



For Immediate Release

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TOWN OF DARRINGTON ANNOUNCES NEW WOOD INNOVATION CENTER

The Town of Darrington today announced plans to develop the Darrington Wood Innovation Center, a campus that will house and attract new wood fiber-based innovation and manufacturing companies. The Center will include companies building or manufacturing mass timber, cross laminated timber (CLT) and modular housing.

“Darrington has deep roots in the timber industry going back for generations,” said Darrington Mayor Dan Rankin. “Wood has been an integral part of our community and through mass timber will continue to be part of our future. The Darrington Wood Innovation Center will create new, innovative jobs that embody the spirit of our community. By bringing mass timber and CLT production to Darrington, the new Center will continue to make possible a livelihood that allows folks to live, work and play in this incredible place we call home.”

This development addresses town officials’ long-term goals to reinvigorate the local economy after the 2014 Oso/SR 530 mudslide and bring innovative wood technology jobs to the community, affirming its identity as a timber town.

Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers has strongly supported this project, providing tools and strategic guidance through the grant and permitting phases.

“Snohomish County is known for its innovative spirit,” said Executive Somers. “After the devastation of the SR 530 slide, the Stilly Valley brought that spirit to all its efforts to build a more resilient and sustainable economy. Our partnership with Darrington, Forterra and the State of Washington will

transform how towns utilize natural resources to create jobs for the future. I would like to thank Mayor Rankin for his steadfast leadership in this effort that will benefit our entire region for generations. As we travel our road to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to shape our future by pursuing innovative ideas across Snohomish County.”

Darrington officials identified a site for the Center northwest of the town. The Town of Darrington will install the required utility, environmental and road infrastructure on the site. Forterra NW, a Washington-based nonprofit, then will help develop the site and manage the construction of the Wood Innovation Center buildings that, in turn, will be leased to the manufacturing companies.

On Thursday, July 16, the Town of Darrington received a \$2 million award from the State of Washington Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), a critical piece of funding to support site acquisition and infrastructure work. The Town of Darrington and Forterra also were awarded a series of grants to support early due diligence and conceptual planning of the project, including from the Governor’s Strategic Reserve Fund.

“It’s great to see public dollars, including our state CERB funds, supporting a proactive community with an innovative project, especially in a challenging time like this,” said Lisa Brown, director of the Washington State Department of Commerce.

The Strong Communities Fund, a social impact investment vehicle managed by Forterra, will be the primary equity investor in the Center’s buildings. Design architecture firm, Mithūn, and leading timber structural engineering group, Aspect, also are supporting development of the Center. Darrington Wood Innovation Center LLC, which is owned by the Strong Communities Fund, will design and construct the onsite buildings to suit future wood innovation tenants.

The Town currently is finalizing funding for the infrastructure work. Groundbreaking is expected in 2021.

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ABOUT TOWN OF DARRINGTON

Darrington, a small mountain town in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, stands where two rivers once joined in a valley between the Sauk and the Stillaguamish rivers. Today, the town has about 1,405 residents and serves another 1,200 people in the surrounding areas. The primary economy is still the timber industry; however, Darrington is also using its unique location near the Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness to promote recreation as a strong force in the local economy. Learn more at: www.townofdarrington.com.

ABOUT SNOHOMISH COUNTY

Snohomish County is the third largest county in the State of Washington by population and is home to the largest manufacturing facility in the world. Snohomish County is also a top tourist destination. From the waves of Puget Sound to the ice fields of Glacier Peak, Snohomish County has diverse ecosystems, while also being home to a thriving agriculture industry and dynamic urban centers. Learn more at: www.snohomishcountywa.gov.

ABOUT FORTERRA

Forterra is a Washington-based nonprofit that enhances, supports, and stewards the region's most precious resources—its communities and its ecosystems. Forterra conserves land, develops innovative policies, and supports sustainable rural and urban development. In its 30-year history, Forterra has helped conserve more than 250,000 acres, with its work stretching from the farmlands and river canyons of Yakima to the estuaries and forests of Washington's coastline. Visit www.Forterra.org.