

5. Economic development

Context

Forks traditional economic base of timber harvesting was seriously undermined in the late 1980s due to judicial and executive actions concerning the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Forks Economic Development Steering Committee (FEDSC) proposed creating an industrial park centered around timber products and actively marketing the industrial park to other manufacturers.

In the last decades, Forks rapidly shifted from a heavily dominated natural resource-based economy to one that is now mixed between natural resources, the retail and service sector, and government. A concentrated effort has and continues to be ~~been~~ made to further develop the manufacturing aspect of the local economy.

In late 2014 and 2015, the lumber manufacturing sector of Forks was decimated with the closure of Interfor Beaver-Forks and Allen Mills. These mill closures, along with others in the state, removed high paying family waged jobs in Forks. Efforts to identify and develop replacement employment opportunities will take significant investment by local, state, and federal leaders.

Reduction in timber demand forced the area to diversify its economic base. The Olympic Corrections Center (OCC) and the Clallam Bay Correction Center (CBCC) helped stabilize the Forks economy during the transition. Forks participated in the multi-jurisdictional effort to obtain a RECOMPETE Grant from the Economic Development Administration aimed at increasing employment opportunities within the North Olympic Peninsula. This five year effort began in late 2024.

The US Forest Service (USFS), Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Quillayute School District, Olympic

Corrections Center (OCC), and the Clallam Bay Correctional Center (CBCC) are major employers of hundreds of people from ~~the~~ Forks.

The Forest Service, Quillayute School District, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reduced staff in recent due to declining state and federal budgets. Pressure on state budgets continues to require Forks to spend significant political efforts to maintain both services and jobs associated with those state funded agencies. The Olympic Corrections Center (OCC) and Clallam Bay Correctional Center (CBCC), however, have increased staff and ~~believes~~ expect this trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

Employment trends

Timber harvesting remains an active economic sector of the West End. Predominately centered around private timber lands which have remained at a relatively consistent level, it is hoped state harvest will increase to authorized levels. In addition, there could be additional growth from federal forestlands in ~~the~~ decades to come.

Modern timber harvesting, however, is automated using machinery cutting equipment rather than manpower, with logs exported to other areas in the state, or in the case of private harvested timber to foreign markets rather than mill cut locally. Consequently, a resurgence in timber harvesting will not result in the employment totals of previous decades before the 1990s.

Tourism - is a vital, growing, seasonally based sector, but has helped diversify the economic base of Forks. While the natural surrounding beauty and recreation activities have been a constant draw, pop cultural interests such as “Twilight” have fueled the tourism sector.

Forks is over 3 hours from the highly populated I-5 corridor positioning the west end of Clallam County as an ideal “get away location”. As a result, growth in the tourism sector has benefited many

local retail and hospitality businesses. Although tourism continues to grow, there remains a concern that growth in the sector may not result in higher paying wages.

Public sector employment - many of the large employers in the community are government agencies including the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) with 2 facilities located within an hour of Forks, Quillayute Valley School District, Forks Community Hospital, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Industrial growth and renewal - more land will be needed for industrial uses and will be partially provided by Forks Industrial Park. As a result of the Quileute Tribe purchasing the former Rosmond Mill/110 Business Park, there should be sufficient property for the industrial development in the future.

Affordable housing - is limited in Forks and restricts tourism, public sector, and industrial employers' ability to retain, recruit, and house employees.

Education

The American Community Survey (ACS) - is an ongoing statistical survey by the US Census Bureau sent to approximately 250,000 addresses monthly (or 3,000,000 per year) with a margin of error varying from +/-3.0% to +/-14.6% depending on the subject. The ACS regularly gathers information previously contained only in the long form of the decennial census. It is the largest survey other than the decennial census that the Census Bureau administers.

The demographic characteristics in this plan are taken from the ACS's most current compilations for the combined 2017 to 2022 years. Given the limited sampling the results are likely to be typical but not overtly accurate of actual existing conditions.

The 2020 Decennial Census was conducted in 2020 and some portions are still being compiled. Normally, the decennial census is considered a 100% count. However, due to Covid and underfunding by Congress, the decennial census includes some random sampling like ACS.

Forks population over the age 25 has a typical percent with high school education attainment at 27% compared to 22%-27% for Clallam County, Washington State, and the US, an average percent with some college but no degree at 25% compared to 20-27%, and a lower percent with Bachelor or higher degrees at 11% compared to 19%-24% of Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

Forks potential labor force includes a proportionate percent of high school graduates but less with some or more college compared to the competitive labor forces in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

	Clallam			
	US	WA	Co	Forks
Less than 9th grade	5%	4%	2%	9%
9th-12th grade	7%	4%	4%	10%
High school graduate	27%	22%	22%	27%
Some college, no degree	20%	21%	27%	25%
Associate degree	9%	10%	12%	9%
Bachelor's degree	20%	24%	19%	11%
Graduate or professional	13%	16%	15%	9%

Labor force participation

Forks has an average labor force participation rate of 63% compared to Washington State and the US of 64%-65% and significantly above 47% for Clallam County, and a low civilian employed rate of 58% compared with 61%-63% for Washington State and the US and significantly above 45% for Clallam County. Forks has a high civilian unemployment rate of 8% compared to 4% for Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

Travel time from Forks to place of work is low at 18.0 minutes compared to 19.1-27.6 minutes for the comparable Clallam County,

Washington State, and US.

	Clallam			
Labor force participation	US	WA	Co	Forks
Total in labor force	64%	65%	47%	63%
Total civilian employed	63%	61%	45%	58%
Civilian unemployed	4%	4%	4%	8%
Travel time in minutes	27.6	26.3	19.1	18.0

Industry

Base industries - are resource based including agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, construction, and manufacturing that export products to a larger economy. Base industries create rural towns and urban cities from the local resources that can be developed by base industries, they are the reason for being.

Forks has a low percent of the employed labor force concentrated in base industries, especially construction and manufacturing, at 10% compared with 14%-19% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

	Clallam			
Industry employed 16+	US	WA	Co	Forks
Agriculture, forestry, fish	2%	2%	2%	7%
Construction	7%	7%	7%	1%
Manufacturing	10%	9%	5%	2%
Subtotal base	19%	18%	14%	10%
Wholesale trade	3%	2%	1%	2%
Retail trade	11%	12%	15%	18%
Transportation, warehouse	6%	6%	3%	1%
Information	2%	3%	2%	1%
Finance, real estate	6%	6%	4%	2%
Professional, scientific	12%	15%	9%	3%
Education, health, social	23%	21%	27%	23%
Arts, recreation	10%	8%	11%	16%
Other services	5%	4%	6%	5%

Public administration	4%	5%	9%	20%
Subtotal service	81%	82%	86%	90%

Service industries - including wholesale, retail trade, transportation, information, finance, real estate, professional services, scientific, education, health, social services, arts, recreation, other services, and public administration support the population generated by base industries. While towns and cities are created by base industries, social industries provide the supporting services necessary for the town and city to sustain itself.

Forks has a high percent of the employed labor force in service industries, especially retail trade, transportation, education, health, and social services, arts, recreation, and public administration, at 90% compared to 81%-86% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

Forks has a high concentration in retail trade at 18% compared to 11%-15%, arts and recreation at 16% compared to 8%-11%, and public administration at 20% compared to 4%-9% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US. Conversely, Forks has a very low representation in transportation and warehouse at 1% compared to 3%-6%, in finance and real estate at 2% compared to 4%-6%, and professional and scientific at 3% compared to 9%-15% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

Occupation

Forks has a very low 26% concentration of persons in managerial and professional occupations compared with 40%-47% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US; and 10% in production and transportation compared with 11%-13% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

	Clallam			
Occupation employed 16+	US	WA	Co	Forks
Managerial, professional	40%	47%	40%	26%
Service occupations	18%	15%	18%	29%
Sales, office occupations	21%	18%	22%	24%

Natural resource, const	9%	9%	9%	12%
Production, transport	13%	12%	11%	10%

Conversely, Forks has 29% concentration in service occupations compared with 15%-18% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US; and 24% in sales and office operations compared with 18%-22% in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US.

Income

Forks per capita income of \$25,564 is extremely low compared with Clallam County, Washington State, and the US of \$35,672-\$50,764. Forks median household income of \$42,080 is also significantly lower than \$54,712-\$91,306 in Clallam County, Washington State, and the US. Forks median family income of \$48,549 is significantly lower compared with Clallam County, Washington State, and the US of \$80,944-\$109,192.

	Clallam			
Income	US	WA	Co	Forks
Per capita	\$35,672	\$50,764	\$41,830	\$25,564
Median household	\$65,712	\$91,306	\$66,139	\$42,080
Median family	\$80,944	\$109,192	\$88,451	\$48,549

Poverty

Population in poverty	12.3%	10.0%	11.8%	24.6%
Over 65 in poverty	9.4%	9.3%	7.6%	22.9%
Female head families	24.1%	19.3%	13.5%	44.2%

Forks percent of the population in poverty of 24.6% is significantly higher than Clallam County, Washington State, and the US of 10.0%-12.3%. Forks' percent of persons over 65 years in poverty of 22.9% is also significantly higher than Clallam County, Washington State, and the US of 7.6%-9.4%. The percent of female headed families in Forks of 44.2% is even more significant than Clallam County, Washington State, and the US of 13.5%-24.1%.

Employers

Clallam Bay Corrections Center (CBCC) is located at Clallam Bay 25 miles north from Forks with an estimated staff of 400 professionals. Olympic Correction Center (OCC) is located within the Forks postal service area in Jefferson County 25 miles south of Forks with an estimated 107 staff and contractors.

Largest Employers in Forks	Total
Clallam Bay Corrections Center (CBCC)	400
Olympic Correction Center (OCC)	107
Forks Community Hospital	283
Quillayute School District	170

In Forks, the largest local government employers include the Forks Community Hospital with 283 staff, and the Forks School District with 170 staff.

Population and employment allocations

Clallam County issued 2024 Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) for population, housing, and employment allocations for urban growth areas based on the impacts of Housing Bills HB 1220 and Climate HB 1181.

Employment	2022	2045	Growth	% total	% rate
Forks					
Total UGAs					
Rural					
County total					

Clallam County is expected to increase employment from _____ jobs in 2022 to _____ jobs by 2045 or by _____ additional jobs or by ____%. At least 95.1% of the employment increase is allocated to occur in urban growth areas (UGAs) in the county including Forks which is allocated to increase from 391 jobs in 2022 to 506 jobs in 2045 or by 115 additional jobs or 29.4% equaling 0.6% of all county jobs by 2045.

Goals and policies

ECON GOAL 1 - Increase economic activity in areas specifically designated for business, commercial, industrial, and mixed uses.

ECON Policy 1.1 - Develop and implement a long-term strategy to recreate lost family wage jobs associated with recent mill closures.

ECON Policy 1.2 - Determine potential manufacturing sectors that could readily adapt, or with some minor investment re-purpose the existing infrastructure at the industrial park.

ECON GOAL 2 - Provide adequate infrastructure necessary to support economic development.

ECON Policy 2.1 - Plan and improve Quillayute Airport including all utilities, roads, and other improvements.

ECON Policy 2.2 - Continue to ensure that the Forks community has access to the necessary telecommunications and technology infrastructure essential for modern business.

ECON Policy 2.3 - Plan and construct a 1,000,000-gallon water storage tank and water storage capacity at the Forks Industrial Park.

ECON Policy 2.4 - Operate and maintain a solution for wastewater and sludge treatment.

ECON GOAL 3 - Responsibly manage and protect the natural environment and utilize renewable resources for long-term, sustainable economic development.

ECON Policy 3.1 - Make environmental protection a business opportunity by marketing Forks' pristine environment as an ideal location for conducting environmental research.

ECON Policy 3.2 - Encourage expansion of agriculture and farmers' markets, particularly for local products.

ECON Policy 3.3 - Work with Clallam County to develop storm water management plans to assist future development.

ECON Policy 3.4 - Meet or exceed Clean Air and Clean Water goals established by applicable state and federal entities.

ECON GOAL 4 - Become a community of creative solutions where government, education, and business recognize, appreciate, and adopt an entrepreneurial spirit.

ECON Policy 4.1 - Encourage and assist entrepreneurial efforts.

ECON Policy 4.2 - Provide businesses help in determining the type of assistance needed (i.e., business counseling, planning, financing, marketing, employee concerns, training, etc.) and provide the assistance or facilitate the delivery of assistance from other resources such as the Small Business Development Center, SCORE.

ECON GOAL 5 - Actively support tourism, recreational, cultural, heritage, and social activities as a significant element in expanding employment opportunities.

ECON Policy 5.1 - Assist with the marketing, promotion, operation, of tourism-related and other special event enhancement program and project coordination.

ECON GOAL 6 - Establish and maintain productive communication and outreach relationships to improve economic development efforts and effectiveness.

ECON Policy 6.1 - Support the Quillayute Valley Park & Recreation District's (QVP&RD) community center and aquatic center development and operations.

ECON Policy 6.2 - Support Chamber of Commerce efforts to expand and recruit new businesses.

ECON Policy 6.3 - Support coordinated efforts in the West End aimed at business innovation, retention, and expansion. Actively participate in Clallam County EDC initiatives relevant to all other plan elements areas as they arise.

ECON Policy 6.4 - Support University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University (WSU) efforts, studies, and other actions and participate in projects with UW and WSU, or other entities, that have relevance to Forks economic development.

ECON Policy 6.5 - Participate in committees and develop coalitions with entities whose missions relate to economic development initiatives to include local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, as well as private organizations.

ECON GOAL 7 - Develop regulations that effectively promote economic development.

ECON Policy 7.1 - Review laws, policies and procedures affecting rural economic development.

ECON Policy 7.2 - Represent area economic development interest and needs before government bodies, agencies, and regional economic development organizations.

ECON Policy 7.3 - Communicate economic development efforts.

ECON GOAL 8 - Monitor and improve the accountability and performance of actions related to economic development.