

Ashland
Economic Opportunities Analysis
Grant Project Update

Ashland Planning Commission
May 8, 2007 Regular Meeting

What is this project about?

- Big picture:
 - Identify factors that affect Ashland's economy
 - Forecast employment & corresponding land needs over the next 20 years
 - Identify prospective industries & site needs
- Create a foundation for an economic development plan – goals & strategies
- Identify simple changes to existing Plan policies and ordinances

Required Grant Products - 1st item

- Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA)
 - Technical report – Trends, employment forecasts, land needs, etc.
 - Helps to identify economic development objectives – Where are we? Where are we going?
 - Draft EOA - Complete

Required Grant Products - 2nd item

- Implementation Plan - Goals and Potential Actions
 - Where do we want to go? How to we get there?
 - Web Survey – not scientific
 - March 22nd Public Workshop
 - Draft status

Online Survey Findings

Concerns and issues

- Lack of living wage jobs
- Perception of being anti-business and anti-growth
- Performance of city council, city government, city planning
- Affordable housing: “how can workers afford to live here?”
- Maintaining or improving appearance of town
- Environmental concerns
- Lack of parking and traffic congestion

Ashland: employers' perspectives

- Attractive to employers:
 - Location
 - Quality of life
 - Educated workforce
 - Cultural amenities
 - Good schools
 - Ashland Fiber Network

Ashland: employers' perspectives

- Needs improvement:
 - Affordable workforce housing
 - Reducing red tape
 - Increasing land supply
 - Tax incentives
 - Better public transportation

Approach to economic development

- City should take an active role
 - Majority of respondents believe the City should target specific businesses (64%)
 - Smaller group believe the City should accommodate or manage growth (23%)

Business recruitment

- Business recruitment should be a shared responsibility
 - City
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - So. Or. Regional Economic Development, Inc (SORED)

Economic development initiatives

- City takes the lead:
 - Streamlining development process (rather than reducing fees)
 - Downtown promotion
 - Financial incentives
 - Business retention
 - marketing
- Desired policies
 - Environmental protection
 - Affordable housing

March 22nd – Public Workshop

Economic Development - Goals Identification

March 22nd – Public Workshop

- **Jobs and the economy**
- **Quality of life**
- **Planning and public process**
- **Sustainability and the environment**
- **Transportation**
- **Housing**

Economic Development – Strategies Identification

March 22nd – Public Workshop

■ **Jobs and the economy**

- **Family wage job promotion**
- **Diversity - targeting health care, high tech, biotech, and agriculture industries**
- **Support services for business or entrepreneurs (e.g. “think-u-bators”)**
- **Pro-business attitude - process predictability**
- **Role of SOU - workforce education/development**

March 22nd – Public Workshop

■ **Quality of life**

- **Community involvement in decision-making**
- **Maintaining the quality of schools**
- **Support for cultural amenities (OSF), library, and arts community**
- **Downtown planning – beautification & pedestrian friendly atmosphere**
- **Preserving and creating open space, balance of density and livability**

March 22nd – Public Workshop

■ **Planning and public process**

- **New urbanism design principles**
- **Density and infill promotion**
- **Community-based decision-making process**
- **Land availability, master plan larger properties**
- **Economic development plan – clear vision, goals & policies**
- **Consistency and certainty in the planning process**

March 22nd – Public Workshop

- **Sustainability and the environment**
 - **Prohibit heavy industry - preserve environmental quality**
 - **Green business clusters - incentives for green**
 - **Alternative transportation - rail, transit, etc**
 - **Sustainable business education - State sustainability initiatives**
 - **Lower costs, barriers to green business startups (e.g. expedited review)**
 - **Use of local supply lines**

March 22nd – Public Workshop

■ **Transportation**

- **Diverse transportation plan – focus on public transportation services, improving pedestrian facilities,**
- **Nodal development and density (could promote use of alternative modes of transportation)**
- **Parking downtown**

March 22nd – Public Workshop

■ **Housing**

- **Land supply and expansion of the UGB**
- **Mixed-use, higher density condos and other residential**
- **Use of public land for affordable housing**

Required Grant Products – 3rd item

- Changes to Comprehensive Plan policies and implementing ordinances
 - Compare existing policies to EOA findings
 - Compare existing policies to public feedback – web survey & public workshop
 - Amend existing policies and ordinances

Required Grant Products – 3rd item

- Examples – Inventory maintenance policy
 - **Example Policy:** Maintain an adequate supply of development sites with appropriate zoning and of a sizes necessary to accommodate anticipated employment uses as well as to assist with local business retention

Required Grant Products – 3rd item

- Examples – Inventory maintenance implementing ordinance
 - **Example code amendment:** One hundred percent of the ground floor area shall be designated for permitted or special permitted uses, excluding parking and residential use (applies to mixed-use zones).

Project Status & Next Steps

- **Product #1** - Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) – Final draft complete
- **Product #2** - Implementation Report – potential goals and actions – Consultant drafting stage
- **Product #3** - Potential Plan and code amendments – Staff draft stage
- Grant Closing Date – Products Due – **June 30th, 2007**