

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
City Council Special Meeting**

6:00 PM
June 15, 2022

Blakely Hall
2550 NE Park Dr.

MINUTES

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Councilmembers:

Barbara de Michele
Zach Hall
Victoria Hunt
Russell Joe
Tola Marts
Chris Reh
Lindsey Walsh

Administration/Staff:

Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor
Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator
Andrea Snyder, Deputy City Administrator
Rachel Bender Turpin, City Attorney
Tisha Gieser, City Clerk
David Linehan, Acting City Attorney
Paula Schwan, Chief of Police
Lee Shin, Emergency Manager
Minnie Dhaliwal, Community Planning & Development Director
Bennett Ashbaugh, Public Works Manager

Purpose: The purpose of this special meeting is to provide an update on certain areas of interest to the Issaquah Highlands community and allow the City Council to hear from the community.

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION

Mayor Pauly called the meeting to order at approximately 6:20 PM.

- a) Welcome & Opening Remarks
By Mayor Pauly & Council President Walsh
- b) Presentations on:
 - Public Safety
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Current Projects: Public Works Infrastructure/Maintenance
 - Current Projects: Private Development
- c) Question & Answer Session
- d) Wrap-Up

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.

Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk



Economic Development

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issaquahwa.gov

Economic Development 2nd Quarter 2022 Update

Cautious optimism for Issaquah’s economy

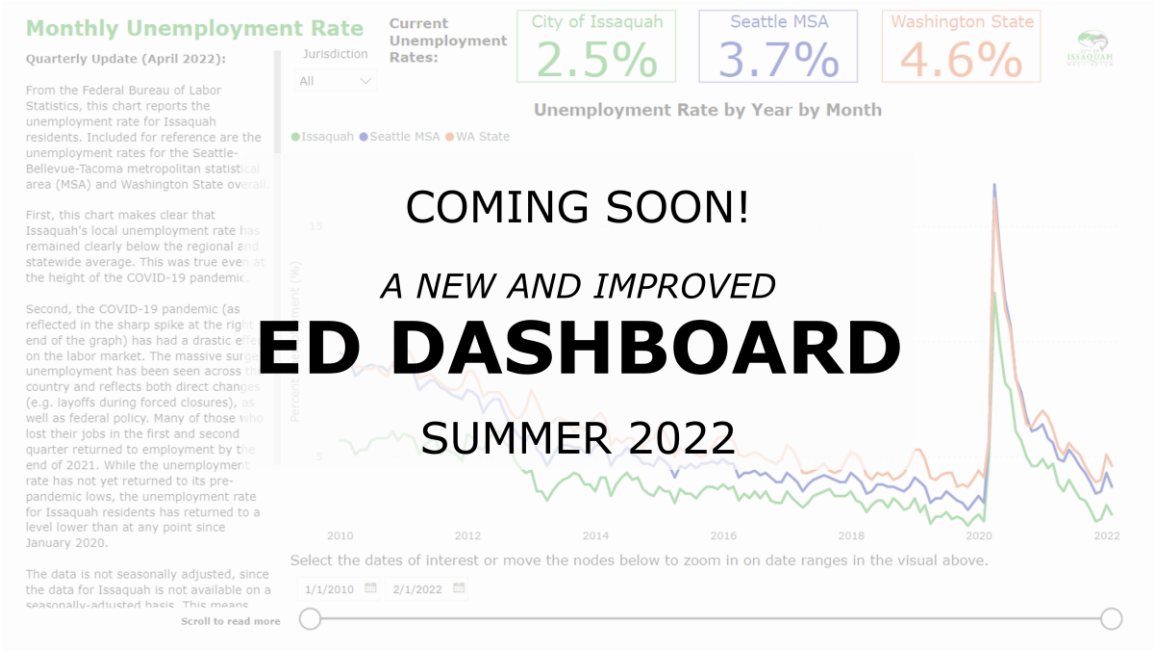
As uncertainty grows over inflation and interest rates, Issaquah businesses have continued to see an increase in sales compared to 2020 and 2019. Workforce continues to be a challenge for most employers despite the headlines that some companies are laying off employees. This summer is expected to bring more visitors to the region and Issaquah to enjoy our amenities, events, and amazing businesses.

This update provides an overview of the business climate, economic development activities, and a glimpse into some future activities in 2022.



Source: Finance Department revenue activity through April 30, 2022.

Additional economic data always available on the [Economic Dashboard](#).



What is Economic Development doing to help businesses?

Our continued focus is to provide resources and technical assistance to help any size businesses thrive. We are the liaison for businesses, property owners, and new businesses.



Over 7 Issaquah businesses received technical assistance

- No cost, one-on-one Business Advisor services
- Business Technical Assistance Seminars



Over 16 Issaquah businesses connected to services

- Economic Development staff continue to be the first contact for businesses with questions about permits, public safety, workforce, expansion, business licensing, and business assistance to name a few.



7 businesses and 6 property representatives provided commercial property assistance

- Business types include beverages (tea & wine), food trucks, and sports.
- Worked with owners or brokers to discuss potential redevelopment opportunities for 2 properties on Front St, one on 12th Ave NW, two on Gilman Blvd and one on East Lake Sammamish Parkway.



Resident Survey Next Steps

- 108 businesses initial research based on resident suggestions
- 5 businesses contacted
- 2 new businesses announced via social media

Small Business Flex Fund

The City is poised to begin in earnest our partnership with the Small Business Flex Fund. The Flex Fund **provides low-interest loans to small to medium sized businesses** across the State. This partnership will ensure that Issaquah businesses have a guaranteed access to the program, and to all the resources associated. In the upcoming quarter, we will make a special emphasis in advertising to ensure that Issaquah businesses are aware and can take advantage of the Flex Fund.

Job Fair

Workforce issues remain the top concern for businesses across our region. In May, the City partnered with the Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce to hold the Spring Virtual Job Fair. About 40 businesses signed up to participate in the Virtual Job Fair, and approximately 80 job seekers attended to learn about all the careers that Issaquah has to offer. The Job Fair was met with very positive reviews, and **employers, in particular, appreciated the resource it offered to spread information about their job openings in an extremely difficult hiring environment.**

What's Happening in Tourism?

The [Lodging Tax Advisory Committee](#) made recommendations for full or partial **funding for seven tourism promotion initiatives in 2022**. These seven were sponsored by the Tasveer South Asian Film Festival, Village Theatre, Village Theatre, Greater Issaquah Chamber of Commerce, Cougar Mountain Zoo, Issaquah History Museums, Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery, and the Downtown Issaquah Association. These seven initiatives will bring many visitors to our community, who will stay in our hotels, dine at our restaurants, shop at our small businesses, and enjoy all that Issaquah has to offer.

Visit Issaquah hired Christy Garrard as Director of Business Development in March. Since her hiring, Visit Issaquah has been working to interview stakeholders, make connections with outside organizations, and develop a strategy to attract visitors and events to Issaquah in the post-Pandemic environment.

Resources at Businesses' Fingertips

We know that business owners are busy. That's why we push information to their inbox through the bi-monthly Business E-News. Our Business E-news is a great way to promote timely programs, funding opportunities, and important information that impact businesses. With over 3,600 subscribers, Economic Development uses this tool as one way to share information.

We have also **created new webpages** and updated others to highlight resources that businesses and other community members can use – 24/7.

- Created [Downtown Streetscape](#) webpage to provide information about the Alder Festival Street improvements planned for July & August and Pilot Parklet program.
- Created [Resident Business Survey Wishlist](#) webpage to share the results of the December 2021 survey and encourage interested businesses and residents with suggestions to contact us.
- Recreated the [Workforce & Education](#) webpage to highlight ways for businesses and job seekers to find what they need from information about our superb school district to job boards and programs that can help employers find the right workforce.



New Podcast Highlights Issaquah Businesses

In May, we launched a monthly podcast to share the buzz about businesses. From new business openings and to what's coming soon - such as H Mart & Tippy Cow! Each podcast includes an interview with a local business owner. Check out the latest podcast [here](#).

Representing Business Perspective in City Projects and Programs

An important but less visible Economic Development role is to **participate, support, and sometimes lead intradepartmental projects**. Our involvement helps to ensure the business perspective is considered when policy, programs, and decisions are made.

Our involvement in the second quarter of 2022 included:

- Green Building Initiative
- Salmon Days permit coordination
- Electric Scooter Pilot Program proposal
- Title 18 Parking & Circulation Code Update
- Front Street Banners Program Implementation
- Retail Loss Prevention meetings with Issaquah Police Department
- Gather business input for Code Enforcement proposed changes
- Welcoming Week
- Input to and promotion of City Hall RFQ
- Internal Data Governance Committee
- Internal Broadband Committee

What's Next?

The remainder of 2022 will be a busy year for economic development in Issaquah. Here are just a few things to look forward to this year.

Events:

- Exploration of virtual or in-person **Job Fair** in Fall 2022.
- First in-person **Business Leadership Forum** in September 2022: Gathering leaders in the business community to connect, learn about efforts to improve business climate, and coordinate across organizations and businesses.
- Community-wide events such as Parkadilly in Lake Sammamish State Park, Downtown Wine & Art Walks and Gas Station Blues, Highlands EcoMarket, City's Concerts on the Green, Shakespeare in the Park and Farmers Market, and so much more. Check out the newly created [Visit Issaquah events calendar](#) for more information about these and other events.

Programs & Projects:

- Alder Festival Street improvements: The **installation of catenary lighting on Alder Street** will begin to fulfill the vision of the Streetscape Concept Plan and create a more pedestrian friendly, vibrant area. A **pathway mural** will be a creative way to connect Front St. and the Depot Park. Lighting installation **begins July 11**; mural painting begins July 28. The project will be complete by the end of August.
- Downtown Issaquah Association MOU: The City met with DIA staff and board members to discuss a schedule and next steps to **begin to develop a MOU for 2022 funding**. Once a draft MOU is developed, the City will gather input from Downtown stakeholders before returning to City Council for review.