesting North Olympic Development Coalition as a possible ADO. NODC has a broad regional mandate, making them a poor candidate to serve as Jefferson County's dedicated ADO.

Next…. the idea of the Port taking over as ADO is ill-advised. The Port needs to focus on its core charter.

The Port has made commendable progress focusing on its own sustainability and stability. Please keep that focus. If you choose to walk away from the EDC, so be it. But please figure it out—because right now, the Port is acting as a boat anchor on the EDC, and that serves no one.

Let's imagine instead what could be accomplished if the Port and the EDC aligned as true partners. This is the ideal outcome for our entire community.

Bill Wise, Port Townsend

From: Carla Main
To: Public Comments
Subject: 10/28/2026 Public Comment
Date: Monday, October 26, 2026 3:58:08 PM

I am writing to express my concern about the recent Port discussions about defunding the EDC and potentially taking over its functions. I am going to quote now from a letter I wrote to the IGC about this topic in April.

"As long term participants in LION, my husband and I have had the good fortune to invest in numerous small businesses in our country. For those of you who have not had much contact with LION, we are a network of 99 local investors who, since 2008, have invested at least 13.8 million dollars in 132 East Jefferson County businesses, non-profits, and affordable workforce housing entities. Most of the LION recipients were unbankable at the time of their application. Please refer to Profiles of Local Investing by LION Members for more details on this remarkable network.

The loans my husband and I have sponsored have ranged from farms to fishing, from non-profits to manufacturing. We are learning so much about the challenges and benefits of doing business on the peninsula from these courageous businesses. A consistent message from every small business that has mentioned the EDC has been how valuable that help has been. Many said they either "wouldn't have made it" or that their business has gained immeasurably due to the training and consultation of the EDC. It is a joy to see young entrepreneurs who are growing and learning new skills, and providing local jobs, while contributing to the overall economic health of our county.

Why do they feel this way? The EDC provides one-on-one business advice to vet and strengthen small business concepts so that entrepreneurs can create a viable business plan and avoid costly missteps. The EDC has also provided invaluable administrative support for processing Business Opportunities submitted to LION by local businesses seeking financing. I joined the EDC as a retired member of our community simply because I want to support and strengthen our small businesses.

After reading the recent PDN article describing how the Port is considering leaving the EDC I grew very concerned. I have so many questions.

What would be the impact of this loss of funding? Who else will do this important work? Who else has a focus on the breadth of emerging small businesses in our community? Who else can provide one-on-one advice, business classes, and access to information?

In a time of increasing economic uncertainty locally, nationally and internationally our local businesses need to know they can influence decisions about economic development that are made locally. They need to feel seen and heard. So do those of us who are investing our personal resources to support them. Please take the time to have this conversation with all of us."

I wrote that to the IGC in April. In October we are facing even larger challenges with bigger budget holes at the county and city, bigger issues at the mill, and even more uncertainty with elections.

I commend the Port. I am proud of your work with our maritime and airport sector. You are opening up work on food resilience as well. But I am also concerned about "mission creep". If you did decide to take on the role of the EDC you would be responsible for meeting the economic development needs of our entire small (and large) business community in a time of great economic uncertainty. I applaud your concern and involvement but hope there can be a way to uphold and improve the essential work of the EDC without defunding them.

Thanks for all you do for our beloved community!
Carla Main
2260 Seaview Drive
Port Townsend WA
360-302-1081

From: Jane Lohry Armstrong
To: Public Comments
Subject: Team Jefferson EDC
Date: Monday, October 26, 2026 9:23:51 PM

The Port of Port Townsend Commissioners has continued to raise the question as to whether they will continue to fund our local, independent, economic development organization, known as "Team Jefferson EDC". I am in favor of our Port continuing to support the EDC for the following reasons.

The EDC merits support by the Port, the City, County and PUD to work toward success in its mission.. There are a number of Port and business park-residing businesses that are stronger today because of the resources and network available from and through our EDC. I know this because as a member of LION, our Local Investment Opportunity Network, how locally businesses have benefited from the training and connection with our EDC staff. I have also see the strengthening of existing businesses when they seek new insight and tools through the EDC. There is nothing quite like the EDC available to our local businesses, many of them small, to help them develop and strengthen their business skill sets and networking capabilities.

Today, businesses interested in developing relationships for possible local LION loans contact the EDC to be connected with our network. As one of the facilitators of the conversations that follow, i can personally say that those businesses and their owners who avail themselves of the EDC services are more knowledgeable on the business side of their enterprise than those who do not. If you look at the jeffersonlion.net homepage, you'll see a few of these businesses. https://www.jeffersonlion.net/

RECOMPETE is another reason to support our EDC. It is a very recent local economy strengthening and ground breaking achievement due to our EDC collaborating with other Peninsula organizations and our Federal government for funding. Its success hopefully will lead to even more healthy economic growth in industries that are the heart of our Peninsula. Other similar successes have followed.

These are difficult times for local businesses, as often has been the case here. Now, as much as ever, we need available local professional resources and connections to navigate these

times. The EDC is both small and mighty, reflecting much of what is can be accomplished when we seek to work together.

The definitions of local economic development and who is served in its economic development work are different for the Port than it is for the EDC. Over the 5 plus years I have been involved with the EDC, the EDC has delivered on its mission. To incorporate the EDC into the Port would lose its service because that is not yours. The other governmental partners and non government board members “get” the EDC. Adjust for these times, but please support the EDC in theirs.

Jane Lohry Armstrong, Port Townsend resident