

Who: Petaluma Businesses, including retailers, artists, specialty food processors, lodging, restaurants and non-profits.  
What: Petaluma Economic Strategy Focus Group Meeting  
When: **Tuesday, Feb. 23 @ 3PM to 5PM**  
Where: Petaluma Community Center, 320 N. McDowell Blvd in the Crafts Room #1  
Why: Address the needs of business in Petaluma and the North Bay.

The focus group will be facilitated by Ms. Kathryn Studwell, Senior Associate with Applied Development Economics, Inc. Ms. Studwell has nearly 30 years experience working with business and community leaders to re-invigorate local and regional economies.

Some of the topics to be discussed:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages to owning a business in Petaluma?
- What communities compete with Petaluma retail? Relative to these other communities, how "business friendly" is Petaluma?
- What is Petaluma's role in the broader North Bay economy?
- What are Petaluma's advantages as a place to do business? What needs to happen to sustain or build on those advantages?
- What gets in the way of business growth and expansion in Petaluma?
- What occupational categories are in shortest supply; where is the greatest need?
- Which cities or communities are attractive as business locations? Would they be viable locations for your business?
- What is attractive about them? How does Petaluma compare with them in terms of "business friendliness."
- What 2 or 3 things can the City do to support expansion of your firms?
  
- How does the current mix of business contribute to Petaluma's identity?
- How are retail, the arts, the food industry and tourism all connected?
- How do these linkages contribute to the Petaluma brand?

At the request of the City Council, Petaluma hired Applied Development Economics (ADE) to prepare an economic development strategy. As part of its research, ADE is conducting a series of group interviews and public focus groups with business and industry. The purpose of these interviews and focus groups is to inform the process of developing an action plan for the City's economic development program. We want to better understand opportunities for business growth and expansion and how public policies can support that growth.

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