

Council Communication

Economic Development Strategy Appointments

Meeting Date:	October 20, 2009	Primary Staff Contact:	Adam Hanks
Department:	Administration	E-Mail:	adam@ashland.or.us
Secondary Dept.:	N/A	Secondary Contact:	John Stromberg
Approval:	Martha Bennett	Estimated Time:	20 Minutes

Question:

Does Council approve of the Mayor's appointments to the Economic Development Strategy Policy Group and Technical Advisory Committee, as well as the proposed initial layout of the public involvement?

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Council confirm the Mayor's appointments to both groups and support the proposed public involvement process with the understanding that the Policy Group may adjust the framework as the process unfolds.

Background:

The development and adoption of an Economic Development Strategy has been a Council goal for several years. In 2008, the City Council increased lodging tax rate from 7% to 9% to provide a funding source dedicated to economic development activities. Most recently, the Council included funds for the Economic Development Strategy in allocating transient occupancy tax revenue (February 17, 2009 and Resolution 2008-35) and in the FY 2010 Budget.

On June 17, 2009, the City Council formally adopted its 2009-2010 Goals. The theme of these goals was to improve Ashland's ability to be sustainable well into the future in six major areas. Under the "Economy" section, Council adopted the following goal:

The development and implementation of a comprehensive economic development strategy for the purpose of:

- *Diversifying the economic base of the community*
- *Supporting creation and growth of businesses that use and provide local and regional products*
- *Increasing the number of family-wage jobs in the community*
- *Leveraging the strengths of Ashland's tourism and repeat visitors*

In the July 2009 Council Study Session, Staff presented proposed starting and ending points for the project, as well as a process, public involvement and overall timeline recommendations which Staff has used to move the project forward to this point.

Public Process – Mayor's Appointments

The public process will be guided by two groups appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council. The Policy Group is made up of representatives from various community partners and other key stakeholders and will be charged with laying out the framework of the strategy based on the initial



work of the Economic Opportunities Analysis from 2007 and the accompanying draft implementation plan that Council agreed on as a starting point for the process.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is made up of staff members of the community partners and other local, regional and state agencies involved in various aspects of economic development in our community and region. This group will provide an understanding and working knowledge of current economic development tools and practices and will be a resource to the Policy Group and the City Council in providing feedback on potential strategies and action items discussed throughout the process.

The Mayor's list of appointments for Council confirmation is provided as an attachment.

Timeline

It is anticipated that the groups, upon approved appointment on October 20th, will begin meeting in mid-November, with each group meeting one to two times a month for the next six to eight months. At some point near the mid-way point, meeting times may be suspended while the focus group portion of the public involvement process occurs.

Related City Policies:

Ashland Comprehensive Plan, 3.03, 3 – Citizen Involvement

Ashland Comprehensive Plan, 7.07.03, 3 – Develop and implement an economic development program

Council Options:

1) Confirm the Mayor's list of appointments to the Economic Development Policy Group and the Economic Development Technical Advisory Committee.

2) Provide alternate potential member names for discussion and appointment/confirmation at a future meeting date

Potential Motions:

I move to confirm and approve the Mayor's list of appointments to the Economic Development Policy Group and Technical Advisory Committee

Attachments:

Mayor's list of appointments to the Economic Development Strategy Police Group and TAC
Council Communication 7/20/09 – Economic Development Strategy Kick off



City of Ashland

Economic Development Strategy

Mayor Stromberg's Committee Member Appointments

Policy Group

Russ Silbiger	City Councilor, Chair
John Stromberg	Mayor
Wendy Siporen	Executive Director, THRIVE
Ric Holt	Southern Oregon University, Economics Dept
Dean Cropper	Owner, Cropper Medical/BioSkin Technologies
Mark Marchetti	CEO Ashland Community Hospital
Jim Klein, Provost	Southern Oregon University
Tom Bradley	Bradley Properties/Board Member Ashland Community Land Trust
DeeAnn Everson	Executive Director, United Way of Jackson County
Pam Hammond	President, Ashland Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
Annie Hoy	Board Member, Ashland Chamber of Commerce
John Fields	Golden-Fields Construction
Emile Amarotico	Citizen*
Laurie Gibbs, Owner	Winchester Inn*

* Tentative Appointments

Technical Advisory Committee

Sandra Slattery	Executive Director, Ashland Chamber of Commerce
Larry Holzgang	Oregon Business Development Department
Ron Fox	Executive Director, SOREDI
Jim Fong	Executive Director, Job Council of Southern Oregon
Bill Molnar,	Community Development Director, City of Ashland
John Rinaldi	Citizen/Planning Commission
Jeff Griffin	Regional Coordinator, Economic Revitalization Team, OR Business Dev Dept
Ross Finney	RHT Energy Solutions/Conservation Commission*

* Tentative Appointment

Council Communication

Economic Development Strategy

Meeting Date:	July 20, 2009	Primary Staff Contact:	Adam Hanks
Department:	Administration	E-Mail:	adam@ashland.or.us
Secondary Dept.:	N/A	Secondary Contact:	Martha Bennett
Approval:	Martha J. Bennett	Estimated Time:	90 Minutes

Question:

What direction does Council wish to provide about Staff’s suggestions for kicking off the Economic Development Strategy development for the City of Ashland?

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council direct Staff to move forward with the complete development of a public involvement plan and timeline that will be based upon the conceptual agreement of the project starting point and ending point, i.e. what does the Council want to end up with at the completion of the project, and are we starting from scratch or are we building on existing plans and documents?

Background:

The development and adoption of an Economic Development Strategy has been a Council goal for several years. In 2008, the City Council increased lodging tax rate from 7% to 9% to provide a funding source dedicated to economic development activities. Most recently, the Council included funds for the Economic Development Strategy in allocating transient occupancy tax revenue (February 17, 2009 and Resolution 2008-35) and in the FY 2010 Budget.

On June 17, 2009, the City Council formally adopted its 2009-2010 Goals. The theme of these goals was to improve Ashland’s ability to be sustainable well into the future in six major areas. Under the “Economy” section, Council adopted the following goal:

Develop and implement a comprehensive economic development strategy for the purpose of:

- *Diversifying the economic base of the community*
- *Supporting creation and growth of businesses that use and provide local and regional products*
- *Increasing the number of family-wage jobs in the community*
- *Leveraging the strengths of Ashland’s tourism and repeat visitors*

Proposed Ending Point

Staff recommends that the City’s economic development strategy include:

- A broad description of Ashland’s vision for its economy. Staff recommends that the City begin with the draft vision statement developed by the City Council at its April 2009 retreat. This vision has broad statements related to the economy, and staff recommends that the Strategy include a refined, more detailed vision of the type of economy that Ashland is hoping to develop. Staff believes there is probably strong consensus about a desirable economic future for the community at the “macro” level, and that starting with the big picture will bring people together at the outset. This should make the specific decisions about strategies and actions



- (which could be more divisive) easier later in the process, as they will be measured against whether they move Ashland towards or away from its vision.
- A Traditional “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” analysis to identify the boundaries of the strategy. As outlined below, much of this work was done as part of the Economic Opportunities Analysis done by the Community Development Department in 2007. The Strategy needs to clearly identify Ashland’s core advantages (e.g., strong, loyal visitor base, very high quality of life, high quality workforce) and constraints (e.g., limited land supply, limited water supply, etc.) and relate them to the type of businesses that we want to retain, attract, and turn away. The data from the 2007 EOA will need to be updated to reflect permanent changes in Ashland’s strengths and constraints due to the current recession and related long-term economic condition.
 - A limited set of specific goals for the economy. As with most strategic plans, the success of Ashland’s economic strategy will depend on our ability to agree on a short list of the most critical items that need to be achieved. These goals will likely not include everything that could be done, but rather will contain the actions most likely to have a positive effect.
 - A specific set of actions tied to each of the goals. These actions should be as specific as possible, and should include a timeline, a responsible entity, a proposed budget, and a description of the outcome desired by the action (what is “success?”). A specific outline of the roles of the various entities that are engaged in economic development in Ashland (e.g., City of Ashland, SOREDI, Ashland Chamber of Commerce, THRIVE, Southern Oregon University, Job Council, State of Oregon, Small Business Development Center, Rogue Community College, Jackson County, etc.) is also essential in achieving the intended results.
 - Performance Measures. The City needs to build measures into the strategy to track key economic trends. This will provide feedback about whether the action plan is taking Ashland towards its vision of its economy.
 - Update process. The strategy needs to clearly identify a timeline and process for updates.

Proposed Starting Point

While there is a plethora of data available from various state, regional, county, city and partner agencies, the Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA), completed in March of 2007 provides a great deal of information relevant to the economic status of our community, including demographic, housing, employment and land needs and availability. This document not only includes key data, but it also outlines the existing policies from the City’s Comprehensive Plan, includes the results of community outreach, and recommends a framework for a strategy.

Staff proposes that these documents, including the recommendations from ECONorthwest be the starting point. The key documents from the EOA process are available on the City’s website at www.ashland.or.us/econdev . Staff specifically suggests that Council review pages 14 through 27 of the Preliminary Implementation Plan memo dated June 28, 2007 from Bob Parker of ECONorthwest to the City. Staff will want to discuss whether this document provides a good launching point for Ashland’s strategy.

Staff strongly recommends that we use this document as a starting point. The work done on this project was thorough, included participation of over 300 people, has clear recommendations, and will also assist the City in complying with state land use regulations. . Even though two years have passed and the national economic landscape has changed significantly, the general categories and suggested strategies still seem very relevant to our current economic climate locally. Staff recommends that the



City contract with ECONorthwest to provide a white paper that updates the 2007 data and analyzes how changes in the economy in the world, nation, state, and region affect their recommendations. Otherwise, the seven strategies identified on pages 15 through 18 of the June 28, 2007 Preliminary Implementation Plan seem like a good first proposal for the economic strategy.

Process, Public Involvement & Timeline

Staff has developed a proposed timeline that would have a draft strategy available for formal public and stakeholder review by March/April 2010.

To achieve this goal and ensure a high level of community, business and civic input and involvement, a clear understanding of the starting point and ending point is essential. The following are the primary components in the process with a draft timeline to meet the target date for the final draft document of spring 2010.

Governance Group

Staff recommends that the process be led by the formation of a governance group that would make decisions about the key elements of the Economic Development Strategy and would recommend the draft strategy to the City Council.

This group of no more than 15 people would include an appointed Council member, representatives of groups that the City expects to carry out the strategy when it is complete (Chamber, Thrive, SOU, RCC), other interest groups (such as the Planning Commission or Transition Towns Ashland) and other key stakeholders. Staff has included a list of interests that could be represented on this group as an attachment to this Council Communication.

Technical Advisory Committee

Staff recommends formation to of a technical advisory committee (TAC) to provide support for the Governance Group and “reality checks” to staff on the elements of the strategy. Staff recommends the TAC to get at some of the technical issues that affect the strategy. This group would be made up of various staff of the organizations that most likely would have formal actions and tasks assigned in the strategy.

Members of the eight to twelve member TAC would include staff from organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, SOU, City of Ashland, THRIVE, SOREDI, Oregon Economic & Community Development Dept(OECDD), Jackson County, and Ashland School District.

Focus Groups

In addition to these formal groups with specific roles, staff recommends that the Council consider using focus groups as a specific public outreach method for this project. Staff has been contacted by several specific people with expertise one or more aspects in Economic Development. Some of these people have backgrounds in business. Others have theoretical or research expertise. Many of these people have particular ideas of what the strategy should contain. Staff believes it is very important to engage these people in the process and to capture their ideas. At the same time, they may not be the right people to put on the governance body or on the TAC as they may not have specific implementation roles. It is quite likely, too that some of these people have opinions in direct conflict with on another. Staff currently thinks that the proposed implementation document from ECONorthwest provides a structure to form focus groups. The report summarized the input from the



public workshop into six main categories, and these categories could be used to create focus groups made up of individuals with a keen interest or expertise in that particular category, such as housing, transportation, sustainability/environmental issues, etc. Staff recommends including these focus groups after the governance group has made some decisions about the vision for the economy and about the most critical strategies, but before the specific action steps have been defined.

Draft Conceptual Timeline

The following chart represents a general project timeline that will be fine tuned as the project components and public process elements become more concrete with the formation of the TAC and the Governance Group.

Activity	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Staff Draft Strawperson Document									
Formation of TAC									
Formation of Governance Group									
1st Governance Group Meeting									
2nd Governance Group Meeting									
3rd Governance Group Meeting									
4th Governance Group Meeting									
1st TAC Meeting									
2nd TAC Meeting									
3rd TAC Meeting									
4th TAC Meeting									
5th TAC Meeting									
Focus Group Meetings									
Focus Group Meetings									
City Council Update Meeting									
Staff Draft of Final Doc for Council									
Initial City Council Review for Adoption									

Related City Policies:

- Economic Opportunities Analysis, March 2007
- Ashland Comprehensive Plan
 - Chapter III, Citizen Participation
 - Chapter VII, The Economy
- City Council Goals, 2009-2010

Council Options:

- 1) Provide feedback to Staff on the general agreement and understanding among the Council to move forward with the development of a complete public involvement plan and associated project timeline based on the starting and ending points proposed by Staff. This would also include the drafting of a “strawperson” outline/draft document, a framework for the appointment of members of the TAC and Governance Group

- 2) Request Staff to return to Council with modified starting and ending points and direct staff to adjust the public involvement plan and project timeline to incorporate the additional project elements desired by Council.



Attachments:

Recommended Economic Development Framework – ECONorthwest, June 28, 2007

Ashland Community Workshop Summary – ECONorthwest, April 19, 2007

Sample Action Plan – Corvallis-Benton County “Prosperity That Fits” – October 2006

Additional background information can be accessed at www.ashland.or.us/econdev

