

## LANE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

April 8, 2024

(LEC meetings are held on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Monday** of each month)

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81960005925?pwd=ubqber6377zn0i3kDuyApxjMDh00Ge.1>

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Meeting ID: 819 6000 5925

Passcode: 157497

*All individuals are expected to observe respectful behavior and decorum during this public meeting. Please be courteous and respectful.*

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|---|-------|
| <b>1. Welcome / Introductions / Changes to the Agenda</b>   | 11:30 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>2. Public Comment</b>  | 11:35 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>3. Comments from Members, Chair, and Staff</b>   | 11:40 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>4. Review Minutes from February 12, 2024</b>   | 11:45 |
| Presenter: Greg Ervin   |       |
| <b>Action Item:</b> Approve minutes.  |       |
| <b>5. Local Workforce Development Board Local Plan</b>  | 11:50 |
| Presenter(s): Cindy Perry – Lane Workforce Partnership  |       |
| CEDS Priorities: 1 – Regional Collaboration and Partnerships, 4 – Workforce Support, 5 – Rural Vitality |       |
| <b>6. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update</b>                                     | 12:10 |
| Presenter(s): Justice Peterson – Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments                            |       |
| CEDS Priorities: All  |       |

#### **Next Meeting Dates:**

- May 12, 2024
- June 10, 2024

**April 8, 2024**  
**Lane Economic Committee (LEC)**  
**Agenda Item Summaries**

**ITEM 5: Local Workforce Development Board Local Plan**

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The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each local Workforce Development Board to complete a Local Plan every four years. This item presents the 2024-28 Local Plan consisting of two general categories, a strategic portion and an operational portion. Plans from across the state will be presented to the Governor for approval in June. The link below takes you to the full plan:

[Lane Workforce Development Board 2024 – 2028 Local Plan](#)

Local Plans should align with the vision, mission, and imperatives of the Oregon Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) which are:

**Vision:** Equitable Prosperity for All Oregonians

**Mission:** Advance Oregon through education, training, jobs and careers by empowering people and employers.

**Imperatives:**

- An inclusive workforce system that advances equitable prosperity.
- Clear understanding of and improved use and impact of the workforce system.
- The WTDB is embraced by the Governor as an accountable convener, empowered facilitator, and informed advisor.
- Strategic and close alignment between education, economic development, and workforce development, including public and private partners.

**ITEM 6: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update**

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The LEC will review the draft process for the CEDS update to be presented to the Cascades West Economic Development District Board on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

Lane Economic Committee (LEC)  
Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), Fifth Floor Conference Room  
859 Willamette Street -- Eugene (Hybrid meeting via Zoom)

February 12, 2024  
11:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Greg Ervin; Chair (City of Cottage Grove / Government), Mike Eyster; (LCC), Mark Bodie; (Business/Finance), Paul Berger; (Business), Jenna Cusimano; (Lane County / Government), Cindy Perry; (Business / Labor), Larissa Ennis (University of Oregon), Faye Stewart; (Public Works / Cottage Grove), Jacob Thode; (City of Veneta).

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Anne Fifield; Vice Chair (City of Eugene), Jeremy Caudle; (City of Lowell / Government), Chantelle Meyer; (Economic Development), Kari Westlund; (Travel Lane County), Allie Camp; (City of Springfield / Government), Jake Clifton; (Business).

**STAFF:** Sandra Easdale; (LCOG Staff), Denise Walters: (LCOG Staff), Diana Pamir Tisdale: (LCOG Mintues), Justin Peterson; (Oregon Cascades West).

**GUESTS:** Jacob Callister; (LCOG), Keith Testerman; (LCOG), Michael Wisth; (LCOG), Paula Taylor; (LCOG),

**1. Welcome/Introductions / Changes to the Agenda**

Chair Ervin called the LEC meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. Introductions were made, and a quorum was established. There were no changes made to the agenda.

**2. Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

**3. Comments from the Members, Chair, & Staff**

Ms. Walters said tours to view the Connected Lane County Spark facility were still being organized. She suggested designating a few minutes at the end of this meeting to discuss viable dates for interested members. The Lane Education Service District (Lane ESD) successfully obtained \$500,000 for their manufacturing pathways program. The Lane ESD Grow Your Own Educator Program received a Meyer Memorial Trust Grant.

Ms. Cusimano said a Small Business Administration Assistance Program had opened up in the aftermath of the recent ice storm in Lane County. She noted that the program offered low-rate loans to small business owners. Representatives from Lane County would give presentations about the program at the Cottage Grove Public Library, Springfield City Hall, and Public Service Building in Eugene.

Ms. Perry said the Local Strategic Plan for Lane Workforce Partnership was open for public comment and the public comment period would close in one week.

**4. Review Minutes from January 8, 2024**

Ms. Walters made the following amendments to the January 8, 2024, meeting minutes:

- Chantelle Meyer was listed as absent but was present.
- Nicole Desch was listed as absent but was present.

**MOTION:** Mr. Eyster moved, seconded by Ms. Perry to approve the January 8, 2024, LEC meeting minutes with amendments. The motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Lane County Regional Broadband Update**

Mr. Callister gave a regional broadband update.

He began by saying that fast and reliable internet allowed businesses to operate seamlessly, access data solutions, and make smarter decisions. It also created opportunities for business growth, made remote work possible, and powered education. Broadband access and adoption in rural areas was linked to increased jobs and population, a higher percentage of business formation, an increase in home values, and lower unemployment rates.

The Cascades West Economic Development District’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – 2020 to 2025 identified the following:

- The COVID Pandemic highlighted the need for access to high-speed internet, particularly in rural areas.
- A lack of broadband made remote work and education difficult during the pandemic.
- A lack of internet access contributed to increased disparities in prosperity in the Cascades West region and beyond.
- Infrastructure Resilience was listed as a priority.

### LCOG and Broadband

- LCOG staffed and administered the Regional Fiber Consortium (RFC) and staffed the Public Agency Network (PAN).
- LCOG owned and operated an interconnection facility called Park Place Interconnect. This facility consisted of 23 leasable cabinets that provided a space where internet providers, carriers, could interconnect.
- LCOG was involved with broadband planning and mapping and provided support for state and federal programs.

The following is a list of regional entities directly coordinating broadband-related issues:

- PAN
- RFC
- Lincoln, Linn, Benton, Lane Broadband Action Team (BAT)
- Willamette Internet Exchange (Non-profit)
- Lane Radio Interoperability Group (LRIG)
- EUGnet (Eugene’s Downtown Fiber System)
- US Ignite (Eugene / Springfield Smart Cities Steering Committees (Non-profit))
- Park Place Interconnect, RIS Data Center, Oregon Hall

### A Brief History of Broadband in Lane County

- Broadband was installed in the Pacific Northwest in the late 1990’s / early 2000’s.
- Local agencies began to build fiber networks in the early 2000’s and the PAN was formed for cohesion.
- The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) funded the construction of the Willamette Internet Exchange which connected many anchor institutions.

- Mid 2010's – A way to connect internet service providers (ISPs) wanting to connect to outside markets using an alternative to the incumbent was established.
- EUGnet emerged in late 2010.
- The EUGnet project allowed for the expansion of the Willamette Internet Exchange, which became Park Place Interconnect.
- A regional broadband strategic scoping process took place in late 2010.
- Appreciation for broadband as a requirement for a functioning society took place during the global pandemic in 2020.
- Historic funding programs emerged from the pandemic in the early to mid-2020's.

#### Current Regional Broadband Strategic Planning

Regional planning dollars were utilized for:

##### Phase One

- Baseline Characterization
  - FCC Mapping (Characterize Broadband Landscapes)
- Funding Strategy
  - Project Identification and Funding Alignment

##### Phase Two

- Funding Response (Partner ID, App Preparation)
- Regional Coordination
  - Asset Management, Mapping and Documentation, Dig Once

The following Vision and Goals were presented to the Lane County Board of Directors in the fall of 2021:

##### The Vision

Maximized outside funding secured by Lane County agencies and partners addressing unmet local needs for affordable, resilient, high-speed internet connectivity across Lane County.

##### The Goals

- Broadband should be available and affordable.
- Broadband should be reliable and resilient.
- Broadband should be fast.

##### Tactics to Achieve the Goals

- Invest in Open Access Fiber Infrastructure
- Strategically Partner with Private Sector
- Modernize Existing Infrastructure
- Construct New Runs to Underserved Communities
- Grow and Strengthen Interconnection Facilities
- Incentivize and Attract a Multitude of Broadband Providers
- Having a Good Strategy in Place for Capturing Data and Analytics

On February 2, 2024, LCOG, in partnership with Lane County, applied to receive funding from the Oregon Broadband Technical Assistance Program. This funding could be utilized for broadband staffing and strategic planning. Both agencies were also in pursuit of receiving funds from the ARPA Capital Projects Fund.

An assessment of existing broadband conditions determined that it would be in the best interest of the Lane County public sector to partner with private sector ISPs. Any potential partnership should align public interests with private interests in the following categories:

- Public Good
- Geography
- Service Expectations
- Elements of Open Access
- Goal Alignment
- Capability
- Profit

The criteria for such partnerships should include compatibility with LCOG’s broadband vision, goals, and tactics, and compatibility with grant scoring criteria for federal funds. The main focus of potential partnerships was to bring broadband to the underserved and unserved areas of Lane County. LCOG identified four focus areas within Lane County and released a request for proposals (RFP) seeking ISPs in the area to help bring broadband to rural areas. Mr. Callister noted that the ARPA Capital Projects Fund would not solve every broadband problem across the state or even within Lane County. Seven local ISPs responded to the LCOG RFP, and an evaluation committee selected an ISP partner. Partnership negotiations were underway.

Mr. Callister noted that most of the current LCOG projects had focused on infrastructure thus far. The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program would distribute 42 billion dollars nationally, and 700 million dollars of that would go to Oregon. Funding for this program would be administered by the Oregon Broadband Office. LCOG had been in frequent communication with this office to better understand the BEAD Program and get prepared to apply for the funds.

#### Oregon BEAD Five-year Action Plan

The state’s primary goals for broadband deployment were aligned with the principal focus of the BEAD Program:

1. Connecting 100 percent of unserved locations.
2. Connecting 100 percent of underserved locations.
3. Delivering gigabit connections to community anchor institutions (CAI) that do not have an adequate level of service.

#### Objectives

- Promote Public Sector, Private Sector, and Cooperative Broadband Solutions
- Support and Promote Local and Regional Broadband Planning
- Promote Digital Literacy, Equity, and Inclusion
- Generate Public Awareness of the Value of Broadband Technologies and Applications
- Promote Adoption and Utilization of Broadband Technologies and Applications

The BEAD Program involved a “challenge” that required entities to verify broadband data so that an accurate national broadband map could be developed to represent broadband service across the country. LCOG was formulating their strategy for participating in this challenge.

Mr. Testerman said regarding the BEAD Program, Oregon had been tasked with serving every underserved or unserved address with BEAD money, which would be a difficult challenge to accomplish. That was why having an accurate broad map of the region was crucial to the program’s success.

Mr. Berger said his office was located in the Valley River Center area of Eugene and his internet service cost twice as much as it did when his office was located downtown, despite having less speed. He asked about EWEB’s fiber infrastructure.

Mr. Testerman said as a fiber provider, EWEB’s was tasked with primarily serving their electrical grid. Their initial buildouts primarily gave anchor institutions the connectivity and resiliency they needed to perform their daily operations, but they had extra capacity, which was available to lease to private entities. However, just because fiber was close to a specific location, did not mean that a private entity would utilize it to serve a customer. EWEB’s fiber was typically utilized by entities setting up distribution nodes that served using their own fiber to last mile connections.

Mr. Callister said Lane County was on the cusp of having a lot of competition in the urban areas. The RFC would hopefully continue to leverage making viable fiber alternatives a possibility.

Mr. Berger said his office park only offered one ISP; they were expensive, and the service was slow. Four miles away, his CEO had much faster speeds in a residential neighborhood.

Mr. Testerman said that LCOG shared the same concerns as Mr. Berger regarding those types of issues in the metro area but noted that the available funding mechanisms were almost 100 percent dedicated to rural applications.

Mr. Berger said a long time ago, there was a lot of talk about Oakridge being in the center of three big regional circles.

Mr. Callister said that Oakridge was primed and ready. They were located on an off ramp along a major fiber route, and they had connectivity. They already had good wireless internet. The next step would be to convert the wireless to fiber.

Mr. Testerman said the funding that was available at the time when connecting anchor institutions, i.e., schools, and hospitals, connected to better internet was a priority, Oakridge was discretely connecting. There were several laterals created with partners to serve high value targets in a community. Since those were already served, there was less desire for ISPs to build a full rollout in Oakridge now. The difference between those funds and the new funds coming out was that new funds were specifically for residences.

Ms. Walters asked if the priority was getting affordable service to the underserved and unserved.

Mr. Testerman said there was a unique problem among the funding mechanisms in that the scoring for how much it costs to deliver service initially, or build the broadband infrastructure, was the primary focus of the point scoring. Getting more people served was the priority as opposed to serving more people affordably.

Mr. Berger asked if LCOG was initiating any outreach to help people understand why they should want broadband.

Mr. Callister said LCOG did not have an outreach campaign for their broadband efforts at this time.

## **6. LCOG Loan Program Overview**

Ms. Easdale introduced herself as the Loan Program Manager at LCOG and noted that LCOG had been doing business lending since 1971. The goal of their loan program was to foster economic development by providing access to capital for small business owners for business start-ups, expansions, or their need for working capital. LCOG provided loans that traditional banks were not able to provide. To accomplish this, LCOG partnered with banks or credit unions on most of their projects. LCOG hoped to stimulate investments and create jobs with their loan program.

LCOG had loaned money to business throughout Lane County and had the ability to provide 504 loans statewide. LCOG had the ability to offer small business loans through their associations with the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Economic Development Administration. Working with these programs enabled LCOG to assist over 780 businesses and issue 98 million dollars in loans. The LCOG Loan Program created or retained over 9,616 jobs.

### LCOG Loan Program Main Eligibility Criteria

- Qualified Small Business Worth Less Than 15 Million Dollars
- Owner Occupied Real Estate and Equipment (51 Percent Owner Occupied Real Estate)
- Job Creation or Retention
  - Women Owned
  - Rural Areas
  - Veteran Owned
- Economic Policy Goals

### LCOG Loan Structures

- 50/40/10 or 50/35/15
- 80/10/10 or 75/10/15
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Lien Position
- 50,000 Dollars to 5,500,000 Dollars

Ms. Easdale noted that LCOG loans accepted secondary collateral. Most banks and credit unions did not want to take the full risk of loaning money to small businesses. Because LCOG had partnered with these institutions and shared part of the risk, it helped small businesses get approved for loans easier, thus reducing the cash flow, giving small businesses a lower interest rate, and reducing the risk for banks or credit unions.

The Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Economic Development Administration offered specified amounts of money to organizations like LCOG throughout the nation. They loaned organizations the money and in turn, the organizations loaned money to businesses in their community to alleviate poverty and boost the economy. CCD Business Development Corporation in Roseburg, Oregon assisted LCOG with administering 504 loans.

### LCOG Loan Benefits

- Low Competitive Interest Rates
- Fixed Rate Loans



- Lower Down Payment
- Improved Access to Capital
- Debt Refinance Allowed

A few examples of businesses that received loans from LCOG include the following:

- BMW of Eugene
- Ninkasi Brewing Company
- Hop Valley Brewing (Eugene and Springfield)
- Holte Manufacturing
- Cosmos Caramel Corn
- Cascade Home Center
- Creswell Veterinary Hospital
- BB&A Associates
- Coastal Fitness
- Hummingbird Wholesale

## **7. Adjournment**

Chair Ervin said the next LEC meeting would take place on March 11, 2024. He reminded members to respond to the survey requesting viable dates to tour the Connected Lane County Spark facility. He adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

*(Minutes recorded by Diana Pamir Tisdale)*



## Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships

**Description:** A regional economic development strategy is most effective when it considers and incorporates the interests and strengths of all jurisdictions in the region. By leveraging the strengths and capabilities of each county towards a wider economic strategy, the region can become more prosperous, resilient, and cohesive.

**CWEDD's Role:** As a regional coordinating body, the District is well positioned to facilitate collaboration. **Over the next five years,** the District will foster cross-regional relationships and seek to align efforts around regionally significant projects.

<b>Approaches</b> <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	<b>Implementation Ideas</b> <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Build relationships and collaboration through project-based regional initiatives.	Convene economic development practitioners from across the region quarterly or semi-annually to brainstorm, revise, and prioritize a list of regionally significant projects.
Integrate the priorities captured in the CEDS into existing local- and regional-scale initiatives.	<p>Economic development practitioners who are familiar with the CEDS should engage economic development practitioners who are new to the region or the CEDS in a CEDS overview/onboarding process.</p> <p>City and County economic development staff should deliver an annual CEDS overview and update to elected officials.</p>
Increase CWEDD's staff capacity so CWEDD can provide more support to regional initiatives.	<p>Seek funding to add at least 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff support position to CWEDD.</p> <p>Create a regional economic development organization chart that clearly identifies the linkages and roles of all economic development agencies in the CWEDD region (house on CWEDD website).</p>
Increase representation of currently underrepresented business, workforce, and education interests on the CWEDD Board and CEDS project working groups by including more perspectives from Tribes, Latino/a/x communities, Black communities, immigrant communities, rural communities, and low-income communities.	Review CWEDD Board representation and recruit new members that can speak to the perspectives of underrepresented groups, including but not limited to: Tribes, Latino/a/x communities, Black communities, immigrant communities, rural communities, and low-income communities.



## Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, cont.

### Approaches, cont.

*What will guide regional economic development?*

Invest in continuity of operations planning for all economic development support providers so these entities can continue providing response and recovery assistance post-shock.

Foster a coordinated approach to economic resilience and recovery planning efforts across the region.

### Implementation Ideas, cont.

*How can the strategies be implemented?*

Work with emergency managers to create inventories of local businesses capable of providing services, material, equipment, and workforce in the event of a disaster. Then develop pre-approved contracting with these businesses to allow for immediate access post-shock.

Ensure representation for business interests emergency preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery planning processes by requesting space on planning committees for economic development practitioners and business representatives.

Form economic recovery teams that include business representatives and convene regularly to create regional economic recovery plans.

Develop local recovery ordinance model language that jurisdictions can adopt.



## Priority Area 1: Regional Collaboration & Partnerships, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of cross- and multi-jurisdictional economic development projects

**Equity & Inclusion:** Representativeness of CWEDD Board & Working Groups

**Resilience:** Incorporation of resilience considerations into regional and local economic development strategies

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff across the region
- ❖ CWEDD Board
- ❖ Business Oregon
- ❖ Regional Solutions
- ❖ University of Oregon EDA University Center

### Key Considerations

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Representation** – by including and involving a more representative set of perspectives from the communities served by CWEDD in CWEDD committees and initiatives, economic development projects have a better chance of meeting the needs of everyone in our region, not just those who traditionally held the most power and influence over decision-making and resource allocation.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Internal Coordination** – economic development efforts in the CWEDD region have not been well coordinated in the past, leading to missed opportunities for collective impact. When we begin to align our efforts, collaborating around resources rather than competing over them, we can spread the benefits of economic development more broadly, building a region that is less vulnerable to economic downturns.

**External Communication** – lack of internal coordination leads to confusing, ineffective communication to businesses and workers. Increasing collaboration among economic development supporters will foster a more unified, streamlined message to the business community and our workforce, aiding our ability to respond quickly and effectively to economic crises.



## Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development

**Description:** Our region’s businesses are the beating heart of our economy. In order to thrive, the region must support and retain existing businesses while also cultivating new businesses that will help diversify our economy and generate job growth. With macro-level economic changes – from globalization to shifting market structures – the regional economy will require a continued influx of fresh energy from new and existing businesses.

**CWEDD’s Role:** The District has an opportunity to offer resources and coordination that will support local-level business retention and expansion efforts and entrepreneurial ecosystems builders. **Over the next five years**, the District will provide research capacity, serve as an information hub, and facilitate important connections between business support providers.

<b>Approaches</b> <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	<b>Implementation Ideas</b> <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
<p>Provide support to entrepreneurship and business retention and expansion efforts by serving as a clearing house for regional data and resources.</p>	<p>Create and promote a database of incubators, accelerators, capital sources, and business support services available in the region.</p> <p>Assist with identifying and pursuing funding that would increase capacity of business incubators and accelerators.</p> <p>Develop a business registration or tracking system that will allow the collection of more and better data about businesses’ needs.</p> <p>Establish a network of local and regional staff who can help businesses navigate through permitting and other processes.</p> <p>Develop and publicize educational opportunities about the advantages of international trade for regional businesses that are interested in expanding into new markets.</p>
<p>Facilitate connections between business development centers and business incubators and accelerators to create an obvious bridge of support between the start-up and growth phases of new businesses.</p> <p>Facilitate connections between educational institutions (both K-12 and higher education) and business incubators and accelerators to foster a culture of entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>Facilitate annual meetings with representatives from business development centers and incubators/accelerators to discuss the process referrals between support providers.</p> <p>Facilitate annual meetings with representatives from educational institutions to build connections between regional needs and academic course offerings.</p> <p>Organize a forum on regional innovation networking.</p>



## Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development, cont.

### Approaches, cont.

*What will guide regional economic development?*

Work to ensure that the demographics of business owners and entrepreneurs are representative of the race and gender distributions in the region.

Provide start-ups and existing businesses with resources and incentives to develop, test, and implement continuity of operations plans.

Develop emergency recovery revolving loan funds and other creative financing options before shocks so that businesses can immediately access financial assistance post-shock.

### Implementation Ideas, cont.

*How can the strategies be implemented?*

Assess the demographic distribution of business owners and entrepreneurs who are accessing services and develop or support programs specifically targeted to demographic groups that are underrepresented. Intentionally seek out grassroots efforts that may already be occurring to support these businesses and offer to collaborate.

Work with Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), incubators, and accelerators to develop low-effort business continuity of operations planning resources.

Discuss potential shocks, threats, disasters and risk reduction strategies at local chamber or business association “Lunch and Learn” events to encourage businesses to create continuity of operations plans.

Incentivize investments in business resilience for businesses that have business continuity plans (e.g. reduce business license fees; 1% reduction in property taxes (or other tax) for businesses that have an employee preparedness training program; expedite plan review for hazard retrofit/mitigation projects).

Utilize external funding (such as the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Community Development Block Grants) to leverage local funds for business-related mitigation activities.



## Priority Area 2: Sector Diversification Through Business Development

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of referrals between business support providers

**Equity & Inclusion:** Representativeness of business owner demographics

**Resilience:** Presence of continuity of operations plans

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Small Business Development Centers
- ❖ Oregon RAIN
- ❖ Chambers and other business associations

### Key Considerations

#### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Coordinated industry cluster development requires teamwork. Businesses within a cluster have supply chains and relationships that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Business development support is therefore most effective when it acknowledges the interconnected nature of industry clusters. Economic developers must work together across jurisdictional lines to support a regional business environment that supports the growth and expansion of key industries.

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access for existing businesses** – barriers to entry and promotion in business have been higher for some demographic groups than others, resulting in business ownership and leadership that is not representative of the general population.<sup>9</sup> Programs and policies targeted at supporting groups that are underrepresented in business ownership and leadership will help bring representation back into balance.

**Access for entrepreneurs** – start-ups require significant upfront resources and are more likely to gain traction if the entrepreneurs can leverage relevant social and investor networks. Some demographic groups and entrepreneurs in rural areas may have more limited access to resources and networks. When economic developers work specifically to assist underrepresented groups, they create a more representative pipeline of new business owners.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Diversification of industries** – encouraging business growth, particularly growth into new sectors, will help the region weather shocks by ensuring the region does not have “all of its eggs in one basket.”

**Pre-disaster planning for response & continuity** – encouraging and supporting the development of continuity of operations plans for businesses will better prepare businesses to withstand shocks.

**Internal Coordination** –facilitating connections between incubators, accelerators, and traditional business development support providers will lead to a better alignment of resources.

<sup>9</sup> In 2018, 11% of Oregon’s small businesses (businesses with fewer than 500 employees, which make up 99.4% of all Oregon businesses) were minority-owned, according to the [2018 Small Business Profile](#) from the US Small Business Administration. In 2019, 25% of Oregon’s population was not white alone and not Hispanic or Latino (American Community Survey, 2019: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data, Table DP05).



## Priority Area 3: Infrastructure Resilience

**Description:** Large infrastructure projects, particularly those of regional significance, often exceed the capacity and technical expertise of local municipalities. Further, they often involve multiple partners, public-private partnerships, complex regulatory systems, and strategic stakeholder engagement. In order to effectively achieve needed infrastructure improvements in the region, technical support will be required.

**CWEDD’s Role:** The District is uniquely positioned to support regional infrastructure projects. **Over the next five years**, the District will provide technical assistance and connect specific projects with other resources (e.g. Regional Solutions Teams, University-based programs, state and federal agency partners, etc.).

<b>Approaches</b> <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	<b>Implementation Ideas</b> <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Identify and prioritize projects of regional importance that will (1) improve quality of place for residents and (2) increase diversity and redundancy in the region’s infrastructure (particularly critical infrastructure related to transportation, energy, communications, and fuel).	Survey regional partners annually to develop a project list and convene a conversation about how to ensure these projects support resilience and are coordinated across the region.  Work with property owners and businesses located within hazard zones to develop strategies to harden, elevate, re-locate or otherwise mitigate / prevent damage from natural hazards.  Encourage local practitioners to support the update of the economic development sections of comprehensive plans by encouraging resilience considerations for employment land.
Coordinate regional efforts to expand broadband availability in areas with the least access.	Increase collaboration around broadband development by convening regional economic development practitioners to discuss efforts and share resources.
Incorporate equity assessments during infrastructure planning to ensure the benefits and potential negative impacts of development are equitably distributed across the population.	Develop an equity checklist to apply during project planning; the checklist can help identify project shortcomings and encourage modifications that will lead to a more equitable distribution of impacts.
Promote available services and funding sources that can be accessed via CWEDD to support infrastructure development.	Create a section on the CWEDD Website to list current funding opportunities for local jurisdictions that includes grant deadlines, eligibility information, and connections to current and planned projects.
Increase the capacity and resources available to support grant writing and technical project development for infrastructure projects.	Create a section on the CWEDD Website to serve as a library of past funding applications that be used as a resource for developing successful new funding applications.  Increase staff time at COGs dedicated to helping with preparing funding applications and providing technical assistance on infrastructure project development.







## Priority Area 3: Infrastructure Resilience, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of cross- or multi-jurisdictional infrastructure projects

**Equity & Inclusion:** Presence of projects explicitly considering equity

**Resilience:** Presence of projects explicitly considering resilience and redundancy

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Business Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

### Key Considerations

#### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Although many infrastructure projects occur at a local scale, it is always important to consider regional connections, particularly when planning for diversity and redundancy. By keeping a finger on the pulse of many local projects, economic development practitioners can encourage regional considerations during conversations about infrastructure development.

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access** – research shows that lower-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the negative externalities of infrastructure development (like pollution from industrial development and displacement by highway construction), while these same communities don’t always see the full benefits of projects.<sup>10</sup> Considering equity during the planning process for infrastructure projects can help mitigate these trends. It is also important to remember that equitable benefit is different than equal benefit – to address past discrimination and lack of access, some projects will require more investment in some communities compared to others.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Infrastructure redundancy and resiliency** – focusing on projects that create redundant infrastructure (back-up systems that will take over if the primary system fails) and resilient infrastructure (systems that can withstand disruption for either natural or human-created incidents) will put CWEDD in a strong position to bounce back quickly from disruption.

**Equitable access** – developing broadband and other critical infrastructure in underserved communities will uplift areas that have suffered economically because they lacked access to high-quality essential services.

**Internal Coordination** –working collectively across the region to identify important projects will ensure a more coordinated and collaborative approach to seeking funding.

<sup>10</sup> Glover Blackwell, Angela and Anita Cozart. “How Smart, Targeted Infrastructure Investment Can Pave the Way for an Equitable Nation.” Urban Institute, 1/23/18. <https://www.urban.org/infrastructure/how-smart-targeted-infrastructure-investment-can-pave-way-equitable-nation>



## Priority Area 4: Workforce Support

**Description:** Many businesses in the region report that they are struggling to find qualified employees for a range of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled positions, in part because of training, and in part because of livability factors like lack of affordable housing options. There is also an ongoing need to support existing workforce training efforts and to coordinate and align the efforts of the various Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) in the region.

**CWEDD’s Role:** Over the next five years, the District will help link education, training, apprenticeships, and career planning to the employment needs of existing and emerging business sectors. The District will also advocate for policies that will help enhance workers’ quality of life.

<b>Approaches</b> <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	<b>Implementation Ideas</b> <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Support deliberate coordination between businesses, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and educational institutions to help identify and provide for current employer needs.	Facilitate annual meetings between representatives from educational institutions, WIBs, and key business sectors to (1) identify current and predicted workforce skill needs and (2) consider curriculum changes that will support the development of these skills.  Partner with local workforce development programs, including WIBs, to increase participation of local businesses in apprenticeships, internships and On-The-Job-Training programs, in order to build pathways to employment for persons entering the workforce.
Attract and retain younger talent by promoting the region’s livability and access to exceptional nature and outdoor recreation opportunities.	Work with Destination Marketing Organizations to prepare marketing material specifically geared towards attracting new workers to the area and demonstrating the region’s benefits to recent graduates.
Investigate and support policies and projects that will increase the availability of affordable housing, affordable transportation options, the quality and accessibility of recreation, access to broadband, access to healthcare, and other factors that enhance quality of life.	Encourage practitioners to participate in discussions at the local and county levels related to affordable housing, transportation, recreation, and healthcare access – ask to have representation for economic development practitioners and business representatives on committees and working groups.  Work with statewide economic development groups like the Oregon Economic Development Association (OEDA) and Oregon’s Economic Development Districts (OEDD) to have a state and national lobbying presence advocating for policies that will increase the availability of and access to affordable housing, transportation, recreation, health care, and broadband.





## Priority Area 4: Workforce Support, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Level of coordination between EDOs and WIBs

**Equity & Inclusion:** Percentage of cost-burdened households

**Resilience:** Level of coordination between education/worker-training programs and businesses

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Workforce Investment Boards
- ❖ K-12 & higher education representatives
- ❖ Local & county planning staff

### Key Considerations

#### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are critical economic development partners. The CWEDD region overlaps with three different WIBs, making regional coordination particularly important. CWEDD can play a role in aligning the efforts of our region's WIBs with the needs of our businesses and the capacity of our educational institutions.

#### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access** – many residents in the CWEDD region struggle to stay afloat amid high living costs. With economic inequality on the rise,<sup>11</sup> CWEDD must support efforts to ensure residents have options for earning a living wage and affordable access to housing, transportation, recreation, broadband, and health care. Making headway on these issues will play a key role in reducing economic inequality.

#### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Workforce flexibility** – pushing for more strategic connections between our workforce development sector and our educational institutions will help better align the skills of our workers with the needs of our businesses. By better aligning efforts, we give our workforce an appropriate and transferrable skill that will allow the region to pivot quickly into new sectors as our economy adapts to new technology and consumer demands.

**Equitable access** – supporting policies that ensure basic needs are met (like access to affordable housing and high-speed internet) removes stressors from the lives of our workers, allowing them to focus their energy on contributing to our region's businesses.

**Internal Coordination** – in part because of the mis-aligned geographies of WIBs and EDDs, our region has sometimes struggled to coordinate efforts related to workforce development. By intentionally focusing on building stronger coordination between WIBs and other economic development practitioners, we can create a more coherent system of support for our region's workforce.

<sup>11</sup> Hauser, Daniel and Juan Carlos Ordóñez. "Income Inequality in Oregon Notched New Record Prior to COVID-19 Crisis." Oregon Center for Public Policy, 10/1/20. <https://www.ocpp.org/2020/10/01/income-inequality-oregon-new-record/>



## Priority Area 5: Rural Vitality

**Description:** Rural communities have unique economic strengths and challenges. While training and educational opportunities exist in the region, distance and other challenges can prevent rural communities from accessing those services. Lack of basic services can make rural areas less attractive to prospective residents and employers. Therefore, ensuring equitable access to basic services for residents and businesses in rural areas is a critical strategic opportunity.

**CWEDD's Role:** As a regional body that can work with Counties and other districts that cover unincorporated areas and smaller towns, the District plays an important role in directing resources towards rural areas. **Over the next five years**, the District will advocate for high-quality service provision to rural areas and support projects that enhance economic opportunity and resilience in rural communities.

<b>Approaches</b> <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	<b>Implementation Ideas</b> <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>
Prioritize strategies that support the growth of tourism and value-added natural resource industries (including ecotourism, marine-related activities, sustainable farming, and local food and beverage production) to enhance economic opportunities in rural areas.	Work with local Main Street programs to identify and secure funding for downtown revitalization projects.  Work with Destination Marketing Organizations and the Willamette Valley Visitors Association to develop and market local value-added products.  Develop/sustain business retention and expansion programs in rural communities with a particular emphasis on succession planning for businesses at risk of closing.
Support efforts to provide high-quality K-12 education in rural areas.	Meet regularly with K-12 school administrators and Education Service District representatives to understand students' needs and lend support to projects aimed at meeting these needs.
Support efforts to increase health care and telehealth care access in rural areas.	Meet regularly with health care providers and public health officials to understand rural patients' needs and lend support to projects aimed at meeting these needs.
Emphasize infrastructure self-sufficiency in rural areas to ensure communities can sustain themselves in the event a disaster cuts off access to transportation systems and urban centers.	Develop a self-sufficiency checklist to apply during project planning; the checklist can help identify project shortcomings and encourage modifications that will ensure rural areas can sustain themselves without outside help.



## Priority Area 5: Rural Vitality, cont.

### Indicators

**Collaboration:** Presence of multi-jurisdictional projects in rural areas

**Equity & Inclusion:** Access to health and education services

**Resilience:** Presence of rural infrastructure projects explicitly considering self-sufficiency

### Key Partners

- ❖ Economic development staff
- ❖ Regional tourism staff
- ❖ Rural school districts and education service districts
- ❖ Health care providers
- ❖ Local & county emergency managers

## Key Considerations

### Regional Collaboration

*How will a regional approach to these strategies support economic prosperity?*

Our region’s rural areas must work together to increase access to basic services and cultivate promising new economic sectors. While each community has unique needs and identities, far more unites our rural areas than divides them. County and other regional economic development practitioners should facilitate collaboration and sharing among rural communities. This will help coalesce multiple communities behind funding proposals and projects, increasing the likelihood of their success.

### Equity & Inclusion

*How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive region?*

**Access** – many public services are concentrated in urban areas, making them difficult to access for residents of rural areas who do not have reliable transportation or high-speed internet connections. By highlighting the needs of rural residents and advocating for systems of service provision that are accessible in rural areas, economic developers can bring attention and resources to an underserved population.

### Resilience

*How will these strategies build regional resilience?*

**Diversification of industries/economic sectors** – Oregon’s rural economies have experienced significant decline in part because they lacked economic diversity. Encouraging the diversification of the industries that support our rural areas will increase rural areas’ ability to withstand and bounce back from future economic shocks.

**Infrastructure redundancy and resiliency** – building out self-sufficient infrastructure in rural places will decrease dependency on far-away support systems. Since many disasters may cut off access to these support systems, self-sufficient and back-up infrastructure will be critical to survival.

**Internal Coordination** –coalescing rural communities around specific funding proposals will increase competitiveness since many funders prioritize collaborative efforts. While a single community on its own may have trouble competing with the comparatively vast resources available in urban areas, pooling rural communities’ resources and voices will increase their likelihood of gaining attention and traction.

**LANE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE - 2024**

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\* These positions are appointed by their respective elected bodies.

\*\* This position is selected by the LCOG Board as the unspecified jurisdiction per Article III, Section 2 of the Bylaws.

Changes are indicated in Bold

Last updated: 4/1/2024