

# Memo

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DATE: January 22, 2011  
TO: Economic Development Committee  
CC: Martha Bennett, Diana Shiplet  
FROM: Adam Hanks, Project Manager  
RE: Citizen Involvement Results

Over the past several months the City has conducted several different types of outreach and feedback methods as part of the initial citizen involvement plan for the Economic Development Strategy.

Attached for your review are the following:

- Focus Group Report by Jon Lange Ph.D., the City's contract facilitator/consultant.
- Open House/Public Forum Summary Report by City Staff
- Online Questionnaire Response Summary Report by City Staff

All three citizen involvement elements will be used to further shape the Committee's initial draft vision and strategies and should form a strong foundation for the work to be done to finalize the vision and strategies as well as develop the implementing actions to make each strategy definable, measurable and ultimately successful.

Each report provides a summary of their results with some consistency found between the three input elements. As is quickly evident, the bulk of the data and analysis came from the Focus Group component, but all three efforts provided detailed feedback on many elements of the draft vision and strategies, as well as new input for the committee to evaluate.

As described in the executive summary on pages 1-6 of the Focus Group Report, several strong themes arose in most, if not all, of the group meetings in some form. Amid questions by many as to the City's intended role in local economic development, a consistent sentiment was encouragement that the City assume a role of facilitator and collaborator rather than in an active "command and control" role.

Another strong and consistent suggestion for action was a review and improvement the land use development process, with an emphasis on the relationships and coordination between City Departments, applicants, citizens, Planning Commission and City Council more so than on specific design and construction code regulations or requirements.

Each individual summary report is intended to highlight common themes, point out areas of agreement and disagreement and give the committee the community's perspective on concepts and actions that would benefit Ashland's local economy in both the short and long term.



**FOCUS GROUP REPORT:  
PART OF  
THE CITY OF ASHLAND'S  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**Presented by:  
Jon Lange, Ph.D.  
DECEMBER 26, 2010**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Between mid-September and mid-October of 2010, ten focus groups, each lasting one and one half hours, were “run” by an experienced facilitator, the author of this report. Focus groups yield qualitative data from like-minded individuals responding to questions and interacting with each other. The data are illustrative and informative, though not statistically representative of a population. Focus groups also “involve” participants in the process and can serve an “outreach and education” function as well. Ashland’s two, earlier-appointed economic development committees—Technical Advisory and Policy —drafted an Economic Development Vision 2030 and corresponding set of draft strategies. Focus group participants were asked to react to the draft vision and strategies and suggest actions the City might usefully take or avoid. The ten groups included workforce development, economic development committee members, restaurant/retail/lodging, healthcare/eldercare, venture capital/entrepreneur, specialty manufacturer, sustainability, housing/diversity, development/construction and creative arts.<sup>1</sup>

Focus group themes are listed below, with the critical proviso that *many* other informative and useful ideas—offered by only a single participant—will be found in the Results section. While it will be tempting to limit ones reading to this Executive Summary, doing so would severely compromise the utility of the focus group process. Reading the entire document is required to learn the breadth of participants’ specific

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendices for a fuller explanation of how the focus groups “fit” into the larger Economic Development Strategy process, as well as the specific questions asked, the participant list and methods used.

suggestions. That noted, the focus group themes--those ideas offered at least twice and usually more often--follow:

Regarding **the vision**:

- Concerns about it being too general, vague or long
- Concerns that it emphasized business and growth too much or too little, depending on the group
- Concerns that it was a political document
- Lack of clarity about the exact role of the City in Ashland's economic development
- Disagreement and confusion about just what "sustainability" is and its role in economic development strategies

With regard to **strategy**, there were a number of people who wanted more focus on:

- reducing complaints and concerns regarding planning and development
- collaboration and facilitating collaborations
- increasing support and encouragement for business, especially local business
- technology and other "forward thinking" considerations, such as changing demographics, energy use, the likely future of SOU and ACH, etc.
- entrepreneurship
- thinking systemically, avoiding duplication (i.e., connecting to other City initiatives)
- changing demographics
- taking advantage of surrounding natural resources

Regarding the **“most important” strategies**:

- Business should be emphasized more, particularly a wider, more diverse array of businesses (e.g., beyond tourism)
- Use the already-available tourism infrastructure year-round, in addition to improving capacity during “the season”
- There was an apparent ideological disagreement regarding seeking specific kinds of business (i.e., “enlightened”) versus avoiding such a limiting, politically correct orientation
- There was both a) a belief that “diversity and inclusion” can aid and is even necessary to economic development as well as b) some significant resistance to that idea.
- Concern that Ashland isn’t perceived as a place to “do business” and this has to change
- Improving and/or maintaining infrastructure is seen by more than a few as critical
- Civic/community collaborations are critical, e.g., partnering with non-profits
- Strategy number three was mentioned several times: providing a system or mechanism for creating private investment/capital in local business
- There is more to housing than just the affordability issue. It’s needed in all sectors and could be an economic engine (though some argued against housing as economic development)
- Adequate land supplies were mentioned by several people
- Improving planning and development processes and reducing regulatory barriers

Themes emerging from questions about **actions** and what the city should *not* do follow:

- One set of suggestions offered as much or more than any other involved the City's role as *facilitator* of economic development. The City should facilitate groups and processes, whether on specific issues for a specified length of time or for ongoing, problem-solving groups.
- Related, it was thought the City should *collaborate with established groups to advance economic development*. Groups mentioned included SOU, the Chamber of Commerce, the hospital, OSF, the schools etc.
- The City should "*incentivize*" businesses and groups of different kinds--that served the City's vision (e.g., green, innovative, artistic, etc.)--through things like increased grants, loans, reinvestment pools, reduced or waived fees, etc.
- The City should improve its role as a source of information for economic development-related activity. Various suggestions on how are offered.
- Many people commented on planning activity, as respondents wanted improvements in customer service as well as the streamlining and clarification of regulations and the planning process.
- Infrastructure improvements of many kinds were suggested: transportation, parking downtown, public art, vertical housing, rezoning, sidewalk improvements and more.
- The City should have one, "go to person" for the many different things related to economic development.

- There were a number of people who expressed concerns about panhandling, loitering and related activity that discouraged tourists and others from coming and doing business downtown.
- Some mentioned water redundancy.
- Others mentioned land acquisition.
- Several offered a version of “do no harm,” that is, don’t ruin what is here.

**Process-related** themes included:

- Questions about whether and how this work will be used (e.g., Who is the audience? Will the plan “sit on a shelf”?)
- Reminders that this must be an evolving, regularly evaluated document
- Paying close attention to the prioritization and “roll out” of the strategies and actions once a plan is adopted

Perhaps the responses most often heard involved planning and development processes; the City as facilitator/collaborator; and that the City should actively look for ways to support business. Concluding remarks, including comments about implementing economic development strategies, are offered at the end of the report.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The results are organized according to the questions posed, asking for participants'

- 1) Reaction to the *2030 Vision and Draft Strategies*
- 2) Thoughts about "*the most important strategy,*" or other strategies they wished to offer
- 3) Responses to questions about *specific actions* the City should take
- 4) *Other responses* to all other questions, including ideas about what the City should *not* do, if there was anything else they wished to add, etc.

Responses are ordered by the ten different groups. For each group, the participants and city representatives present are identified (except for Adam Hanks and Jon Lange, who were present for all groups, and Diana Shippet, present for eight). There are short summaries after the relevant sections, paralleling the Executive Summary above.<sup>2</sup> It is important to mention that some groups were better represented than others, either by sheer numbers or—perhaps—by degree of understanding of the City and economic development.

## **RESULTS:**

**Question One: General Reaction to Draft Vision and Strategies:** The first question asked participants for their general reaction to the 2030 Vision and Draft Strategies:

*"Were these generally "on the right track"?"*

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<sup>2</sup> For ease of organizing, the responses sometimes appear in a different chronology than verbalized, since respondents often made suggestions about actions when asked about strategies.

<b>Workforce Development/Labor Group</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Stromberg, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Wes Brain, Jim Fong, Lynn Thompson, Julie DiChiro, Bill Huron, Heidi Parker, Dean Cropper

Bill Huron was the first of many to follow who noted the generality of the strategies and suggested that *actions* are more important. Lynn Thompson led an array of people to follow saying 1) that there seemed to be too much focus on political ideals, and 2) there should be a focus on reducing the complaints and barriers associated with the planning process. Juli agreed. She thought there is relatively little about rapidly changing technology and the continuous education that will be needed for our future. Heidi applauded the diversity emphasis, saying how important it was for economic growth. Wes liked the workforce housing ideas.

Dean Cropper followed Lynn, stressing the need to provide opportunities for *business*, while pointing out that everyone still needs to gain from this process. Jim Fong said that entrepreneurship was essential, and the City needs to acknowledge what's in the way and then address those obstacles. Juli said—as did others later—that what she always hears is that the City may or may not be in the way, but they certainly don't want to help. She believes this is critical since small business will drive our economy and they do not feel supported by the City. They don't feel valued and they get discouraged.

Juli also pointed out that *how* this process is rolled out by the City, how it begins, will be essential. The first actions must be successful and well-received in the community. Wes expressed concerns about the lack of “working class” focus group participants (and was reminded of the online questionnaire and open houses to follow.) Wes also

suggested that sometimes businesses thrived by paying too little in wages but Jim Fong said it isn't always the case and doesn't have to be like that.

<b>Restaurant/Retail/Lodging</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Kate Jackson, Wendy Siporen, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	David Runkel, Don Anway, Dennis Slattery, Thom Bean, Lisa Beam, Alex Amarotico, Graham Sheldon, Rich Hanson

Graham recommended being sure to distinguish between strategies and actions as the strategies are so general. Alex agreed and recommended focusing on the actions when it comes to the public.

Thom thought that emphasizing “diversity” can be an “economic growth detractor.” He used the example of someone with lower income living in affordable housing who might have less to spend in shops, restaurants and who will pay lower taxes, thereby lowering the City’s budget, etc., in contrast to someone who can afford the full price of a home. David thought that all the diversity/inclusion parts are “B.S.” Dennis strongly disagreed as did Alex who cited Aspen, arguing that the City’s workforce must be able to have their needs met here. Lisa asked, “Since diversity is in the vision, does it have to be in the strategies?” Graham said there is a fine line between gaining a workforce and keeping bums out; finding the balance is obviously difficult. The City must be inclusionary but still recognize there are societal rules to be followed and those who don’t aren’t welcome as they drive others (particularly tourists) away. Rich later said that the “homeless issue” is the “main deterrent” to successful businesses here and

should be addressed. A similar message is repeated later by different members of different groups. Dennis said that yes, it's about behavior, not housing.

Don made the point that these strategies will need to be updated constantly and others immediately agreed. Dennis suggested that some may misinterpret these strategies so a question to be asked is: who will be using them. David said that technical jobs are usually developed where there are technical schools; let's not make Ashland something it isn't.

<b>Economic Development Committee</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Stromberg, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Jim Fong, Ron Fox, Ric Holt, Jim Klein, Mark Marchetti, Mallory Pierce, John Rinaldi, Wendy Siporen, Jim Teece

In a slight twist, some members of both the Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee were asked to participate in a focus group. Things began with Jim Teece wondering if they were brought here because someone with the City was unhappy with the strategies so far. Ric said that he was uncomfortable that some aspects of the Vision statement weren't reflected in the strategies and that he had sent an e-mail to that effect a while ago. Adam clarified that this was mainly an opportunity for members from the two committees to be brought together and experience the focus group process. Both Wendy and Jim noted things talked about in committee that no longer appeared.

Regarding the overall vision and strategies, Ron opined that while these efforts never have end-products that come out in a neat bundle, the big picture is there. Jim thought the big picture was "cloudy" and while he doesn't see anything that would

*prevent* economic growth, he believes there is insufficient diversification of strategies. Heavy focus on tourism could be balanced by investment in other areas, particularly technology. Wendy agreed about diversifying the economic development focus, saying we were overly dependent on tourism, arguing—as many others eventually did—that there must be strong support for *local* businesses and *new* businesses that will create jobs. She would like to see an analysis of what the community is importing (goods, services, finances, etc.); this might help inform the question of what types of investments this plan might support.

In a theme that emerged often in the different groups, John and Mark agreed that the exact role of the City isn't clear, though Mark added that he didn't claim to know what it should be.

Mallory thought Ashland could be a more “welcoming” community to different populations, saying the City hasn't grasped the changing country's demographics; she worried that this wouldn't be sufficiently addressed in the focus groups. Jim Klein also discussed changing demographics, noting there is little addressing the issue. Mallory agreed with Jim Teece that there is nothing there *preventing* economic growth but wondered if there are too many ideas “mushed together.”

Ric Holt talked about constantly evaluating and re-evaluating what the community values and structuring economic development (as opposed to economic growth) accordingly. He argued for supporting local entrepreneurs and that the diversity/inclusion strategy needs to be better defined. He said we need to do better at supporting Hispanic business development and that he didn't see sufficient attention to sustainability in the strategies. The theme of constant re-evaluation was brought up by

others in and outside of this group.

<b>Health Care/Elder Care</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Pam Hammond, Greg Lemhouse, John Stromberg, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Chris Dodson, Don Mackin, Laurie Schaff, Harvey Ray, Connie Saldana

There was general agreement that the overall vision and strategies were on the right track but that, once again, a little vague as well as “warm and fuzzy.” The issue of demographics re-emerged, as Don pointed to the growing elderly population in Ashland. He wanted to see strategies that addressed the high turnover in elder care facilities and the challenges of finding qualified staffing. Chris joined those arguing for “fluidity” of strategy *deployment* and was among the first to recommend coordinating with other City systems, such as transportation planning, in general, and planning for seniors, in particular. Though not specific, Harvey reminded the City to capitalize on its strengths already in place. Echoing Juli DiChiro’s earlier theme, he suggested prioritizing actions.

Harvey and Don were among the first, followed by other groups, to suggest emphasizing potential opportunities from *collaboration* between the City and others involved in economic development related endeavors.

<b>Venture Capital/Investment</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Fields, Adam Hanks
<b>Participants:</b>	Bill Thorndike, Jeff Monosoff, Meiwen Richards, Steve Vincent

Jeff Monosoff also thought the Vision was too broad, and as a result, weakened individual elements. Meiwen wondered if all these strategies were realistic and

achievable. Steve basically agreed and wondered about the inconsistencies inherent in some of them. Bill Thorndike suggested considering the balance between uses of land for economic development and other activities. He added that future funding for both SOU and ACH will be critical, both potential “threats” that the committees may wish to consider: will these organizations remain as they are? Bill also recommended coordination with *other regional entities* and processes in leveraging economic development.

<b>Specialty Manufacturing</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Annie Hoy, Kate Jackson, Adam Hanks
<b>Participants:</b>	Nancy Morgan, Jon Bauer, Diane Paulsen, Doug Massey, Susan Powell

Members of this group were split among those who liked the vision and draft strategies and those who said both were too “general” and kind of “lofty.” Nancy Morgan called them “a great start.” This group included some of the many who discussed various things the City had to do to “get out of the way” of business and business expansion. Diane expressed frustration with the process of siting a new facility. Another theme was joined by Jon who said that obstructions to business made Ashland less competitive with other communities when hoping to attract new ones.

Susan agreed and suggested the City look for ways to mitigate the challenges of the approval process, making as much information as possible “available up front” rather than later as the process went on. Jon agreed that start-up expansion information should be more readily available and understandable. Nancy wanted the City to assist with coordinating information.

<b>Sustainability</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Stromberg, Ric Holt, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Lesley Adams, John Alexander, Torry Biles, Larry Blake, Lynn Blanche, Heidi Dawn, Tracy Harding, John Lamy, Melanie Mindlin, Julie Norman, Stephanie Tidwell

The relatively large number of people in the “Sustainability Group” generated a large number of ideas. This group criticized the vision more than any other. It was seen as too traditional/conventional, shooting too low (“We’re already doing much of that.”), nowhere near green enough, too general (where are eco-, geo-, and edu-tourism? What *kind* of new jobs? How do you define sustainability?), too much about “growth” as opposed to “development” or “resiliency” (a strong theme for this group repeated by some others later), unconnected to anything outside the city limits (rivers, forests and other natural resources and the opportunities they afford), disingenuous (“....not admitting the negatives or weaknesses.”), too little about quality of life vs. money and, finally, misguided (since government is unable to target “winning” industries).

This group talked a lot about collaboration, including the City’s role in its facilitation—between government, community, education, non-profits—and, as Lynn and John argued, that this should be in the vision.

There was a lot of talk surrounding the infrastructure strategy: Tracy pointed out that there was nothing about agricultural lands there and words about transportation need to be stronger, more radical. Torry said that open spaces and parks aren’t sufficiently

prevalent. Julie suggested adding language: When targeting industry clusters/sectors, the phrase “specifically sectors which address increased energy costs,” should be appended. She suggested that the last two infrastructure strategies should add the phrase “with rapid investment in conservation and reduction in greenhouse gasses,” as we will be shifting away from fossil fuels. Lesley recommended the City address the currently environmentally-unsound wastewater plant.

This group was interested in energy-related issues, as various members wanted to emphasize ecological values, demographic sustainability and better transportation. This group joined others wanting an emphasis on *local* business and the *local* economy, e.g., in food production, transportation, and supporting joint ventures of groups already here.

<b>Development and Construction</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Russ Slibiger, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Darrell Boldt, Bob Kendrick, Mark Knox, Jac Nichols, Colin Mullane, Laurie Sager, David Wilkerson

Not surprisingly, this group was very different from the previous. In addition, they were unique in the way they asked so many questions before the facilitator could pose any. Mark referred to a process in which he engaged some years ago and wondered if nothing came of that, how would this be different. Adam explained the connection between that process and this one. Bob asked how the strategies were developed and Adam explained. Collin asked about the Council’s role in this and Russ talked about his and others’ limited but clear participation, stating they wanted this portion to come from the community. Jac pointedly asked if the City or City Council were going to “take over” economic development or if they were going to let the Chamber of Commerce do what

they do best. Adam said that part of this process is to determine who is most appropriate for handling each action item and that for many things, it is clear that the City is best suited as a facilitator, not the lead entity.

Darrel and David both wanted to get to the details (actions), noting the strategies were too general. David and others agreed that the Infrastructure strategy needed to include housing. There was a lot of talk about the “onerous” and “anti-business” public input process. The Northlight project was said to be killed by public sentiment, resulting in the blight that is there now. Mark and others said that Council leadership had to have sufficient backbone to stand up to the anti-development sentiment and instead let the market and the laws determine these issues.

Laurie agreed and began the discussion about planning. She said “Love the place, hate the process.” Paragraph number two of the vision isn’t ok right now; our economy isn’t adaptive and flexible. Our approval process for development is too long and unpleasant for developers to choose Ashland. Jac agreed and said it was also the Planning Commission and the Planning Department in addition to Council that made it hard. Mark said the Planning Staff are very capable but aren’t supported or backed up by the Council. David thought it was financially unsound that staff is directed to spend equal time with people trying to *prevent* a project as someone trying to *develop* and pay the City for the project. He later added that the final paragraph of the Vision should read, “All of the combined efforts of our community are conducted with an active, open, and *tolerant* civic culture....” Bob was particularly strong about this, saying that the City has a culture of obstructing projects as opposed to supporting and encouraging them. Colin agreed with all this, noting the City had to shift this kind of culture quickly; we can

no longer be controlled by a small group of “nay-sayers.” Jac and David hoped for a [new] Council that would understand and support economic development.

<b>Housing and Diversity</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Stromberg, Mallory Pierce, Adam Hanks, Diana Shippet
<b>Participants:</b>	Regina Ayers, Jason Elsy, Don Mackin, John Wheeler

The related name notwithstanding, this was a very different group from the last. There was general agreement here too, that the vision statement was too long, too general and perhaps simply reflecting what is true today. They wondered who the target audience is for the vision statement. Mallory said that the vision statement had to be “aspirational.” The group spent most of its time on actions. (See below.)

<b>Creative Arts</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Russ Silbiger, Adam Hanks, Diana Shippet
<b>Participants:</b>	Peter Alzado, Kevin Christman, Carol Davis, Gary Lundgren, Mark Mularz, Tom Olbrich, Julie O'Dwyer, Howard Schreiber, Marcus Scott, Jim Young, Jess Webb

Gary wasn't even going to come to the meeting until he read the vision and strategies; he liked them a lot. There was general agreement that the vision statement is comprehensive, though, as Tom Olbrich put it, it is “the longest vision statement I've ever seen.” Others said it was wordy. Peter suggested the City look toward connecting to its surrounding natural resources, especially the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument. Julie wanted more emphasis on “support for entrepreneurial business.” Kevin joined those from previous groups who worried that there were so many

strategies; too few would actually be implemented. Marcus lamented there wasn't enough on "culture." Jim focused on finding a "cultural experience that was uniquely Ashland," that could not be attained elsewhere. Carol asked what "specialized and targeted tourism" meant. She encouraged pushing the envelope—supporting what's unique or new-- to bring a wider variety of people. Jess asked why SOU was the only organization specifically named.

### **Summary of Question One: Reaction to the Draft Vision & Strategies**

While there were a number of ideas specific to different individuals--and careful readers will find them above--the *themes* emerging in response to the vision included:

- Concerns about it being too general, vague or long
- Concerns that it emphasized business and growth too much or too little, depending on the group
- Concerns that it was a political document
- Questions about whether and how this work will be used (e.g., who is audience? will it "sit on a shelf"?)
- Reminders that this must be an evolving, regularly evaluated document
- Lack of clarity about the exact role of the City in Ashland's economic development
- Disagreement and confusion about just what "sustainability" is and its role in economic development strategies

Responses about the strategies were more varied. They of course reflected the groups from which they came and these groups have different and sometimes conflicting interests. There were individual reactions—some of which may be useful and should be read above. There were more than a few who said there was not enough focus in each of the following areas:

- Reducing complaints and concerns regarding planning and development
- Increasing support and encouragement for business, especially local business
- Technology and other “forward thinking” considerations, such as changing demographics, energy use, likely future of SOU and ACH, etc.
- Entrepreneurship
- Collaboration and facilitating collaborations
- Thinking systemically (connecting to other City initiatives)
- Clarity of the City’s role
- Changing demographics
- Taking advantage of surrounding natural resources
- Paying attention to the prioritization and “roll out” of the strategies and actions once a plan is adopted
- The need for periodic re-evaluation of both vision and strategies

Several others wondered if there were simply too many strategies to easily grasp and therefore readily achieve.

## **Question Two: Most Important Strategy**

The second question, for most groups, asked what people thought was the single most important *strategy*—already on or not yet on the list—that they thought would benefit them or the “arena” in which they were located (e.g., creative arts, manufacturing). Some individuals responded with ideas that would benefit their particular organization exclusively. Many individuals, when asked about *strategies*, immediately reported on *actions* (see question three below), even though the facilitator attempted to clarify the difference. It is sometimes difficult even for those familiar with the distinction to separate them. In fact, *both* the Venture Capital/Investment and Sustainability groups moved directly to actions, so they are not included under this question. The following attempts to identify groups’ additional suggested strategies.

<b>Workforce Development/Labor Group</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Stromberg, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Wes Brain, Jim Fong, Lynn Thompson, Julie DiChiro, Bill Huron, Heidi Parker, Dean Cropper

There was general agreement in this group about emphasizing *business*. Jim thought strategies number three and four were the most important, adding that “enlightened businesses” are of course preferable. Lynn cautioned use of the word “enlightened” as it could turn business away if it made Ashland seem too “politically correct.” Heidi and others said there should be an emphasis on “diversity” of business, which is currently lacking. Juli argued that if the emphasis is on the future, we must do more to bring in the family age population, thus making diversity one of the most important strategies. Dean talked about creating opportunity and an environment in

which the PR could rightly claim that “Ashland is a place to do business.” Jim suggested developing “sector groups,” like the focus groups, similar to activity in New Brunswick, Canada, that would meet periodically to assess that sector’s needs and how the City (or county or community) might assist.

<b>Restaurant/Retail/Lodging</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Kate Jackson, Wendy Siporen, Adam Hanks, Diana Shippet
<b>Participants:</b>	David Runkel, Don Anway, Dennis Slattery, Thom Bean, Lisa Beam, Alex Amarotico, Graham Sheldon, Rich Hanson

Don and Dennis agreed that infrastructure-related work is the most important including inadequate parking and sidewalks. Lisa thought the city needed a face lift and expanding the tourist season was the most important strategy. Graham said expanding the season is important but that even in summer, hotels, restaurants, shops etc. are not at capacity so the strategy should read more like, “Increase the overall experience of tourism throughout the year.” Alex added that “year-round” is important but a face lift for the City is unnecessary; he came and stayed in Ashland for what it was. Lisa said that looking for ways that help tourists to “stay longer” would be useful.

<b>Economic Development Committee</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Stromberg, Adam Hanks, Diana Shippet
<b>Participants:</b>	Jim Fong, Ron Fox, Ric Holt, Jim Klein, Mark Marchetti, Mallory Pierce, John Rinaldi, Wendy Siporen, Jim Teece

As one might have guessed, there was a wide range of sentiment from this group. Mark and Jim agreed number three was important. Jim added number four. John said they can’t be parsed; they all seem interdependent. Wendy argued for micro-capital for

investment and an increase in *partnerships* with non-profits. Jim made the case for putting technology more in the forefront, suggesting that to focus only on sustainability in this area is insufficient and that the AFN experience ought not to make city leaders gun shy of risk, or even failure. Ron said the first rule is to “do no harm,” and not mess up what we’ve got. Ric made the case for investing in entrepreneurial growth by supporting culture, schools and diversity; this will draw entrepreneurs. He advocated for forming solid international business relationships, drawing capital from abroad. Ron reminded the group that entrepreneurs are a “fundamental gem” in this community.

<b>Health Care/Elder Care</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Pam Hammond, Greg Lemhouse, John Stromberg, Adam Hanks, Diana Shippet
<b>Participants:</b>	Chris Dodson, Don Mackin, Laurie Schaff, Harvey Ray, Connie Saldana

Chris and Harvey were drawn to the Civic/Community Collaboration strategy. Chris said this would help avoid duplication of services and Harvey pointed to the hospital as an example. Further, hospital issues are interdependent with housing issues (as patients and their families need places to stay). He also suggested that sustainability be reflected in the City utilities and other infrastructure issues.

Don suggested the targeted industry cluster/sector strategy ought to think hard about health care. Just as hospice has been successful, with its attached federal funding, respite care is going to grow and people will need assurance that it’s available if they are to continue to retire here. Control of these activities is best kept local, as other out-of-town companies will provide services if we don’t. Harvey agreed saying that a well-educated workforce is needed for community balance, and that if we don’t provide

what's needed here, services and systems down the road will. Laurie reminded the group that agencies like the Y get most of their funding from local business and community members and that we need those frequently lower paying jobs for necessary care and support of what is done here.

Connie noted that housing and diversity/inclusion strategies will help keep care-givers in Ashland and perhaps help develop an in-home care business sector. She saw no disparity between good quality of life and good economic development. Chris said that *balance* gives an improved quality of life, mentioning “studies” showing that on an international scale, parts of the world scoring highest on quality of life are always those with multi-generational (intergenerational) families and others working and living together. Harvey suggested focusing on a continuum of care, from birth to death.

<b>Specialty Manufacturing</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Annie Hoy, Kate Jackson, Adam Hanks
<b>Participants:</b>	Nancy Morgan, Jon Bauer, Diane Paulsen, Doug Massey, Susan Powell

This and other groups made clear that “affordable housing” isn’t the only housing issue. Susan pointed out that many families who work here prefer multi-generational types of housing, of which there is little to none in Ashland. Nancy talked about the need for a better educated workforce, but doesn’t see how the City could carry that out. Nancy thought that a prime City role could be coordination of resources and information for economic development. Jon said the City needs to listen better to the community, citing the Croman Mill Master Plan as an example of not listening.

<b>Development and Construction</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Russ Slibiger, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Darrell Boldt, Bob Kendrick, Mark Knox, Jac Nichols, Colin Mullane, Laurie Sager, David Wilkerson

Collin thought the City should be concerned about maintaining a quality water system, bringing options for water from the outside. Bob thought the City should encourage housing of *all* types, including in the downtown area. Commercial development is also important. Mark stressed the Civic/Collaboration strategies. Darrel focused on workforce education, possibly through RCC or SOU and thus also emphasized the strategies related to collaboration, coordination and information provider.

In contrast to some other groups, Jac suggested providing incentives to attract business, “rather than chase them away.” David argued for encouraging new housing as an engine for economic development. Bob thought we needed high density building and lamented that it is near impossible to find land. Mark thought adjusting height limits might be useful.

<b>Housing and Diversity</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	John Stromberg, Mallory Pierce, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Regina Ayers, Jason Elsy, Don Mackin, John Wheeler

Don wanted the City to emphasize business start up, retention and expansion to create *family wage jobs*. He also stressed the importance of *all* types of housing, not just low income. Regina agreed about family wage jobs, would de-emphasize tourism

(“There’s enough going on that’s working.”) and would like to see the town’s rental supply increase. John thought affordable housing was the most important strategy, and suggested the City market that or partner on that: diversity comes from availability of housing options. In order to keep dollars in Ashland, he would like to see more businesses like Superior Windows, which eliminate the need for going to Medford. Jason stressed adequate land supplies, so that businesses don’t have to go somewhere like White City to locate. He also thought this strategy should be moved under the Business and Economic growth category, as opposed to Infrastructure.

Don and John talked about the perception that regulatory barriers are “off the charts” in Ashland and this hurts the City as it creates unpredictability and uncertainty. One hundred and eighty days is far too long for project approval and the process is too subjective. This comes up later in action items in a variety of groups. It may argue for somehow weaving in the now-separate Council goal regarding the Planning Process.

<b>Creative Arts</b>	
<b>City Reps:</b>	Russ Silbiger, Adam Hanks, Diana Shiplet
<b>Participants:</b>	Peter Alzado, Kevin Christman, Carol Davis, Gary Lundgren, Mark Mularz, Tom Olbrich, Julie O'Dwyer, Howard Schreiber, Marcus Scott, Jim Young, Jess Webb

Howard thought the Education/Workforce strategy and the Civic/Community Collaboration process were the most important. He noted the absence of the words “marketing” or “advertising” in the strategies; perhaps they were implied but it made him wonder. For Mark, the two under Diversity were most important; he would like to see the City support businesses that are “thoughtfully innovative.” Julie thinks expanding

the tourist season and working toward supporting public art are the two most important strategies. Mark and Kevin strongly agreed, stating that it will help with tourism. Carol “doubled down” on expanding the tourism season, talking about how tourist dollars affect the entire community as they “trickle down.”

### **Summary of Responses to Question Two: Most Important Strategies**

It should once again be stated that useful, individual comments appear above, in contrast to the following *themes* that emerged:

- Emphasize business more, particularly a wider, more diverse array of businesses (e.g., beyond tourism)
- Tourism infrastructure is here; let’s use it year-round AND improve capacity during its usual season
- There is a disagreement regarding seeking certain kinds of business (e.g., “enlightened) versus avoiding such a “politically correct” orientation which would continue to limit economic development
- There is disagreement about how “diversity and inclusion” can aid and is even necessary to economic development versus some major resistance to the idea.
- There is deep concern that Ashland isn’t seen as a place to do business; this has to change
- Infrastructure is seen by more than a few as critical
- Civic/Community collaborations are critical; partnering with non-profits for economic development-related activity would be useful

- A number pointed to strategy number three—providing a system or mechanism for private investment/capital in local business
- There is more to housing than just the affordability issue. It's needed in all sectors and could be an economic engine (though some would argue against that).
- Adequate land supplies were mentioned by several people
- Improve planning and development processes/ Reduce regulatory barriers

### **Question Three: Actions**

The next question asked participants about specific actions that might be taken by the City, to either “fill in” the specific draft strategies, or to be undertaken apart from them.

#### Workforce Development/Labor Group

Heidi Parker:

- ❖ Provide grants and/or exempt businesses from certain regulations, if need be, for innovative and “vibrant” approaches

Jim Fong and Juli DiChiro

- ❖ Create paths for young people to learn about business and entrepreneurship (so they will stay or return to the community).
- ❖ Assist them finding internships in businesses. Create a “Youth Success Seminar.”

Note: Both said they would be willing to work on such a series of activities.

Wes Brain

- ❖ Strengthen the living wage ordinance
- ❖ Adopt a sweat-free procurement policy
- ❖ Use economic development zones

### Restaurant/Retail/Lodging

Graham Sheldon

- ❖ Be sure to explain the difference between strategies and actions in any communication about this work
- ❖ Find ways to create *ad hoc* groups with a mix of public and private to address specific issues (like the recent “deer meeting”)

Dennis Slattery

- ❖ Identify the users of this document
- ❖ Support the I-5 Welcome Center
- ❖ Look for ways to partner with SOU

Don Amway

- ❖ Plan must be constantly updated and revised
- ❖ Need better education and training of both staff and developers/business owners regarding the planning process
- ❖ Maybe there needs to be just one person handling commercial projects
- ❖ Address 24 hour parking on Hargadine, for weddings, etc.
- ❖ Keep Community Development and City Hall downtown (though the locked access isn't good)

David Runkel

- ❖ Create a loan fund to support small business

Thom Beam

- ❖ Increase dollars available to promote and advertise tourism
- ❖ City could vacate all City parking spots on Winburn Way now
- ❖ Do something like Bend's Pole, Paddle and Putt event, through Parks and Recreation (which might require some freeing up of some rules related to alcohol)
- ❖ Require permits for panhandling
- ❖ Partner on public arts projects
- ❖ Buy land today and put on ballot (to build a convention center) later

David Runkel & Thom Beam

- ❖ Build a small convention center

Dennis and Graham

- ❖ Perhaps a community center is a better idea

Don Amway

- ❖ With no affordable airport access and high costs of lodging, we are not a group destination. We need to understand who we are.

Lisa Beam

- ❖ Increase general quality of public spaces (sidewalks, plaza, etc.) to encourage/incentivize business to succeed on Lithia Way
- ❖ Train (planning) staff in customer service

Rich Hanson

- ❖ Cigarette disposal available on every street or light pole
- ❖ Do a survey of all the builders, contractors and architects to find out what they find difficult about planning
- ❖ Continue to work on the parking challenges

Alex Amarotico

- ❖ Hire a hearings officer (for planning issues)

### Economic Development Committee(s)

Ric Holt

- ❖ Need constant evaluation and re-evaluation mechanism
- ❖ Need metrics for defining sustainability and quality of life
- ❖ Use terms “creativity and entrepreneurial” as opposed to only the latter

Ron Fox

- ❖ Don't mess up what we've got. Do no harm. “Be Ashland.”

Mark Marchetti

- ❖ Streamline the planning process

Mallory Pierce

- ❖ Do a branding study
- ❖ Develop an understanding of barriers to doing business in Ashland

Jim Teece

- ❖ Encourage SOU's growth. Double its size.
- ❖ Use SOU, ASD, ACH and CC to create a model of what works locally

## Health Care/Elder Care

Chris Dodson

- ❖ Serve as information sorting/inventory/resource center for Collaborations
- ❖ Be fluid with things in order to deal with the unexpected
- ❖ Improve transportation systems

Harvey Ray

- ❖ Help coordinate what we have (e.g., two vans for two care facilities)
- ❖ Help develop elder care facility owners association

Harvey Ray and Connie Saldana

- ❖ Create more opportunities for in-home care business sector and support adult foster homes

Don Makin

- ❖ Provide water redundancy
- ❖ Develop an inventory list of services/organizations that people considering locating here could draw upon [Chris thought the Chamber/VCB might be better suited to that]
- ❖ Develop a “front desk” (concierge) concept as in Florence, OR where seniors call in for assistance with finding a plumber, cleaner or taxi company who has been vetted by the City. Perhaps there could be a “buy in bulk” co-op service to lower costs for seniors

Chris

- ❖ Ashland at Home is already developing something like this

Connie Saldana

- ❖ The National Aging and Disability Resource Center is working on a similar project

### Venture Capital/Investment

Bill Thorndike

- ❖ Assess the cost of poverty to our communities and ask if everyone can shoulder that cost.
- ❖ Examine the advantages and disadvantages of the local labor pool.
- ❖ Develop reinvestment pool of private equity funding and co-investment opportunities
- ❖ Expand communication efforts/audit current processes and tools, e.g., website to make sure information is available
- ❖ Consider an industrial lands task force to evaluate industrial land availability in order to ensure possibility of business expansion on existing or adjacent parcels

Steve Vincent

- ❖ Develop Small Business Development Center satellite office or SOREDI satellite office in Ashland
- ❖ Help develop an “incubator project” to develop or attract businesses
- ❖ The City could be involved in acquiring light industrial land and have it “shovel ready” for development

Jeff Monosoff

- ❖ Reduce permitting/development fees for those who meet certain eligibility criteria (to be developed) (Much agreement from others)

- ❖ Reconsider TAP intertie

Steve, Meiwen and Bill

- ❖ Increase regional involvement

### Specialty Manufacturing

Susan Powell

- ❖ Collaborate with other non-profits for grant administration and perhaps serve as a clearinghouse
- ❖ Streamline and simplify the permit process
- ❖ Implement team stakeholder process meetings to get everyone on a project together one time rather than do each step independently

Jon Bauer

- ❖ Act as a primary source of information about business development

Doug Massey

- ❖ Take a proactive role in making start up/expansion process information available, as well as reconfiguration and redevelopment

Jon Bauer and Diane Paulsen

- ❖ Make planning information more readily available and understandable so people know what they are getting into at the start

Diane

- ❖ Re-evaluate land supply issues

## Sustainability

Lynn Blanche

- ❖ “Save certain things for use and other things for beauty”
- ❖ “Support/facilitate a system or program to increase access to private investment capital...Don’t we already have that in Medford? Can we collaborate with Medford on this?”

Tracy Harding

- ❖ Purchase locally

Stephanie Tidwell

- ❖ Increase use of renewables
- ❖ Commit to more local sourcing
- ❖ Perhaps preferential contracting for local business

Julie Norman

- ❖ Work on youth employment solutions

Torry Biles

- ❖ Collaborate with SOU to bring students/graduates into the community
- ❖ Local “rewards card” for lower cost purchasing at local businesses
- ❖ Don’t go forward without first creating metrics on non-monetary growth (i.e., determine what we want/value in quality of life)

John Alexander

- ❖ Look for innovation when granting monies
- ❖ We need happiness measures other than material or monetary (as in Bali’s index)

- ❖ Identify a “growth cap”
- ❖ Develop a local currency

Melanie Midlin

- ❖ Examine ways to strengthen local transit
- ❖ Identify what supplies/suppliers we have here and what’s needed and figure out how to target what we need to come here

### Development and Construction

Collin Mullane

- ❖ “Rules aren’t met to be prohibitive. Perhaps if a project meets 90% of the larger goals, it gets approval” (as with Earth Advantage Certification).
- ❖ Develop a plan to “re-friend” city business people. Apologize for previous lack of support.
- ❖ Look at other communities to come up with new ideas for Ashland
- ❖ Maybe SDCs could be charged as a long-term property tax, over time, instead of “upfront”

Jac Nichols

- ❖ Develop SDC incentives for developments
- ❖ Maybe the fees, or a portion, can be deferred until the project is 100% approved
- ❖ Provide incentives to attract businesses, “rather than chase them away”

Darrell Boldt

- ❖ Support programs already in place (e.g., at SOU, RCC) that educate skilled workers

- ❖ Provide information to business, workers and students about that education

Bob Kendrick

- ❖ Re-develop areas, improve/re-develop urban development

Mark Knox

- ❖ Maybe change building height limits

Mark and Bob

- ❖ Create a larger downtown district

Mark and Jac

- ❖ Amend codes to provide a “menu of opportunities,” e.g., lower the parking requirements threshold if a developer is willing to choose a higher building
- ❖ Look to improve private-public partnerships (and though it may be risky, the City benefits from taxes from projects)

David Wilkerson

- ❖ The Council puts in writing that they support development (of certain kinds and with certain criteria of course, e.g., if it meets certain council goals or economic development strategy). This might help mitigate those with overly loud voices influencing Council

### Housing and Diversity

John Wheeler

- ❖ All the important words in the vision could have hyperlinks on the website to ongoing or upcoming actions.
- ❖ Increase the accepting and use of CDBG monies, particularly for land acquisition

- ❖ Help with marketing and partnering on Affordable Housing
- ❖ Develop a transportation hub, with public transportation into and out of Ashland, to tie ourselves to the rest of the valley
- ❖ The City should annex and buy property (just to the north of the City near Exit 19) and then subdivide and sell
- ❖ Have one staff member take ownership of each project and shuffle it through the planning process rather than let it lay untouched on someone's desk for weeks

Jason Elsy and John

- ❖ Waive fees to attract business
- ❖ The City needs to assure an adequate land supply for business

Don Mackin

- ❖ Make planning requirements clear, predictable and less subjective
- ❖ Land that is already set aside and zoned correctly eliminates the uncertainty for siting a business
- ❖ Streamline the planning process
- ❖ Identify all vacant property and see if there is comparable zoning to accommodate target demographics. Have that property pre-zoned, as re-zoning is what takes up so much time
- ❖ Evaluate the use of enterprise zones as a tool for business expansion and retention
- ❖ Look to develop an executive or research development park here (as that is what we now have left with Brammo)

John and Don

- ❖ Reduce the 180 day approval process; it's far too long

Regina Ayers

- ❖ Increase the rental supply units in town
- ❖ Develop a rental registry
- ❖ More vertical housing
- ❖ Identify all multi-family use space and make sure that single family homes are not built there
- ❖ Develop waivers on density bonuses for affordable housing
- ❖ Develop car-free or pedestrian only areas and become less auto-focused
- ❖ Help develop the Northlight property which is an eyesore
- ❖ Develop a housing trust fund

### Creative Arts

Peter Alzado

- ❖ Assist with the smaller theaters and art groups
- ❖ Establish a fund beyond the TOT to promote artists
- ❖ Marry together the arts and sciences
- ❖ Support housing for artists or, more generally, provide financial support for theater companies.

Tom Olbrich and Peter

- ❖ Expand grant programs for the arts

Mark Mularz

- ❖ Market what's here
- ❖ {Howard thought the process in place for permitting events is good.}
- ❖ Look to other communities to see what is innovative, new, challenging but necessary

Jim Young

- ❖ Change laws to better allow for parades and loud music

Gary Lundgren

- ❖ Develop a way for small businesses to obtain easier access to capital

Kevin Christman

- ❖ Could there be a PayPal link on the City website to support the arts?

Marcus Scott

- ❖ Make the plaza off limits to cars
- ❖ Create an outdoor mall, open all year
- ❖ Create a space where businesses could be "incubated" and helped to grow.

Jess Webb

- ❖ Connect with SOU and OSF for economic benefits
- ❖ Create a staff member to act as liaison to film projects
- ❖ Provide incentives for encouraging film production here

### **Additional Questions:**

There were varying amounts of time left (on occasion, none at all) after groups finished the “actions” section, and since there were different emphases in each group, the facilitator used the last few moments in different ways.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes, he asked what the City should *avoid* doing. In other groups, he asked, “If there was “just one thing” you would like to see the City do, what would it be?” On occasion, he simply asked if there was anything people wished to add.

#### Workforce Development/Labor Group

In terms of things the City should *not* do, Lynn Thompson respectfully suggested staying away from everything mentioned by Wes (a living wage ordinance, sweat-free procurement policy, economic development zones). Instead, the City should be setting up an attractive--not regulatory--community.

#### Restaurant/Retail/Lodging

Though there was disagreement on this issue from within and outside of this particular group, David thought all references to diversity/inclusion are “total BS. They don’t belong in an economic development strategy.” When David later suggested dedicating a portion of a lodging and food tax to a convention center, Thom cited AFN and the wastewater treatment plant as examples of failure. Thom further said that while he supported the convention center idea, it would be “social suicide” to recommend

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<sup>3</sup> That variance was determined mainly by the number of people present, as well as how verbose each group was. In addition, the introductory time (to each other, to the process, questions asked) also varied.

using lodging and food taxes for another project. Thom added that the City should not expand the downtown core while there are still vacant buildings in the current space.

This group was asked if there were one thing you could direct the Council to do, what would it be. Almost the entire time remaining was spent discussing how to make the planning process easier and more predictable, as, according to Graham, it “currently feels like going through a meat grinder.” Various problems were cited, and Lisa said it seems some City employees don’t understand that people don’t want to do business in Ashland because for them, time is money. Dennis said he thought the process seemed arbitrary (as did Graham) and capricious and there was too much “government mentality” at the expense of “entrepreneurial mentality.” A variety of actions were offered (listed in the previous section of this document).

#### Economic Development Committee(s)

All of this group’s responses are found in previous sections.

#### Health Care/Elder Care

Harvey emphasized “the good work” at Skylark (where everyone buys into the community). Perhaps that could be modeled; he would be willing to work with the City to see what could be extrapolated. He also recommended that the City support existing programs, and be careful not to duplicate them.

### Venture Capital/Investment

Bill cautioned the City from doing things that don't assist in generating and maintaining local money, or from engaging projects and programs that don't "pencil" on a cost-benefit analysis.

### Specialty Manufacturing

Doug said to stay away from anything that creates roadblocks and instead adopt and maintain a role of facilitation and assistance. Diane agreed but added the City must avoid anything that disrupts the balance between business needs and community needs. Nancy stressed avoiding avoid service duplication. She added that she appreciated the direct access to information and staff that she couldn't have had in other communities. Susan cautioned against changing the "Ashland brand."

### Sustainability

Melanie, with the group's agreement, strongly opposed "recruiting big business" from outside. Lesley noted that Ashland is the only municipality participating in the RPS process that chose to stay within its current boundaries. Torry and others added that Ashland should not expand beyond those boundaries. Lynn said not to be afraid to reach, or be extreme and to look for opportunities to focus on "green."

### Development and Construction

A number of people in this group felt picked on or singled out in the past. Mark recommended that the City quit trying to manipulate the free market, avoid changing

codes without realizing the long-term consequences (e.g., disallowing condo conversions, resulting in no new apartments being built). Further, making affordable housing a “building requirement” isn’t as useful as creating incentives to build them. Collin agreed, and suggested that the City can’t make people want things; it should try to ascertain what people do in fact want. David said the City should stop passing “knee-jerk reaction ordinances” (e.g., condo conversion and the YMCA big building ordinance). Jac said the City shouldn’t kill a project because of one, single issue (e.g., Northlight’s setback). He further stated they should facilitate but not try to lead economic development and, contrary to suggestions from other participants, they don’t have to hire full-time staff for it.

David remarked that we need to find a way to be civil with one another, to disagree without being disagreeable. Mark added that he has worked with most people in the room and each is passionate about this community. “We all want to keep Ashland special.”

### Housing and Diversity

Both John and Don emphasized that because Ashland is perceived by others in the region as exclusionary, fewer people come here. This has to do with the meals tax, the focus on tourism and an “isolationist” image. The City needs to reverse that perception. John did add that he appreciates the SDC waivers, re-zoning to higher density and other things the City has done to assist business.

## Creative Arts

Howard mentioned that he thought the process in place for permitting events works well. All other responses from this group are documented in previous sections.

## **Summary of Actions and Responses to “Other” questions**

Suggested actions ranged wildly and sometimes, as one might expect, contradicted each other. Responses differed along ideological lines; where interests were opposed; and when respondents' different visions for Ashland collided. While some wanted to emphasize diversity and inclusion, others cautioned to stay away from anything related. Some wanted to emphasize things “green;” others thought that ill-advised. As some suggested lifting regulations thought onerous to businesses, others wanted additional regulations. A few respondents said to avoid seeking (big, outside and/or new) businesses for location here; others suggested going after them or at least making it more attractive for them to come.

In addition to the process-related suggestions listed earlier, under the strategies questions, others were offered here, including 1) making certain that the “audience” for all future documents was correctly identified and accounted for, 2) explaining clearly the difference between strategies and actions, and 3) making certain that any economic development strategy be constantly updated and revised.

There were many, many creative and potentially useful ideas that were singularly offered (as well as some that might not be so useful). A few clusters of ideas offered a number of times (themes), include the following:

- One set of suggestions offered as much or more than any other involved the City's role as facilitator of economic development. The City should facilitate groups and processes, whether that be for specific issues for a specified length of time or for ongoing, problem-solving groups.
- Related, it was thought the City should collaborate with established groups to advance economic development. Groups mentioned included SOU, the Chamber of Commerce, the hospital, OSF, the schools etc.
- The City should "incentivize" businesses and groups of different kinds (that served the City's vision, e.g., green, innovative, artistic, etc.) through things like increased grants, loans, reinvestment pools, reduced or waived fees, etc.
- The City should improve its role as a source of information for economic development-related activity. Various suggestions on how are above.
- Many people commented on planning activity, as respondents wanted improvements in customer service as well as the streamlining and clarification of regulations and the planning process.
- Infrastructure improvements of many kinds were suggested: transportation, parking downtown, public art, vertical housing, rezoning, sidewalk improvements and more.
- The City should have one, "go to person" for many different things related to economic development.
- There were a fair number of people who expressed concerns about panhandling, loitering and related activity that discouraged tourists and others from coming and doing business downtown.

- Some mentioned water redundancy.
- Others mentioned land acquisition.
- Several offered a version of "do no harm," that is, don't ruin what is here.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ten focus groups, each lasting one and one half hours, were “run” by an experienced facilitator—the author of this report—between mid-September and mid-October of 2010. Qualitative data were obtained as individuals in like-minded groups responded to questions and interacted with each other. The process also attempted to *involve* participants via “outreach and education.” Previously, Ashland’s two Economic Development committees—Technical Advisory and Policy—drafted an Economic Development Vision 2030 and corresponding set of strategies. Focus group participants were asked to react to the draft vision and strategies and suggest actions the City might usefully take or avoid. The ten groups included workforce development, members from the two economic development committees, restaurant/retail/lodging, healthcare/eldercare, venture capital/entrepreneur, specialty manufacturer, sustainability, housing/diversity, development/construction and creative arts.

Emergent themes are presented in the Executive Summary located at the beginning of this report. Additionally, it is important to say that a number of participants made clear their expectation that the City of Ashland would *act* as a result of all this work, implementing the best “actionable” strategies, ideas and suggestions that were offered. Fear that the focus group results and the larger report would “sit on a shelf” was expressed a number of times, during and in between focus groups. Several participants suggested the best way to do this was appoint a City “point person” for economic development and the ideas herein. Another method to ensure follow through is to attempt to immerse the City staff culture in economic development thinking. Of course

the exact strategies and tactics will be chosen by City officials. It is hoped that this report will ultimately aid some of those choices.

## APPENDIX

A. Methods

B. Focus Group Selection

C. Project Background/History

D. Background Documents

- 1) Focus Group Member Rosters
- 2) Focus Group Member Packet
- 3) Sample Invitation
- 4) Focus Group Minutes
- 5) Facilitator/Consultant Bio

## APPENDIX A. - Methods

Focus group interviews are a type of qualitative research method, intended to yield richer, more in depth data than most numerical, quantitative approaches. The focus group interview dates back to the mid-fifties and has been used in thousands of investigations involving marketing, political, educational and other contexts. The technique gathers more or less homogeneous (like-minded) groups with an interviewer/facilitator to “focus” interviewee attention on a particular topic in order to create a group “synergy,” the idea being to generate ideas that would perhaps not surface in a single person interview context. The interviewer asks participants a series of focused questions and then, as interviewees answer, repeats back, paraphrases, summarizes and probes in an attempt to “mine” as much information as possible. Areas of agreement and disagreement are noted, and interviewees are encouraged to “piggy back” on each other’s ideas as a brainstorming-like effect is created.

Jon Lange, Ph.D., Professor of Communication at Southern Oregon University, acted as the facilitator. Along with City project staff, a number of interview questions were generated. The questions reflect the specific data that the City of Ashland sought from its citizens regarding the creation of an economic development strategy. Not all questions were asked of all groups. (See Results section.)

### Questions:

1) Take a look at the list of strategies on the wall. Think silently for a moment and then I’m going to ask you, one at a time, if you think these strategies are on the right track.

2) What is the single most important economic development *strategy* the City could take on--either one that is already on the list or not--that you think would benefit you and your organization the most?

3) Again, from your perspective as a \_\_\_\_\_, what *actions or activities* would go with or correspond to that strategy?

4) For the entire local economy, what is the single most important action or activity the City could and should take on?

5) Also, are there activities or ideas the Council or City should stay away from, that is, NOT do, in terms of local economic development?

*Additional questions if time:*

6) What local economic development activities that are occurring now do you think are working and should continue or even be expanded, whether done by the City or by someone else (i.e. Chamber, SOREDI, SOU/RCC, etc)

7) If you could direct the Council to do anything you wanted with regard to supporting and/or enhancing the local economy, what would you have them do?

8) Is there any “general-big picture” or “specific-detailed” idea, about economic development, that we haven’t gone over yet, or that you really want to re-emphasize, that you think ought to be heard by the Economic Development Committee or the City Council?

9) Are there any questions we haven’t asked you that we should have? Is there anything else you wish to add?

## **APPENDIX B. – Focus Group Selection**

Focus group categories were proposed by City Staff and discussed and “finalized” by the Economic Development Policy Group & Technical Advisory Committees.

Potential focus group members were generated for each of the nine categories based on input from the Economic Development Policy Group & Technical Advisory Committee, as well as from the Mayor and Council. Specific dates and times were predetermined for each focus group meeting. Invitations were sent to approximately 18-20 people per category with a target of 10-12 accepted invitations per category and focus group meeting. (See appendix D for sample letter.)

Many invitees could potentially “fit into” more than one focus group category and some movement between groups was made with a goal of securing a minimum of eight participants per group. While the end result was somewhat short of this goal in a few categories, in all nearly 70 people were able to participate in the focus group process.

In all, the final participant list (see appendix D) provided a wide spectrum of expertise, interest and involvement in each of the focus group categories, which resulted in a healthy exchange of opinions, ideas and feedback for the two committees’ use as the final strategy document is developed and presented to City Council.

## **APPENDIX C. – Project Background/History**

The Focus Group meetings were a significant component of the overall citizen involvement plan for the Economic Development Strategy project. Additional outreach and input methods included two open house/public forums, one held in the afternoon and one the following evening, as well as an online questionnaire.

The format of the open houses/public forums were similar to that of the focus groups in that the same set of questions were posed of the group, with similar efforts of the facilitator to extract feedback from as many of the attendees as possible and attempt to conduct follow-up's and clarifications as time and flow permitted.

The open houses/public forums also functioned as an information and outreach effort to provide background and history on current and previous economic development efforts by the City. Contact information was also collected for future outreach efforts to those interested in the progress and completion of the project as it moves forward through the final committee meetings and on to the City Council for formal review and ultimate adoption.

The online questionnaire, available on the City's website for roughly eight weeks while the focus groups and open houses/public forums were being held, was also based on the questions and format of the focus group meetings so that all three different outreach efforts could be collated and summarized with as much consistency as possible.

## APPENDIX D. – Background Documents

### 1) Focus Group Member Rosters

**City of Ashland**  
**Economic Development Strategy**  
 Focus Group Participant List

<b>Workforce Development/Labor Group</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Wes Brain	Southern Oregon Jobs With Justice
Jim Fong	The Job Council
Lynn Thompson	Attorney & Ashland Budget Committee
Julie DiChiro	Ashland School District
Bill Jiron	Rogue Community College
Heidie Parker	Ashland School Board
Dean Cropper	BioSkin LLC - CEO/Founder
<b>Restaurant/Retail/Lodging</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
David Runkel	Anne Hathaway's Cottage/Ashland B&B Network
Don Anway	Ashland Springs Hotel
Dennis Slattery	Southern Oregon University - Hospitality/Tourism Services
Thom Beam	Pasta Piati, Tabu, Sesame Kitchen (Restaurants)
Lisa Beam	Pasta Piati, Tabu, Sesame Kitchen (Restaurants)
Alex Amarotico	Standing Stone Brewing Company
Graham Sheldon	Waterside Inn
Rich Hanson	Gold & Jems Jewelry
<b>Economic Development Committee</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Jim Fong	The Job Council
Ron Fox	Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development (SOREDI)
Ric Holt	Southern Oregon University - Economics
Jim Klein	Southern Oregon University - Provost
Mark Marchetti	Ashland Community Hospital
Mallory Pierce	Oregon Shakespeare Festival
John Rinaldi	Ashland Planning Commission

Wendy Siporen	The Rogue Valley Initiative for a Vital Economy (THRIVE)
Jim Teece	Project A/Chamber of Commerce
<b>Health Care/Elder Care</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Laurie Schaff	Ashland YMCA
Harvey Ray	Ashland Community Hospital (ACH)Board
Don Mackin	Former Ashland Housing Commissioner/ACH Foundation
Connie Saldana	Rogue Valley Council of Governments
<b>Venture Capital/Investment</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Bill Thorndike	SORED I Board Member
Jeff Monosoff	Ashland Certified Financial Planner
Meiwen Richards	People's Bank of Commerce
Steve Vincent	Avista Utilities/SORED I Board Member
<b>Specialty Manufacturing</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Nancy Morgan	Dreamsacks, CEO/Founder
Jon Bauer	Bauer Fly Reels, Owner
Diane Paulsen	Cascade Peak Spirits, CEO/Founder
Doug Massey	Dagoba Organic Chocolate
Susan Powell	Dagoba Organic Chocolate
<b>Sustainability</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Leslie Adams	KS Wild - Rogue Riverkeeper
John Alexander	Klamath Bird Observatory
Torrey Byles	Economist - Granada Research/Former THRIVE Board
Larry Blake	Southern Oregon University - Planning & Sustainability
Lynn Blanche	Southern Oregon Sustainable Business Network
Heidi Dawn	Rogue Valley Growers Market
Tracy Harding	Rogue Valley Farm to School
John Lamy	Southern Oregon Sustainable Business Network
Melanie Mindlin	Planning Commissioner/Transition Town
Julie Norman	National Center for Conservation Science and Policy
Stephanie Tidwell	KS Wild
<b>Development and Construction</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Darrell Boldt	DA Boldt Construction
Bob Kendrick	Commercial Building Owner/Developer
Mark Knox	Urban Development Services - Land Use Planning
Jac Nichols	Architectural Design Works, Inc

Colin Mullane	Gateway Real Estate
Luire Sager	Sager and Associates Landscape Architects
David Wilkerson	Ogden Roemer Wilkerson Architecture
<b>Housing and Diversity</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Regina Ayers	Ashland Housing Commission
Jason Elsy	Jackson County Housing Authority
Don Mackin	Former Ashland Housing Commissioner
John Wheeler	Rogue Valley Community Development Corporation
<b>Creative Arts</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Peter Alzado	Oregon Stage Works
Kevin Christman	Sculptor/Painter
Carol Davis	Davis & Cline Gallery/Ashland Public Arts Commission
Gary Lundgren	Joma Films
Mark Mularz	Acorn Design
Tom Olbrich	Ashland Independent Film Festival
Julie O'Dwyer	Tease Ashland (Restaurant & Events)
Howard Schreiber	Southern Oregon University-Communications/Video
Marcus Scott	Lithia Artisans Market
Jim Young	Lithia Arts Guild
Jess Webb	Southern Oregon Film & Television

## 2) Focus Group Member Packet (sample)



Focus Group Meeting #2  
**Restaurant/Retail/Lodging**  
 Sept 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010 10:00-11:30  
 Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Wy

### I. Mayor/Councilor Introduction (1-2 minutes)

- Welcome - Introductions
- Economic Development Council Goal
- Appointment of the Economic Development Committee

### II. Economic Development Committee Background (1-2 minutes)

- Committee background work to date
- Citizen Involvement Plan

### III. Focus Group Process (2-3 Minutes)

- Facilitator Introduction
- Format, Intent and Groundrules of focus group

### III. Focus Group Questions/Dialogue (75-80 minutes)

- 1) Review the list of strategies (*refer to wall visuals/handout*). Do you think that these strategies are on the right track?
- 2) What is the single most important economic development *strategy* the City could take on, either one that is already on the list or not, that you think would benefit you and your organization or business sector the most?
- 3) Again, from your perspective, what actions would go with or correspond with that priority strategy?
- 4) For the entire local economy, what is the single most important action or activity the City could and should take on?
- 5) Are there activities or ideas the Council or City should stay away from, that is, NOT do, in terms of local economic development?

\* **Additional Questions if time permits** (see reverse side of page)

- 6) What local economic development activities that are occurring now do you think are working and should continue or even be expanded, whether done by the City or by someone else (i.e. Chamber, SOREDI, SOU/RCC, etc)
- 7) If you could direct the Council to do anything you wanted with regard to supporting and/or enhancing the local economy, what would you have them do?
- 8) Is there any “general-big picture” or “specific-detailed” idea, about economic development, that we haven’t gone over yet, or that you really want to re-emphasize, that you think ought to be heard by the Economic Development Committee or the City Council?
- 9) Are there any questions we haven’t asked you that we should have? Is there anything else you wish to add?

# The Building of Ashland's Economic Development Strategy

- 1. Nov-Feb**

  - Citizen committee appointed, background work on:
    - Who are we?
    - What is important to us?
    - What is working for us now?
    - What is not working well?
    - What do we want our community to be?
    - How do we get there from here?
- 2. Mar-May**

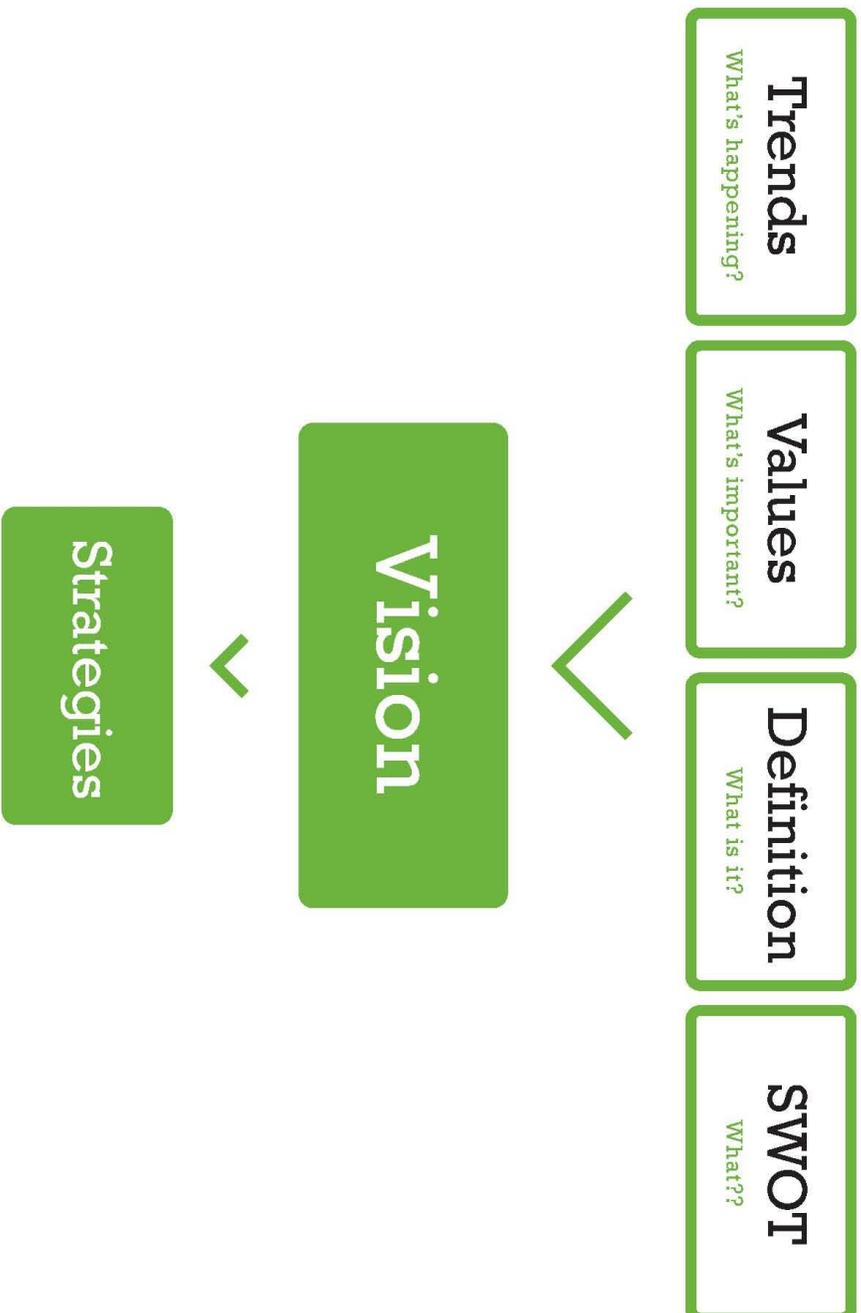
  - Developed a working definition of economic development for Ashland
  - Created a vision statement to guide strategy decisions
  - Brainstormed then prioritized draft strategies
- 3. Jun-Oct**

  - Asked the public for input
  - Focus Groups by category
  - Open Houses for outreach and input
  - Online Questionnaire for individual input
  - Create summary citizen input report
- 4. Oct-Dec**

  - Use citizen input for final prioritization and detailed actions
  - Create a formal document with a working action plan
  - Committee recommendation to Council for review

Outcome >

Economic Development Strategy approved by City Council  
 An ongoing coordinated economic development effort gets underway  
 Council and citizens get regular updates on progress of action plan



## 2030 Vision Statement

**Ashland** is one of the most vibrant and **livable** communities in the West, with a unique combination of performing and visual arts, natural beauty, outdoor recreation, business **entrepreneurship**, urban services, with a small-town openness and friendliness not found anywhere else. Its economy is **adaptive, resilient**, and **flexible**, built on a world class foundation of the arts, Southern Oregon University, and a vibrant and **creative** business sector that thrives on **innovative** and imaginative solutions to local, regional and global challenges.

The economic health of the community is supported by excellent **education**, high quality **public services** that include a commitment to the use of technology to connect our residents and businesses to the global economy. A specialized and **targeted tourism** program is a major economic development asset as well, attracting people who may one day want to live and run a business here.

All of the combined efforts of our **community** are conducted with an active and open civic culture that welcomes and expects a **diverse** range of opinions and ideas.



Administration  
20 E. Main Street  
Ashland, Oregon 97520  
[www.ashland.or.us](http://www.ashland.or.us)

Tel: 541/552-2046  
Fax: 541/488-5311  
TTY: 800/735-2900



**Economic DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

*Enhancing economic strength in community*

## Proposed Draft Strategies

The initial draft strategies convey a sense of the direction, and are flexible enough to evolve through a community process involving focus groups, open houses and online questionnaires.



### Business & Economic Growth

- Support/facilitate a system or program to increase access to private investment capital for local businesses, with a focus on "seed funding" for small business start up and expansion.
- Expand the tourism season beyond summer peak months and expand events and activities to attract and retain a diverse tourist demographic
- Support/facilitate a system or program for ongoing and coordinated efforts to assist and encourage local business start-up, retention and expansion
- Develop a set of target industry clusters/sectors to support and enhance new and existing business cultivation, research and job training strategies



### Education/Workforce Development

- Support targeted education, skills and workforce development efforts to ensure a high quality local workforce prepared to meet both the needs of local employers as well as establish new business start-ups.



### Diversity/Inclusion

- Encourage and support the availability of all needed housing types at price ranges and rent levels that match up with the incomes of Ashland households
- Support or provide programs that enhance and increase business development (start-up or expansion) opportunities across all underrepresented demographic components/elements of our community (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
- Establish and adopt a plan to provide demographic sustainability for the community, ensuring that the overall age demographics provide a relatively consistent student population for our schools



### Civic/Community Collaboration

- Increase partnerships/involvement with local and regional partners to better coordinate actions and initiatives where common goals and strategies exist
- Develop methods/program to increase availability and access to existing local business expertise with existing and emerging business needs (volunteer, peer, retired, etc providing consulting advice & support)



### Infrastructure/Public Services

- Assure adequate land supplies are available for needed business start-up, growth and expansion
- Continue to improve and develop quality local transportation systems to ensure a variety of transportation options are available to citizens, customers and businesses, both for goods receiving/delivery and personal access throughout the community
- Maintain quality utility systems meeting or exceeding environmental standards for electricity, water, waste water, telecommunications and storm water with sustainable rate models



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**Economic DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

*Enhancing economic strength in community*

## We'd love your input!

Our citizen involvement process has been constructed to gather input and feedback on the initial work of the Committee using three\* different involvement tools.

- 1. Focus groups.** Small groups of 8 to 10 individuals, who, like you, represent one (or more) of nine different components or elements of our community. The focus groups will meet with an independent facilitator to hear a short introduction of the process and draft strategies then share thoughts on good elements, what may be missing, what is the highest priority, etc. The group categories are:

Creative Arts	Housing/Diversity	Sustainability
Development/Construction	Restaurant/Retail/Lodging	Workforce Development
Healthcare/Eldercare	Specialty Manufacturing	Venture Capital/Entrepreneur

- 2. Open houses.** Designed to provide an overview of the process to the entire community. An opportunity to catch up on some of the already completed background work and provide input and opinions on the initial draft strategies of the Committee.

- 3. Online questionnaire.** For community members that prefer individual research & study and the ability to comment and provide input at their convenience. The questionnaire will be available online on the City's website and in hardcopy at City Hall and the Community Development Building throughout September and October.

The combined content from the three feedback efforts will be compiled in both summary and detail form and will be used by the Economic Development Committee to refine the strategies and develop the actions to make the plan successful.

- \* Or, connect with the Mayor.** As always, individual input by email, letter, phone or appointment to the Mayor's Office is also available and encouraged. Background information on the Economic Development Strategy project, local and regional economic development statistics, as well as a link to the online questionnaire and direct link to submit comments to the Mayor's office can be found at [www.ashland.or.us/econdev](http://www.ashland.or.us/econdev). Written comments can be mailed to the Mayor's Office at 20 East Main Street and he can be reached by phone at 541-488-6002.



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**Economic DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

*Enhancing economic strength in community*

### 3) Sample Invitation



September 20, 2010

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Since late 2009 the City of Ashland has been working on a community process to produce a new economic development strategy for our town. For the first stage of the process I appointed a Policy Committee and a Technical Committee to create an initial list of draft strategies that could be taken to the community for its feedback. We're now ready to begin that process and you may have a role to play in it.

I am inviting you to attend and participate in the **Venture Capital/Entrepreneur/Investment** focus group. This group will meet from **10:00-11:30 on Monday October 4<sup>th</sup>** in the Siskiyou Room of the Community Development Building located at 51 Winburn Wy. If you are willing and available, we will send you background materials by e-mail to review in advance of the meeting. These materials will include a list of draft economic development strategies on which you will be commenting plus logistical information about the session itself. If you feel that someone else within your organization is better suited to this process than you, please let us know as we are trying to engage and capture as much community expertise in our process as possible.

If you are not able to attend but would like to comment, receive the background materials for personal review or have your name placed on a list for updates as the process moves forward, please let us know by contacting me at [john@council.ashland.or.us](mailto:john@council.ashland.or.us), or Project Manager Adam Hanks at [adam@ashland.or.us](mailto:adam@ashland.or.us) or by mail to my office at 20 East Main St. Additional opportunities for involvement and feedback are also outlined in the enclosed citizen involvement flyer.

All feedback collected from the focus groups, open houses, online questionnaire and individual responses will be compiled and organized for the Policy and Technical Committees to use as they form the final draft strategy document that will be proposed to the City Council for official adoption.

Please let me know by **September 28<sup>th</sup>** by responding to Diana Shiplet at [shipletd@ashland.or.us](mailto:shipletd@ashland.or.us) or 541-552-2100. I very much appreciate your time and involvement and hope your schedule permits you to join us in this important project.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Stromberg".

John Stromberg, Mayor

## 1) **Focus Group Minutes**

9/17/10 - Workforce Development/Labor  
9/21/10 – Restaurant/Retail Lodging  
9/22/10 - Economic Development Committee  
9/23/10 – Healthcare/Eldercare  
10/4/10 – Specialty Manufacturing  
10/4/10 – Venture Capital/Investment  
10/5/10 – Sustainability  
10/6/10 – Housing & Diversity  
10/8/10 – Development & Construction  
10/20/10 – Creative Arts

All Focus Group Minutes are available by e-mail upon request to Adam Hanks, Project Manager – Administration at [adam@ashland.or.us](mailto:adam@ashland.or.us) or on the City's website at [www.ashland.or.us/fgminutes](http://www.ashland.or.us/fgminutes)

**JON LANGE, Ph.D.**

670 BERRY LANE • ASHLAND • OREGON • 97520

• 541.552.6425 • 541.778-4072

lange@sou.edu

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jon Lange is Professor of Communication and Director of Training and Organization Development at Southern Oregon University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 1980, was chair of the Department of Communication at SOU from 1986 through 1991, and currently teaches courses in organizational communication, mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution--areas in which he has authored dozens of papers and publications.

Jon has extensive applied experience having facilitated groups and/or mediated disputes in business, environmental, non-profit, government and health sectors. His clients include a dozen different physician groups, hospitals, and health clinics; the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management; the cities of Medford, Ashland, and Grants Pass; Jackson, Josephine and Siskiyou counties; a wide range of Oregon state agencies; and many regional corporations including Boeing and Bear Creek Corporation. Jon has negotiated a number of labor contracts, facilitated numerous retreats and trained hundreds of mediators.

He has conducted focus groups for public, private and government entities. He has served on several boards including—locally--Mediation Works, and in California, the Center for the Resolution of Environmental Disputes. Jon serves on the Roster of Environmental Mediators with the U.S. Institute of Environmental Conflict Resolution.

# Summary Report

## Open House/Public Forums

November 3<sup>rd</sup> 3:00-5:00 PM  
November 4<sup>th</sup> 7:00-9:00 PM

Citizen Involvement Plan  
**Economic Development Strategy**  
January 15, 2011

## Background

The Citizen Involvement Plan for the Economic Development Strategy project contained three primary elements, all with a goal of providing the Economic Development Committee with feedback, input and recommendations on the Committee's initial draft vision and draft strategies.

Each of the three elements; focus groups, open house/public forums and an online questionnaire, were selected to provide residents, business owners and others a variety of times and formats to learn about the project and provide input on their thoughts and recommendations on the Committee's work up to this point.

## Format

Each open house/public forum was designed to operate as consistently as possible with the focus group format so the context of the responses collected are similar and overall summaries "make sense" when compiled.

The meeting agenda/format and the minutes taken from the group question and answer portion of the event are provided in the appendix.

## Summary

### ***Open House #1***

As expected when compared with the focus group format, the comments and recommendations received at both open houses were quite diverse, but many did echo comments made in the focus groups, including ideas for expanding the tourist season possibly with the development of some sort of a community event/conference space.

As was repeated in focus group meetings and discussed at the Committee level prior was the concern that the land use development process was a deterrent to business growth and development, with a specific suggestion that City staff could benefit from customer service training and realignment of how their services are provided to the community.

Also mentioned was further investigation on the potential for small cluster development, incubator and co-op formats to leverage existing business strengths and minimize capital needs.

### ***Open House #2***

The evening open house had far fewer attendees, which provided somewhat of a different level of discussion among the participants. Rather than specific suggestions of actions, discussion regarding how various broad and impacting components fit together and impact economic development, such as maintaining or increasing quality of life while also increasing the economic prosperity of the community, the balance between earning potential and cost of

living, how future climate change may affect the community and the role of economic development in adapting and possibly thriving with the changes.

Again, the issue of the balance between the community's desire for strong land use development regulation and how that regulation is provided arose as a specific action or task for the City to address. There was general agreement and recognition that the City's role in other issues, tasks or actions discussed may not be as direct.

# APPENDIX

1. Open House #1 – Agenda and Minutes
2. Open House #2 – Agenda and Minutes
3. Open House Meeting Advertisements (Daily Tidings, Mail Tribune)

Economic Development Strategy

**Open House #1**

November 3rd, 2010 3:00-5:00

Pioneer Hall  
75 Winburn Wy

**3:00-3:15**

Individual informal welcomes and orientation from Mayor, Committee Members & Staff.

Nametags, Sign up sheet for e-mail notifications and a small packet of background documents

**3:15-3:20**

Formal welcome and introduction from Mayor Stromberg and/or Councilor Russ Silbiger thanking them for their time and interest and providing some background context with Council Goal background.

**3:20-3:25**

Welcome and comments from Committee member - Annie Hoy

**3:25-4:00**

Group Q & A with Facilitator Jon Lange opening statements prompting ideas and context for input, feedback and discussion. Committee members/staff available to respond.

**4:00-4:05**

Thank you from Mayor/Committee members/staff

A welcome to stay for more casual conversation, individual interaction, completion of questionnaire, etc

**4:05-4:45**

Open Discussion time

MINUTES FOR THE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
OPEN HOUSE  
**November 3, 2010**  
**Pioneer Hall**  
**75 Winburn Way**

**ROLL CALL**

Leadership members present: Adam Hanks, Diana Shippet, Russ Silbiger, Mayor Stromberg, Jon Lange.

Policy/TAC Group present: Bill Molnar, Ron Fox, Annie Hoy, Wendy Siporen, Ric Holt, Emile Amarotico, Sandra Slattery

Participants present: Lisa Beach, Andreas Paulsen, Drew Bailey, Melissa Brandao, Risa Buck, Marie Donovan, Phil Messina, Huelz, Lloyd Haines, Jaime Marshall, Chris Clayton, Garrett Furukiti, Denise Daehler, Dennis Slattery (From sign-in sheet, others may have been in attendance)

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Russ Silbiger welcomed the group and thanked them for their time. He gave a summary of the origins of the project, read to them the Council goal and explained the two-group process so far.

Annie Hoy thanked the group for their time and gave an overview of her experience on the Policy Committee. She described how these draft strategies and vision statement were created and a little about the focus groups.

Jon Lange welcomed the group, had them introduce themselves, and gave a little overview of how the rest of the open house will go.

**QUESTION 1: What is your general reaction to the Vision Statement and Draft Strategies? Are there specific actions the City can do in connection with the strategies? Do you have anything to add or any questions?**

Risa: Has a question about the first line in the Vision Statement. What does “vibrant and livable” mean to the group? It’s different for everyone. She thinks the Vision Statement can be successful because it can mean just about anything. She would like to see a commitment from the City to think seriously about waste management and making a goal of going to “waste zero” as soon as possible. If we are able to conserve our resources, we would be able to expand the local economy.

Melissa: As she reads the Vision Statement she feels that Ashland is already represented there. A Vision Statement, though, should be what we are trying to achieve, not what we already have achieved. We need a vision of how to expand in a forward (and green) thinking way. The Vision Statement should be more aspirational.

Jaime: As a bookkeeper, she’s frustrated by the frequent lack of basic knowledge of how to run a businesses that is in this community. She would like to see a program for how to learn to run a business (legally and successfully). Perhaps if a person/group finished the course, they could have access to grant funding.

Andreas: We often forget it's a global commerce age. We should have recognition of those businesses who work globally. Everything we create here is viable for use by someone somewhere else in the world – we just need to be open and encourage those connections with national and international businesses. Also, be open to national and international businesses setting up here.

Melissa: Business today is about a specific model. Ashland could define itself by having a business model unlike any other – i.e. be the example of how to create unique businesses. Ashland has a micro business community and has every level of business here to use as the starting model.

Garrett: Has there been any discussion in the groups or focus groups on using the “incubator” model of business development and growth? He is currently working with a group hoping to start using that model. The Rogue Valley Resiliency Fund is hoping to create a co-pack facility for local farmers for assistance in distribution of their product.

Jaime: She and her friends have talked a lot about wanting to have a Trader Joe's here in town as an “anchor” business to attract other businesses and strengthen the ones we have.

Annie: Ashland is the wrong size of market for a Trader Joe's.

Drew: The Chamber did a review of businesses recently which showed the grade for, “an easy place to do business” was not good. We need to work to change that grade, to make it easier to do business here.

Denise: One challenge for businesses is that there is no community space available for use. We can't host events or festivals (particularly off-season) due to the cost of the space, lack of size, etc. A community use space would be excellent, particularly in the 300- 500 people range. Another challenge is that it's a small town with a very short selling season (3 great months, 9 just scraping by). This means business owners must work very long hours which limits community involvement, access to additional training, etc. A third challenge for businesses here is that large delivery companies won't deliver to our businesses because we can't do consistently large enough orders. This means we pay a higher cost for the deliveries we do get and must pass that cost on to our customers. Action: Facilitate the bringing together of groups to expand buying power. Maybe create a “buying co-op”.

Risa: That's probably not something for the City to take on, but is an opportunity for businesses to see the gap and work together to solve the challenge.

Lisa: Most important to her is seeing the tourism season expanded.

Drew: Agrees that the off-season is very important. He would love to see that, like Bend, we have festivals (beer, etc.). Would like to see Ashland use the things we already have (breweries, Organic Nation, wineries, etc.) to create off-season festivals.

Lloyd: Expansion of the tourist season is important and we do have the infrastructure in place to support that. He would like to see the City help support off-season festivals by waiving a tax for the event (like Food & Beverage or TOT). In other words, could the City incentivize the creation of new

festivals?

Marie: We need to work to change the perceptions of what Ashland is like, i.e. that we are only boutique businesses. Agrees that the planning process is daunting, we need a “step by step process” to follow in business creation.

Lloyd: And it is more than just a perception. Our reputations are well earned.

Melissa: The Ashland workforce has short-term jobs – could we create or cultivate off -season jobs? Could we create a cluster beyond theater where we specialize in fashion/clothing construction or woodworking?

Huelz: Congress has been talking about “green jobs” but he doesn’t see that reflected in the drafts. Can’t we do things like become a center for building green products that we also use (create solar panels that are also on every home/building in town)?

Jaime: Lloyd’s incentives ideas could be for the short term until businesses are viable. The question really is are we wanting something new or just wanting to expand what we already have?

**QUESTION #2: Is there one activity/action you’d like to see the City take on?**

Denise: Update the Plaza. Repair the sidewalks, clean up the landscaping downtown. “It looks tired.”

Dennis: In Community Development, there needs to be customer service training. There seems to be a misunderstanding of who they are serving. The planning process needs to not be open to everything but to be open to good ideas. They need the “team approach.”

Sandra: The City so often creates different plans for different areas (transportation, water, etc.) but don’t always bother talking to one another. All the various plans should feed together and come to the same purpose. We need to consider all the other plans going on or approved.

Risa: Create infrastructure that supports sustainable (green) economic development that permeates through all activities/decisions.

Andreas: You can’t have real economic development unless you know who all the players are. We need to know who else is working on this plan, what else is already going on in the community/region. We need to be able to supply answers (we need a better information source.)

Wendy: Grants Pass is working on a similar information source project. It’s called “The Connector” and Thrive is currently in the process of doing the database creation work.

Ric: We need to ask if we are going to go beyond tourism – are we going to create business to meet the local aging population?

John: Would like to see us creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurs. Believes it is necessary to foster groups of similar interests to work together and help each other.

**QUESTION #3: Any last activities – even if they are out of the box?**

Risa: Train service.

Denise: A gondola from the downtown up to Mt. Ashland.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Diana Shiplet, Executive Secretary

Economic Development Strategy

**Open House #2**

November 4th, 2010 7:00-9:00

Community Center

75 Winburn Wy

**7:00-7:15**

Individual informal welcomes and orientation from Mayor, Committee Members & Staff.

Nametags, Sign up sheet for e-mail notifications and a small packet of background documents

**7:15-7:20**

Formal welcome and introduction from Mayor Stromberg and/or Councilor Russ Silbiger thanking them for their time and interest and providing some background context with Council Goal background.

**7:20-7:25**

Welcome and comments from Committee member – Pam Hammond

**7:25-8:00**

Group Q & A with Facilitator Jon Lange opening statements prompting ideas and context for input, feedback and discussion. Committee members/staff available to respond.

**8:00-8:05**

Thank you from Mayor/Committee members/staff

A welcome to stay for more casual conversation, individual interaction, completion of questionnaire, etc

**8:05-8:45**

Open Discussion time

MINUTES FOR THE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
OPEN HOUSE  
November 4, 2010  
Siskiyou Room  
51 Winburn Way

**ROLL CALL**

Leadership members present: Adam Hanks, Diana Shippet, Jon Lange.

Policy/TAC Group present: John Fields, Pam Hammond

Participants present: Dana Bussell, Nickhoma Brown, Steve Ryan, JoAnne Eggers, Vicki Aldous, Mike Morris, Huelz

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Adam Hanks welcomed the group and thanked them for their time. He gave a summary of the origins of the project, read to them the Council goal and explained the two-group process so far.

Pam Hammond thanked the group for their time and gave an overview of her experience on the Policy Committee. She described how these draft strategies and vision statement were created and a little about the focus groups.

Jon Lange welcomed the group, had them introduce themselves, and gave a little overview of how the rest of the open house will go.

**QUESTION 1: What is your general reaction to the Vision Statement and Draft Strategies? Are there specific actions the City can do in connection with the strategies? Do you have anything to add or any questions?**

Joanne: Wants people to understand the importance of parks and open space and how they affect the economy (particularly tourism). Also wants City to really focus on sustainability and long-term climate change challenges.

Dana: The Vision Statement says, “Ashland is one of the most vibrant and livable communities in the West, with a unique combination of performing and visual arts...” Ashland has the image of being a good place for the arts but the truth is that it’s not a good place for artists to live. It’s too expensive, there isn’t access to the tools, products and supplies artists need. Most artists here have no connection to non-profit organizations and therefore no access to any of the City grants. The City needs to recognize that there is a problem. The needs of artists are similar to those of light industry – they both need space for work and affordable housing. The City needs to look for ways to assist visual artists. Action: Alter the current grant program to include visual artists.

Mike: On the Planning Commission we often hear of concerns for lack of live/work spaces – would those help artists?

Dana: Anything which makes space available is a benefit (even if the space is small.) Certain neighborhoods might lend themselves better to live/work space or artists spaces than others.

Adam: Is there also a need for a retail element in the live/work spaces?

Dana: Not necessarily – those places are already available, what’s lacking is the creation space.

Joanne: Collaboration with the Community is very important. Currently we have some collaboration between Health Care, Schools, and the Parks Department, she would like to see more like this grow. She would like to see more focus on how to help people stay healthy rather than just focus entirely on “sick care.” It would help to develop neighborhood parks close to people. How do you encourage facilities in parks to encourage healthy exercise or health improvements? She believes that Economic Development or Economic Growth is not just about money but is also about how we care for us as a community.

Steve: After reviewing the drafts he’s struggling with the fact that the strategies have a focus on the ability of workers to live here but there is no inclusion of that focus in the Vision Statement. Ashland workers need the ability to live here. There needs to be a, “balance between earning and cost of living.”

Huelz: Transition Town has ideas about climate change that are not reflected in these drafts. He doesn’t see any consideration for “peak oil” concerns (i.e. drastic climate change.) How can we add those concerns to the plan?

Nickhoma: The list of strategies seems big. The Vision Statement seems good, but vague. He’s glad for the opportunity to think further and give on-line input.

**QUESTION #2: Is there one activity/action you’d like to see the City take on to assist with Economic Development?**

John: Oregon requires each city to have a Comprehensive Plan, and what we’re working on here is the Economic Development portion of that plan. We need to make sure that plan is updated frequently and thoughtfully. We also need to connect this element with the rest of the plan. This whole process, ultimately, is get down to the actions we can take on. He would like to see Council adopt not 20 goals but 1 and actually get it done in the next 4 years. A good way to think about this process is the think of what’s currently working here and how those can be expanded. “All this thought eventually has to lead us somewhere.”

Steve: Is worried about the first section of the draft strategies and targeting industries rather than letting them grown/develop naturally. He sees the word, “support” listed frequently but what does that mean in this context? Does it mean financial support? He worries about businesses becoming dependent upon government funding or subsidies. If we’re talking financial support there needs to be a clear, firm sunset time. If a business can’t be sustainable without subsidies then maybe it’s not a viable business to begin with and not a viable thing for tax payers to support. He’s also worried about the cost of businesses who start up and fail in this community – there needs to be more thought placed on what businesses should start here to begin with.

Mike: Mentioned the Chamber report and how companies don’t like the zoning and planning rules. There is a feeling that dealing with the City is a nightmare but he doesn’t see that clearly reflected in

the current strategies. Quality of life in Ashland is important but it's hard to live here too. Finding the balance between making living here easier while still maintaining the high quality of life is the struggle.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Diana Shiplet, Executive Secretary

# We'd love your input!

The City is drafting an economic development strategy, and we want your help. Please come to one of the following open house meetings:

**Nov 3rd, 3:00-5:00pm**

Pioneer Hall, 75 Winburn Way

**Nov 4th, 7:00-9:00pm**

Ashland Community Center, 59 Winburn Way

Can't attend? Give your input online at  
[ashland.or.us/econdev](http://ashland.or.us/econdev)

Contact Adam Hanks at City Hall  
for more information:

[adam@ashland.or.us](mailto:adam@ashland.or.us)

541-552-2046

CITY OF  
**ASHLAND**



**Economic DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

*Enhancing economic strength in community*

# Summary Report Online Questionnaire

Citizen Involvement Plan  
Economic Development Strategy  
January 15, 2011

## Background

The Citizen Involvement Plan for the Economic Development Strategy project contained three primary elements, all with a goal of providing the Economic Development Committee with feedback, input and recommendations on the Committee's initial draft vision and draft strategies.

Each of the three elements; focus groups, open house/public forums and an online questionnaire, were selected to provide residents, business owners and others a variety of times and formats to learn about the project and provide input on their thoughts and recommendations on the Committee's work up to this point.

## Format

As with the other two involvement components, the online questionnaire utilized the same set of questions and the same packet of material was available for review and comment so the context of the responses collected are similar and overall summaries "make sense" when compiled.

A deviation from the consistency between involvement methods or a general drawback to the online format is the inability to have a facilitated, interactive process that provides clarification opportunities, bouncing back and forth of ideas and comments between participants, etc.

The online questionnaire was made available on the City's website in mid October after the completion of the focus group process and was active on the site for just over one month.

## Summary

While possibly to be somewhat expected with this format and in contrast to the focus groups and open houses, the online responses tended to be more difficult to compare and "match up" with feedback from the open houses and focus groups.

A sampling of comments include:

- Rely on non-profits and others rather than the City taking more on
- Increasing the ability for children raised in Ashland to stay in Ashland (local job growth)
- Preserve and enhance Ashland's quality of life (don't mess things up)
- Secure water source is critical to the community and to economic development
- Streamline the land use development process
- Support local businesses
- Get specific with industry sectors/clusters
- Vision Statement sounds too much like now, not a true future vision

# APPENDIX

1. Online Questionnaire - Complete Results
2. Questions Handout
3. Questionnaire Advertisement (Daily Tidings, Mail Tribune)

Economic Development Strategy					Oct/Nov 2010
Online Questionnaire					
Survey Date	Is the Committee on the Right Track?	What is the Most important Strategy?	What is Currently working	Major Category Focus	Are there Any Missing Strategies?
10/27/2010	Other - it looks fine for now	Golf course	Water; electric; roads etc. Our system is based on competition last I checked not transfer of costly public services paid for by the taxpayer to particular businesses instead of them all. City should provide a 'level playing field' rather than prefer one group of businesses (an employer association for example) so that competition can be enhanced rather than restricted. Why? Benefits the consumer via lower prices.	Business and Economic Growth	Build a golf course. This will make it a year-round resort. Otherwise keep it a small town and forget the tourists.
10/27/2010	No - they are missing major elements	Economic diversification and no 'other local group' because the Chamber is a membership organization and doesn't need the taxpayers' quarter million to benefit its members with venture capital brokershhip		Education/Workforce Development	My comment is not on 'missing strategies' but on the above. I worry that helping infant industries/ new local businesses by 'increase access to investment capital' may support some unsustainable businesses because if they were profitable they would attract venture capital no problem on their own; Expanding tourist season = more low-paying temporary jobs with the corresponding need to live somewhere else due to high rents etc; assist & encourage local business startup... = Is SOREDI not effective? Does the Chamber need to take this role over? We already have these mechanisms at the state level; Chamber etc. if new startup wants to become a member... This all looks like we need to either set up a venture capital brokershhip or give back the \$250 large to the Chamber to perform these services and I'm not buying it. We already have SOREDI for these things we don't need to transfer a quarter million dollars of the taxpayers' money to the Chamber to find venture capital for businesses that would attract venture capital on their own if they were attractive enough. I sense some fishing here: ?...
11/3/2010	YES	ATTENTION TO THE ARTISIAN-SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS PART OF THE COMMUNITY RE ORGANIZATIONS MARKETING AND GROUP PROMOTION	nO		

Economic Development Strategy						Oct/Nov 2010
Online Questionnaire						
Survey Date	Is the Committee on the Right Track?	What is the Most important Strategy?	What is Currently working	Major Category Focus	Are there Any Missing Strategies?	
10/28/2010	Yes - the initial work seems complete			Education/Workforce Development	no	
10/29/2010	Yes - the initial work seems complete		Can't think of any	Yes...except for item below	No	
10/29/2010	No - they are missing major elements	The City can help businesses feel welcome not under attack.	Business land and building availability inventory.	Business and Economic Growth	What new industry sectors would be compatible with Ashland and would diversify the economy with professional jobs? Those need to be specifically named with strategies for attracting those sectors.	
10/30/2010			na			

Economic Development Strategy						Oct/Nov 2010
Online Questionnaire						
Survey Date	Is the Committee on the Right Track?	What is the Most important Strategy?	What is Currently working	Major Category Focus	Are there Any Missing Strategies?	
11/1/2010	Yes - the initial work seems complete	Creating green jobs and infrastructure.	No	Business and Economic Growth ?		
11/16/2010		Public transportation. Local jobs for Ashlanders	empty	Diversity/Inclusion	A stronger emphasis on hiring local people. Ashland citizens to work in Ashland..	
10/30/2010	No - they are missing major elements	local preference guidelines - waste reduction	city grants	Business and Economic Growth	local preference guidelines	

Economic Development Strategy				Oct/Nov 2010
Online Questionnaire				
Survey Date	Is the Committee on the Right Track?	What is the Most important Strategy?	What is Currently working	Major Category Focus
				Are there Any Missing Strategies?
11/18/2010	Other - it looks fine for now	As previously noted quality of life issues and community building initiatives. Draw people out and about enjoying this town and each other in engaging ways (community gardens and artworks friendly neighborhoods service projects festivals performances forums) and then continue to develop strong sophisticated "branding" and "marketing" around those key features. And take the lead for smaller West Coast towns on transportation...bikes and electric vehicles should get VIP treatment.	They aren't very noticeable.	Infrastructure/Public Service
11/7/2010	Other - it looks fine for now			
12/1/2010		The statement should include efforts to expand our "off season" economy.		Business and Economic Growth
11/3/2010	Yes			

I would include in the 'Infrastructure' category a continuing program of outstanding parks trails and recreation and general public works projects to enhance the theme of accessible natural splendor green living and community 'commons' spaces available to residents. These features are extraordinary here already and stand to be the strongest attraction to a large emerging sector of small business and the self-employed in productive younger/family demographics. Additionally enhanced remote access and participation in city planning projects such as you are doing here is valuable and appreciated. I would encourage increasing adoption of 'open government' protocols as this is a strong and sought-after trend in larger progressive cities today. The town needs comprehensive citizen input and exchange around a couple of core issues such as transportation and development so that we can all move ahead on these crucial items. Speaking of which better and safer bike use throughout town should be a priority. It's just sad to have to be afraid to get out and ride instead of drive when biking should be to everyone's benefit. This ties back to my first item--enhance the quality of outdoor living in town. Successful business depends on healthy happy social people...

can't vote since I'm not a resident - a prospective resident actually checking out the web site - don't count me

Economic Development Strategy					Oct/Nov 2010
Online Questionnaire					
Survey Date	Is the Committee on the Right Track?	What is the Most important Strategy?	What is Currently working	Major Category Focus	Are there Any Missing Strategies?
11/15/2010 11/8/2010	Yes - the initial work seems complete	Get us connected to a reliable water source. If we do not have enough water in the future for those of us who already live and work here there is no reason to encourage economic development.	Continue supporting the local businesses that are promoting tourism. Streamline the planning and building process. yes	Business and Economic Growth	I believe the City needs to be more assertive in doing something about the loitering and pan handling in our downtown core. I think we desperately need a NO loitering policy in effect. Trying to build up tourism and expect local business's to prosper in a city that does not have a handle on how to deal with these issues is in my opinion putting the cart before the horse. Locals and tourists are harassed daily. It's impossible to walk to the mailbox or sit on a city bench without having to maneuver in and around the many bodies that are blocking the sidewalk. It's ridiculous that the Chamber of Commerce cannot use the water feature outside their door; due to the fact the transients use it to bathe their dogs and themselves in. Transients set up in front of businesses smoking pan handling etc... and most often for the entire day! Visitors complain constantly about how bad it is here compared to larger cities where you don't see nearly this much transient activity. And they always ask why does Ashland have such a problem? Well I ask you the city "why does Ashland have such a problem"? Is it because we don't think it's really an issue? Is it because we are afraid to address it? What will it take to get our city clean & safe again? We are developing a reputation as an easy target place to land and get paid for blocking the sidewalks. This issue needs your focused attention and a solution soon!
11/15/2010	No - they are missing major elements	Stimulating local enterprise	Conservation and Environmental Protection	Business and Economic Growth	The infrastructure/public services statements are almost meaningless except they say that the City will do the minimum required. They are not strategies at all.

Economic Development Strategy		Oct/Nov 2010
Online Questionnaire		
Is the draft Vision Statement a Good Future Vision ?	Are there things the City shouldn't do?	Are there Strategies or Actions that Should be Added to the Draft?
No.	Anything that raises property taxes which are obscene as it is.	
<p>I like adaptive resilient and flexible plus 'diverse ' because a diversified portfolio of economic generators is even more important when you base your economy on TOURISM which is notoriously fickle and generates low earnings. TOURISM is a volatile industry where the jobs pay low wages are usually temporary and carry no benefits. Likewise employers generally pay less where environmental endowments provide amenities these very tourists pay to come enjoy therefore if you base your economy on tourism in a place with strong natural endowments the result is volatile employment at low wages. My advice: DIVERSIFY. Just like a mutual fund trades in many issues in order to deliver a stable predictable return Ashland simply must diversify beyond tourism if we want to break out of a cycle of low wage temporary employment. Why is that bad? Low wages = low demand for goods and services; rentals; retail; etc. Therefore low wages + temporary employment = low demand for other goods and services = Keynesian expenditure trap. And the bolding of the type is kinda annoying why bold 'liveable' and not 'vibrant' ?? Etc. Looks like a marketing gimmick to me which I am highly skeptical of. Why bold 'innovative' and not 'imaginative'? It detracts.</p>	<p>City should NOT give subsidy back to Chamber. City should enhance competition rather than monopoly. City should not 'materially participate' with any group in a preferential sense over any other. City should NOT take taxpayer money and give it to Chamber because they benefit their members more than they benefit the taxpayer at large. City should not farm out economic development to any other group but should partner with the State and work with citizen volunteers under City oversight alone because 'other groups' do not have the transparency of public record. City should pursue economic development not 'other local group' which caters to members more than whole group of members and nonmembers.</p>	<p>I would add to 'built on a world class foundation of the arts Southern Oregon University and a vibrant and creative business sector ' both the consumer and the producer side. Producer = agriculture other consumer durables and nondurables etc beyond just 'businesses'; and consumer side which = making sure residents earn enough to consume products some of which are imported but many of which cannot be imported e.g. landscaping hairdresser etc. Innovative and creative etc is all good but we need to make sure there are consumers able to purchase the products we produce here if those products are not exported. Exports = new revenue from outside the economy but if not all production is exported the locals have to consume the remaining inventory. Ergo locals must be able to consume i.e. have disposable income above and beyond beans-rice-rent. = Higher paying jobs. Also missing is either the word 'and' in '...visual arts natural beauty outdoor recreation business entrepreneurship AND urban services with a...' or it's a runon sentence; same thing with 'is supported by excellent education high quality public services that include a...' : this is not a sentence. You need to replace the comma behind 'education' with 'and' or this too is simply not a sentence.</p>

Economic Development Strategy Online Questionnaire		Oct/Nov 2010
Is the draft Vision Statement a Good Future Vision ?	Are there things the City shouldn't do?	Are there Strategies or Actions that Should be Added to the Draft?
yes	<p>Brim Aviation/Air Rescue Systems. Brim is attempting to turn the Ashland Airport into a helicopter training facility. Training pilots involves hours of hovering over the area as well as other noise polluting activities. The neighbors have complained very actively. If this continues more and more of Ashland will be subjected to thundering helicopters. The Airport Commission is promoting Brim as an economic development. We don't need this.</p>	environmentally responsible
<p>The description of the state of our arts higher education and business sectors as "world class" is surely a little presumptuous. May I suggest replacement of "a world class" by "its splendid" as more appropriate.</p>	<p>Urban renewal districts can be financially risky and divert money from basic services requiring Ashland to raise fees or try to pass a supplemental levy to fund police and fire.</p>	<p>This sounds like what Ashland is now. What would be new to improve the economy?</p>

Economic Development Strategy Online Questionnaire		Oct/Nov 2010
Is the draft Vision Statement a Good Future Vision ?	Are there things the City shouldn't do?	Are there Strategies or Actions that Should be Added to the Draft?
yes	<p>Stop giving parking tickets and do away with the meals tax. These practices scare away revenue businesses and tourists. Stop hiring outside out of town consultants and hire FTE's instead to address these issues. If you focused on sustainability then the money savings would come from implementing these practices and it would create local jobs starting with the city. Hire locally. Stop raising taxes- how can we afford to live here? Hire someone to streamline costs - especially operations staff benefits and health care costs.</p>	
I raised 3 children in Ashland have lived here for 35 years. I would like to see something about affordability. It bothers me deeply that the homeowners pay such high taxes to keep this town so lovely. And yes it is the best place to live however my children cannot afford to live here. I get upset when I hear affordability and then my taxes are raised yet another time..	<p>I don't know what the City is thinking about taking on. I know that we had no business taking on the Mt.Ashland Ski resort or the Fiber network. We are a small town. And our budget is ridiculous. I think parks public transportation and jobs are important...not taking on other huge enterprises.</p>	empty
empty	business as usual	Sustainability goals waste reduction doing anything different than it's already being done.

Economic Development Strategy Online Questionnaire		Oct/Nov 2010
Is the draft Vision Statement a Good Future Vision ?	Are there things the City shouldn't do?	Are there Strategies or Actions that Should be Added to the Draft?
Very nice; though some possible additions below.	Leave what you can to private and nonprofit entities (business training development investment) they'll do it better and we need you elsewhere.	I would like to see an emphasis on: parks and open space regional economy with support for local producers efficient non-polluting transportation and energy culture of wellness and sustainability.
don't live there testing	n	test

	<p><b>Economic Development Strategy</b> Online Questionnaire</p>	Oct/Nov 2010
<p>Is the draft Vision Statement a Good Future Vision ?</p>	<p>Are there things the City shouldn't do?</p>	<p>Are there Strategies or Actions that Should be Added to the Draft?</p>
<p>Yes</p>	<p>Not at this time.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>The prose itself is too blah. It needs to hold within its own sentences the qualities it seeks to promote . Maybe a re-write by the local poet laureate .</p>	<p>Regional Political Bickering</p>	<p>inspiration</p>

Economic Development Strategy				Oct/Nov 2010
Online Questionnaire				
Is there anything listed that Should be Removed?	Ashland Citizen?	Work in Ashland?	Live in Ashland?	Any Additional Comments?
Any visitor tax - lodging etc.	Yes	No	21+ yrs	No.
				Good job this effort to engage public; IF we have employers' associations like the Chamber we need to ensure employees have same rights to associate and share information like input prices etc; Ashland needs to diversify beyond tourism rather than fill in the holes in the seasonal tourism we do have because tourism creates temporary low-paying jobs that do not empower consumers to spark the economic engine called 'sustainability' if they have no disposable income to spend here at home and because a diversified economic base will level out the peaks and valleys of the tourism business cycle; and we need to make sure that taxpayer money does not go to private membership organizations. And lose the formatting in the outreach; it's cute but it looks like it came from the marketing department and I can see through that. But all in all Thank you good job on the outreach form aside-
the formatting.	Yes	Yes	6-10 yrs	

**Economic Development Strategy**

Oct/Nov 2010

**Online Questionnaire**

Is there anything listed that Should be Removed?	Ashland Citizen?	Work in Ashland?	Live in Ashland?	Any Additional Comments?
no	Yes	No	21+ yrs	no
No.	No	Yes	0-5 yrs	None.

# Economic Development Strategy

Oct/Nov 2010

## Online Questionnaire

Is there anything listed that Should be Removed?

Ashland Citizen?

Work in Ashland?

Live in Ashland?

Any Additional Comments?

no	Yes	Some	21+ yrs	Let the citizens know what actually gets implemented and changed. Surveys and committees don't always lead to positive action but thanks for trying.
attracting people who may one day want to live here..how about making it feasible for those people who are raised here to stay here..how about hiring LOCAL people to our city jobs?	Yes	No	21+ yrs	I am a public health nurse working with children in Medford. I am not too involved in local politics because my plate is full. I want the housing growth to stop. Pretty simple I am not interested in finding more people to live here. We have enough people here. I don't feel we need to make our plans in order to fleece the pockets of investors builders developers. Focus on job development for the families who live here. Encouraging more folks to live here is just adding to the gentrification of this town. What a loss because this is a beautiful town to raise kids in...
The pats on the back.	Yes	Yes	6-10 yrs	none

# Economic Development Strategy

Oct/Nov 2010

## Online Questionnaire

Is there anything listed that should be removed?

Ashland Citizen?

Work in Ashland?

Live in Ashland?

Any Additional Comments?

No	Yes	Yes	0-5 yrs	<p>The times are changing faast; government is generally not so good at keeping up with trends and trying to 'manage progress'. Please do your best to enhance the simple quality of life and health features that will carry this town to the forefront of community vitality in an uncertain but decidedly greener future. Trust your citizens to do the rest—even if we whine a bit about having to figure it out. It's good for us improves fitness and strengthens bonds. We need to come together in the face of significant global challenges while keeping our local character and focus. Thank you for listening and laboring I care.</p>
	No	No	0-5 yrs	<p>oregon big trouble as a state due to not expanding its urban growth boundaries and electing socialists like kitzhaber what happened to liberal hippies who respect private property rights that's the type of town i'm looking for liberals are not the same as socialists liberals are "live and let live" maybe hippy towns don't exist anymore in oregon with richard whitman in charge of the whole state maybe one has to go to new england to find one i'll have to give your relocation office a call. thanks.</p>

**Economic Development Strategy**

Oct/Nov 2010

**Online Questionnaire**

Is there anything listed that Should be Removed?	Ashland Citizen?	Work in Ashland?	Live in Ashland?	Any Additional Comments?
No	Yes	Yes	21+ yrs	Don't just create a plan make it happen!
?	Yes	Yes	21+ yrs	none

## Economic Development Strategy

### Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to give the City your input on the work done so far in developing an economic development strategy for the community. This project has been going for many months starting with the formation of an Economic Development Committee by the Mayor and Council.

This Committee has been meeting and developing background information and sorting and prioritizing a set of initial draft strategies. The committee is now looking for feedback and input on the initial set of strategies.

Your answers to the following questions will be combined in both summary and detail form and will be used by the committee to refine and further prioritize the strategies. Additionally, the input will be used to develop the actions and activities that will be needed to make the plan successful.

\* This questionnaire is also available online at [www.ashland.or.us](http://www.ashland.or.us)

### Vision

The following Vision Statement was drafted by the Committee to guide the development of the strategies and actions.

**Ashland** is one of the most vibrant and **livable** communities in the West, with a unique combination of performing and visual arts, natural beauty, outdoor recreation, business **entrepreneurship**, urban services, with a small-town openness and friendliness not found anywhere else. Its economy is **adaptive, resilient, and flexible**, built on a world class foundation of the arts, Southern Oregon University, and a vibrant and **creative** business sector that thrives on **innovative** and imaginative solutions to local, regional and global challenges

The economic health of the community is supported by excellent **education**, high quality **public services** that include a commitment to the use of technology to connect our residents and businesses to the global economy. A specialized and **targeted tourism** program is a major economic development asset as well, attracting people who may one day want to live and run a business here.

All of the combined efforts of our **community** are conducted with an active and open civic culture that welcomes and expects a **diverse** range of opinions and ideas.

**Question #1**

Does the draft vision statement include the key elements of what we want Ashland to be in the year 2030?

**Question #2**

Is something missing from the vision statement

**Question #3**

Should anything be removed?

## **Strategies**

Much of the work of the Committee centered around the development of a set of draft Economic Development Strategies to prioritize future efforts for our local economy. The draft strategies were sorted into five major categories and will be refined and prioritized based on public feedback and further committee review.

### **BUSINESS & ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Support/facilitate a system or program to increase access to private investment capital for local businesses, with a focus on “seed funding” for small business start up and expansion.

Expand the tourism season beyond summer peak months and expand events and activities to attract and retain a diverse tourist demographic

Support/facilitate a system or program for ongoing and coordinated efforts to assist and encourage local business start-up, retention and expansion

Develop a set of target industry clusters/sectors to support and enhance new and existing business cultivation, research and job training strategies

## **Education/Workforce Development**

Support targeted education, skills and workforce development efforts to ensure a high quality local workforce prepared to meet both the needs of local employers as well as establish new business start-ups.

## **Diversity/Inclusion**

Encourage and support the availability of all needed housing types at price ranges and rent levels that match up with the incomes of Ashland households

Support or provide programs that enhance and increase business development (start-up or expansion) opportunities across all underrepresented demographic components/elements of our community (age, gender, ethnicity)

Establish and adopt a plan to provide demographic sustainability for the community, ensuring that the overall age demographics provide a relatively consistent student population for our schools

## **Civic Community/Collaboration**

Increase partnerships/involvement with local and regional partners to better coordinate actions and initiatives where common goals and strategies exist

Develop methods/program to increase availability and access to existing local business expertise with existing and emerging business needs (volunteer, peer, retired, etc providing management/financial/marketing/consulting advice & support)

## **Infrastructure/Public Services**

Assure adequate land supplies are available for needed business start-up, growth and expansion

Continue to improve and develop local transportation systems to ensure a variety of transportation options are available to citizens, customers and businesses, both for good receiving/delivery and personal access throughout the community

Maintain quality utility systems meeting or exceeding environmental standards for electricity, water, waste water, telecommunications and storm water with sustainable rate models

**Question #4**

Based on the Vision Statement and Draft Strategies, is the Committee on the right track?

**Question #5**

Which major category from the draft strategies document should the City and the Committee place the highest priority on?

- Business & Economic Growth
- Education & Workforce Development
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Civic & Community Collaboration
- Infrastructure & Public Service

**Question #6**

Are there missing strategies the committee should include?

## Actions

While developing the final prioritized list of strategies, the committee will also be creating an implementation/action plan. Each final strategy will contain many actions to be accomplished to implement the strategy and be successful.

Each action will be assigned to an organization or agency who will act as the lead. The expected timeline for completion, progress and completion measurements and any costs associated with the proposed action will also be recorded

**Question #7**

What is the single most important action the City or other local group could take on?

**Question #8**

Are there existing programs or actions that the City is doing for local economic development that you think should continue or expand?

**Question #9**

Are there any actions that you think the City or other local group should not do or take on?

**Demographics**

Do you live in Ashland? (circle one)

Yes    No

Do you work in Ashland? (circle one)

Yes    No

How long have you lived in Ashland?

\_\_\_ 0-5 yrs

\_\_\_ 6-10 yrs

\_\_\_ 11-20 yrs

\_\_\_ 20+ yrs

## **Additional Comments**

Thank you for your feedback. Is there anything else you would like to add to the citizen involvement record for the Economic Development Committee to consider?

# We'd love your input!

The City is drafting an economic development strategy, and we want your help. Please come to one of the following open house meetings:

**Nov 3rd, 3:00-5:00pm**

Pioneer Hall, 75 Winburn Way

**Nov 4th, 7:00-9:00pm**

Ashland Community Center, 59 Winburn Way

Can't attend? Give your input online at  
[ashland.or.us/econdev](http://ashland.or.us/econdev)

Contact Adam Hanks at City Hall  
for more information:

[adam@ashland.or.us](mailto:adam@ashland.or.us)

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CITY OF  
**ASHLAND**



**Economic DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

*Enhancing economic strength in community*