



CHEHALIS COMMUNITY
RENAISSANCE TEAM

IMPACT UPDATE

2021



About Us

We are built for resilience, effectiveness, vibrancy, and change. We leverage local assets and through a network of engagement and resourcefulness, create programs and activities that support Chehalis and foster a healthy community. CCRT is an investment in our shared past, present, and future.

MISSION

We cultivate relationships and celebrate community to deliver a more vibrant Chehalis

VISION

Chehalis is a more prosperous, attractive, and inclusive community for all

VALUES

- Intentionality: High quality and sustainable programs and services
- Ethics: Outstanding quality of life and quality of place for all residents
- Integrity: Strong connection to supporting local businesses, artists, and endeavors
- Dynamism: Vibrant local economy and thriving regional destination
- Innovation: Unique community projects and contributions that serve a purpose



Overview: Chehalis Community Renaissance Team

The Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT) is a non-profit organization offering the opportunity for citizen volunteers to put a permanent positive stamp on the Chehalis community. Much has been accomplished since the Chehalis Renaissance Plan was officially adopted by the Chehalis City Council in 2009. This multi-year, community-wide effort includes projects and initiatives focused on community promotion, economic development, quality design, and downtown development. The CCRT is tasked with accomplishing the goals outlined in the plan through voluntary leadership, broad community participation, and using disciplined project management. Specifically, our goals include:

- Making the Chehalis area a more attractive place in which to live and raise a family
- Enhancing job opportunities and the involvement of youth, so more high school and college graduates choose to live in the area
- Increasing tourism to support local retailers, hotels, and restaurants
- Increasing retail business to enhance local shopping

CCRT is an active participant in Washington State's Main Street Program. The program is organized under Washington State's Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation and supports community efforts in developing strategies to stimulate long-term economic growth and civic pride within downtown communities. This program has provided CCRT with a successful approach and structure to carry out projects. Our director serves on the Washington State Main Street Advisory Board tasked with leading the development of the program at the state level. Through Main Street, we have gained valuable resources for project ideas, insight into relationship building with partners and businesses, forecasts and trends for local economic development, and the ability to participate in Main Street's B&O tax credit incentive program.



ECONOMIC VITALITY

- The Facade Improvement Grant Program, launched in 2017, has awarded 30 grants to local business and property owners. Eight grants were awarded in 2021. Each award funds 75% of facade improvement costs up to \$2,500. CCRT has leveraged over \$431,000 in building improvements downtown since the program's inception.
- The Digital Marketing Grant Program, launched in spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, provides matching funds to enhance downtown businesses' online presence. Nine grants have been awarded to date.
- The Community Priority Improvement Fund is offered to property owners with buildings in Chehalis recognized as deteriorated, dilapidated, unsafe, and/or obsolete. Two matching grants were awarded in 2021.
- Our coworking space, Chehalis Coworks enjoyed another year of membership growth during its third year in downtown Chehalis. CCRT manages Chehalis Coworks as a shared workspace for contractors, freelancers, remote workers, travelers, and business professionals. We currently host 28 renewing monthly members and 250+ community members who utilize daily/weekly rates and conference room rentals. High-speed fiber internet, a kitchen, conference room, outdoor courtyard, coffee/snacks, office supplies, and printer/copier are provided.
- Strengthening local economic partnerships, CCRT Executive Director, Annalee Tobey, was appointed to the Economic Alliance of Lewis County's Board of Directors in November.
- CCRT monitors vacancies downtown and hosts these opportunities on the website. At this time there are only two spaces currently available for sale/lease.



DESIGN



- Two new murals were installed in 2021 bringing more color and art into Chehalis. Murals were installed at the Chehalis Airport featuring our area's aviation history and a whimsical set of wings at M&K Town Store brings people into town to "selfie" with this new piece of art.
- Spring flowers were planted in Downtown Chehalis, partnering with Kaija's Garden & Pet and the City of Chehalis staff for the procurement, planting, and care of the flowers.
- Holiday decorations were expanded throughout the city this year purchasing new light strings, refurbishing pole mounts on Chehalis Ave. and Market Blvd., and purchasing new items for the "gingerbread house."
- The litter pick-up program was revived in 2021. Litter is picked up city-wide in high traffic areas year-round.
- The Color Chehalis! Activity Book for Kids was created and 2,750 copies were distributed. The book features a children's version of the historic downtown walking guide. Due to requests for more copies, the books will be reprinted in 2022.
- Seasonal photo displays were created to invite visitors to take a fun photo downtown. The display is installed outside Book 'N' Brush and the scenes rotate throughout the year.
- Development of a self-guided art tour to lead visitors to local art installations downtown began in 2021. This tour will launch in early spring 2022 when weather improves.



PROMOTION

- The Experience Chehalis website is consistently updated promoting Chehalis' options to eat, stay, and play. The site has listings for all Chehalis retail shops, restaurants, lodging options, and attractions. It features itineraries, a calendar of events, and business resources to support local businesses.
- The Choose Local First campaign brings awareness to our local businesses, boosts our local economy, and fosters civic pride. Social media campaigns, blog posts, and radio ads support this effort.
- The Experience Chehalis Facebook page is actively managed with over 15,000 likes and the more recently launched Experience Chehalis Instagram has over 1,200 followers.

- Feature stories/blog posts promote special events and opportunities to experience Chehalis. We contract with a professional writer for stories.
- The Experience Chehalis brochure was produced for local distribution to lodging operators, attractions, and businesses.
- The 12-page Historic Downtown Chehalis Walking Tour guide was distributed leading visitors to local historic sites.
- New 5x7 in. Chehalis promotional cards were distributed across Chehalis featuring visitor opportunities.
- A modified ChehalisFest was held in July. CCRT worked with local businesses to help promote a car show, beer garden, vendor fair, live bands, kids' area, and launched new scavenger hunts obtaining nearly 1,000 entries.
- Partnered with local businesses to create postcards featuring artwork and photography of local artists. Postcards will be offered to our businesses for purchase. Postcards will be available in early 2022.
- Featured Small Business Saturday Week and the holiday shopping season via a social media campaign, a small business scavenger hunt, and 4-part holiday blog series.
- Began working with consultants in November to update our brand including organization name, logo, and image. Planning launch of our exciting new image in March 2022!

IMPACT

Through a focus on placemaking, community engagement, and economic development, CCRT plays an important role in Chehalis creating a place where people can thrive. Quality-of-life programming and partnerships are aimed at social cohesion, development, and design to support a healthy local community.

We are all about people. CCRT fosters interpersonal connections, and this type of "social capital" generates stronger community ties and strengthens partnerships across our community. Our programs play a significant role in helping to create a sense of community connection, identity, and pride; and a safe, vibrant, and inclusive Chehalis.

Our structure, volunteer core, and strong community partnerships have allowed us to move forward with our efforts with vigor and determination. We look forward to more success in 2022 accomplishing new programs, activities, and providing strategic and thoughtful support to our Chehalis community.



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