

CITY of LA GRANDE

Joint Urban Renewal Agency/City Council Work Session

Monday, March 14, 2022

6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
La Grande City Hall
1000 Adams Avenue
La Grande, Oregon

(In Person Work Session)

You can also view the Work Session on Facebook Live at the following link:
www.facebook.com/CityofLaGrande

AGENDA

The purpose of a Joint Work Session is to provide the Agency/Council with an opportunity to informally discuss topics of common concern and interest and to exchange ideas with Staff, not to make decisions or to direct Staff toward a specific action or conclusion beyond identifying additional information the Agency/Council would like to have presented at a later date. As no decisions are made, there will be no voting at the Work Session. The District/City Manager or members of the Staff may confirm any additional information the Agency/Council requires as part of any future discussions regarding the presented topic(s). If a Work Session topic subsequently requires official action, it will become an action (voting) item on a future Regular Session Agenda. *In accordance with the Oregon Public Meetings Law, this Joint Work Session is open to the public; however, in order to make efficient use of time, public comments and questions will not be entertained during this Joint Work Session.* If you are unable to attend in person and cannot access the meeting via the Facebook link above and need to make other arrangement to view the meeting, please contact City Staff at rstrope@cityoflagrande.org by email or by calling (541) 962-1309 not later than 5:00 pm, Friday, March 11th. Members of the public are routinely provided with an opportunity to address the members of the Agency/Mayor and Council during the Public Comments portion of each Regular Session Agenda.

1. **CALL to ORDER** 6:00 p.m.
~ Stephen E. Clements, Mayor
2. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**
~ Robert Strope, District/City Manager and Timothy Bishop, Economic Development Director
3. **ADJOURN** 7:30 p.m.

Sandra Patterson
City Recorder

Persons requiring special accommodations who wish to attend the Work Session are encouraged to make arrangements prior to the meeting by calling 541-962-1309. The City of La Grande does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities



TO: Mayor Clements & La Grande City Council/Members of the Urban Renewal Agency

FROM: Timothy Bishop, Economic Development Director

SUBJECT: 2022 Economic Development Strategy Work Session

DATE: March 9, 2022

The most current Economic Development Strategy was adopted in 2019 with the intent of being updated every three years. The attached Proposed Economic Development Strategy is also intended to be a three-year plan that will be updated as needed. During the City's Economic Development and Urban Renewal Retreat on January 24, 2022, the Council/Agency asked for a Work Session to review the Economic Development Strategy in more detail. The purpose of this Work Session is to provide that update and validate the plan is in alignment with the Council/Agency's economic development goals. We will seek the Urban Renewal Agency's approval of the plan at your next Agency Regular Session. This Work Session is not intended to address the long-term plan for the Urban Renewal Agency itself, that Work Session is scheduled for September.

The updated Economic Development Strategy maintains the Council/Agency's focus on key targeted business sectors and maintaining a proactive engagement in attracting and recruiting new businesses in those sectors as follows:

1. Recreational Manufacturing and Retail
 - a. Anything tied to the outdoors to maximize our assets
2. Timber Industry
 - a. Mass Timber (Cross Laminated Timber)
 - b. Woodgrain (Supply Chain)
 - c. Other wood product related manufacturers
3. E-Commerce
 - a. Businesses that work from home
 - b. Distribution

The plan also maintains the Council/Agency's focus on utilizing Urban Renewal incentives as a primary driver to develop and assist economic development projects, while identifying additional resources and incentives to help facilitate economic development projects outside the Urban Renewal District (URD) but within the City of La Grande/Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

While maintaining a proactive recruitment focus, the plan recognizes the importance of continued investment in business retention and resiliency. This is key as we continue to see a staggered economic recovery from the pandemic. As a result, significant portions of this plan focus on business assistance and development including existing businesses, new business startups and entrepreneurs.

The plan includes key projects like the Entrepreneur Ecosystem Mapping project currently underway and funded by a Business Oregon Rural Opportunities Initiative (ROI) grant. This work will help ensure a strong frame work of entrepreneur and small business support, and, will help define the form and function of the expanded Ignite Center for Entrepreneurship. This information will also be incorporated with other recent studies, including the 2021 BR&E Report, and used to develop our business retention and expansion efforts.

The most significant new element in the 2022-2024 Strategy is the new tactic focusing on small scale manufacturing.

While we will continue to respond to all viable recruitment leads, this focused approach allows us to prioritize staff-initiated efforts toward small scale manufacturing businesses that align with our top 3 industry sectors identified above.

The focus on small scale manufacturing also recognizes that our recruitment efforts will face many of the same hurdles as our existing businesses including, a tight labor market, employee housing, and access to capital. Small scale manufacturers are also more likely to be right sized for available property or sites currently available in La Grande with the potential to renovate and/or repurpose existing vacant buildings.

A focus on small scale manufacturing businesses also helps increase the potential value of our limited incentive tools, and aligns more directly with many of Business Oregon's tools and incentives that prioritize traded sector, manufacturing, and micro enterprise businesses.

In addition to recruitment, focusing on small scale manufacturing has added value as a retention and expansion tool. Retention and expansion opportunities include working with existing businesses to:

- 1- Scale up and expand production
- 2- Create new sales and distribution channels including online
- 3- Localize the supply chain where possible and expand to fill regional market demand

As we continue to build a culture of entrepreneurship, keying on small scale manufacturing can help emerging entrepreneurs transition from being a cottage industry to a commercial scale.

I look forward to reviewing the 2022 -2024 Economic Development Strategy with you on March 14.

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
Goal 1: Ensure Urban Renewal Agency programs are achieving goals and objectives as set by the Agency and meeting the needs of businesses		
Objective 1a: Periodically assess effectiveness of existing programs		
1	Evaluate Traded Sector Incentive Program.	2023
2	Evaluate Façade Grant Program.	2023
3	Evaluate Call for Projects Program.	2024
4	Revise processes as needed to comply with policy and/or recommend policy revisions to URA.	As needed
Objective 1b: Maximize the effectiveness of the Urban Renewal Advisory Committee (URAC) and Urban Renewal Agency		
5	Fill vacancies on URAC as they occur.	Ongoing
6	Provide training for Urban Renewal Agency and URAC regarding Urban Renewal Programs on an annual basis.	Ongoing
7	Provide orientation training for new URAC members and URA members as appointed/elected.	As needed

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities

Timing

Goal 2: Continue Business Recruitment Efforts

Objective 2a: Refine and implement a focused recruitment strategy

8	Continue active recruitment and attraction for the following priority sectors: Recreational Manufacturing and Retail; Timber Industry; and E-Commerce.	Ongoing
9	Respond to all appropriate recruitment leads regardless of sector or location.	Ongoing
10	Respond to Business Oregon leads that are appropriate for La Grande, including those that could locate within the UGB.	Ongoing
11	Develop a recruitment strategy focused on Small Scale Manufacturing in, or supporting, the priority sectors listed above.	2022

Objective 2b: Utilize URA funding programs and proactive marketing to fill the La Grande Business and Technology Park with an emphasis on selling all Agency owned properties

12	Maintain contract with real estate listing agent to actively promote Agency/City owned properties at Business Park.	Ongoing
13	Market the dedicated CFP funding for projects located in the La Grande Business and Technology Park as tool to fill the Park.	Ongoing
14	Promote the \$200,000 Traded Sector Business Attraction Incentive.	Ongoing
15	Target Small Scale Manufacturing to help increase perceived value of existing incentives.	2022

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
16	Network with other NW communities that have successfully attracted businesses in similar target sectors to develop a list of best practices.	2022
Goal 3: Continue Business Retention and Expansion Efforts.		
Objective 3a: Improve Business Expansion and Attraction Readiness		
17	Develop and maintain a portfolio of available Economic Development resources including local, state and federal incentives.	Ongoing
19	Identify and assist business expansion efforts within the key sectors identified in Objective 2a above.	Ongoing
18	Work closely with the Chamber, Main Street, NEOEDD, and Union County, and other partners to develop a Retention and Recruitment action plan based on the 2021 Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) report.	2022 build team develop plan - 2023 implementation
20	Develop a focused Small Scale Manufacturing expansion strategy focused on increasing traded sector sales.	2023
Objective 3b: Update the Goal 9 – Economic Development Chapter of the La Grande Comprehensive Plan		
21	Conduct available commercial space inventory.	2022
22	Update Goal 9 to evaluate and address the City's goals and priorities for economic development and conduct a commercial land needs analysis.	2022
Objective 3c: Support Partner Organizations in efforts to develop adequate and skilled workforce		
23	Engage La Grande School District's CTE programs for work force development efforts.	As appropriate

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
24	Work with EOU to identify and utilize programs that support business development.	As appropriate
25	Work with Blue Mountain Community College to identify curriculum that could be adapted to support needs of new or expanding businesses.	As needed
26	Work with WorkSource Oregon to promote workforce development programs and employee retention training.	As needed
Objective 3d: Implement Business Retention Expansion and Recruitment Activities for businesses outside the CBZ		
27	Continue periodic check-in with major employers.	Ongoing
28	Continue to share and act on relevant data as collected from various sources.	Ongoing
29	Assist in individual business growth opportunities around industry sectors identified in Objective 2a above.	Ongoing
30	Support local partners efforts to develop more resilient businesses including "Support Local" initiatives.	Ongoing
31	Develop a strategy to localize supply chain using existing small scale manufacturers.	2023
Objective 3e: Utilize Urban Renewal Programs to support business expansion and retention activities		
32	Cultivate Urban Renewal Projects when appropriate.	Ongoing
33	Continue the Call for Projects Grant program.	Ongoing
34	Provide assistance as needed and appropriate to projects that have already received URA funding.	Ongoing

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
Objective 3f: Expand Economic Development Efforts Outside URD (Funding from City's General Fund)		
35	Identify available state, federal, and other incentive programs for properties/projects outside of the URD.	Ongoing
36	Participate in developing a community-wide business recruitment, retention and assistance strategy, using data from the 2017 "Refresh" Plan completed by National Main Street, the Buxton Report, 2021 BR&E report and other relevant resources. Upon completion, implement the strategy within La Grande and the UGB.	2022
37	Market and promote properties outside the URD but within the UGB and City Limits for retail, commercial, and traded sector opportunities as part of overall expansion and recruitment strategies.	2022
38	Recruit Small Scale Manufacturing that is right sized to adaptively reuse vacant properties throughout the community	2023
Goal 4: Create a vibrant Central Business Zone (CBZ)		
Objective 4a: Actively work to fill all available and vacant retail/commercial space within the CBZ		
39	Work with La Grande Main Street Downtown (LGMSD) to conduct retail inventory and space opportunities.	Ongoing
40	Continue to chair the LGMSD Economic Vitality Committee.	Ongoing
41	Continue to review and approve Façade Grants received from LGMSD.	Ongoing

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
42	Work with LGMSD to implement CBZ specific business recruitment, retention and assistance strategy, developed in Objective 3f above.	2022
Objective 4b: Utilize Agency Initiated CBZ Project funding for meaningful projects to address severely blighted or significantly underutilized properties		
43	Develop a program policy that includes specific criteria for project identification and selection outside of the Call for Projects program.	2022
44	Implement new policy once adopted to identify and initiate projects.	2023
Objective 4c: Create more retail shopping opportunities with an emphasis on businesses that generate high foot traffic downtown		
45	Utilize Urban Renewal funds as appropriate to support new retail.	Ongoing
46	Work with LGMSD to conduct a business cluster workshop to identify existing business expansion and recruitment opportunities.	2022
Objective 4d: Create more downtown second story housing to increase downtown viability		
47	Provide technical assistance and resources to projects that are multi-purpose and include first floor retail and upper story housing.	Ongoing
48	With LGMSD to provide workshops on tax credits, incentives and energy efficiency options for historic buildings and second story housing.	Ongoing

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities

Timing

Objective 4e: Increase downtowns economic vitality through tourism and cultural activities

49 Work with community groups as they identify potential projects to help determine feasibility and location.

Ongoing

50 Support EOU projects that link the University to downtown.

Ongoing

51 Work with the Chamber and LGMSD to identify additional ways to promote arts and culture in La Grande.

Ongoing

52 Support the work of Arts Center East as it pertains to economic development.

Ongoing

53 Encourage opening of arts and entertainment facilities and venues.

Ongoing

54 Link City Arts Commission and LGMSD Design Committee on specific arts related projects.

As requested

55 Work with LGMSD and Chamber to coordinate business training on how to market to, and capture more visitor traffic and sales.

2022

56 Work with LGMSD on Wayfinding Signage project.

2023

Goal 5: Encourage Entrepreneurial and Small Business development as a key economic development strategy

Objective 5a: Proactively Encourage Entrepreneurialism and Small Business Development

57 Establish and maintain partnerships with others serving entrepreneurs and small businesses including but not limited to: NEOEDD, SBDC, LGMSD, WorkSource Oregon, and Business Oregon.

Ongoing

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
58	Use the Ignite Entrepreneurial Center, to provide resources and workshops to support new and existing businesses.	Ongoing
59	Refer high growth potential companies to appropriate resources and encourage growth within La Grande.	Ongoing
60	Work closely with EOU entrepreneur program to identify emerging entrepreneurs to keep those new start ups here in La Grande.	Ongoing
61	Develop entrepreneur/small business mentoring opportunities.	Ongoing
62	Partner with LGMSD on monthly business roundtable/resource sessions.	Ongoing
Objective 5b: Continue to develop and expand Ignite Center and services offered Ignite Center		
63	Continue to provide training and network support including remote and Co-Working space to Small Businesses and	Ongoing
64	As part of the current ROI grant, complete the local Entrepreneur Ecosystem mapping project.	2022
65	Track current demand for use of Ignite Center to identify most needed uses and functionality of expanded space.	2022
66	Continue to identify funding for Ignite expansion into the historic Firehouse.	2022 and 2023
67	Work with Entrepreneur Support Organizations (ESO) to implement recommendations from Entrepreneur Ecosystem map.	2023

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
68	Finalize Ignite expansion plans based on funding and potential use requirements.	2023
69	Renovation of Firehouse location and expansion of Ignite Center.	2024 (Sooner if funding is secured)
Objective 5c: Introduce Entrepreneurialism to Students		
70	Work with La Grande School District, LGMSD, City Parks, and other partners to implement a Summer entrepreneur program.	Ongoing
71	Partner with EOU, SBDC and other partners to implement entrepreneurial activities annually.	Ongoing
72	Work closely with EOU's School of Business to identify potential new entrepreneurs and start ups and work to keep those start ups in La Grande.	2023
Goal 6: Market and Educate existing businesses, potential new businesses, and the citizens of La Grande about Urban Renewal Programs and the benefits of Urban Renewal		
Objective 6a: Educate the Public About Urban Renewal Programs		
73	Ensure all marketing materials are up to date including print, electronic, and web based.	Ongoing
74	Maintain listing information, maps and photos for the La Grande Business and Technology Park and other available commercial real estate on the Economic Development website www.lagrandeed.com .	Ongoing
75	Ensure that the Economic development website www.lagrandeed.com provides information around targeted sector recruitment incentives.	Ongoing

Proposed Economic Development Strategy 2022--2024

Goals/Objectives/Activities		Timing
76	Work with partners to list properties on appropriate websites including but not limited to Oregon Prospector and www.lagrandeed.com.	Ongoing
77	Maintain Economic Development social media presence (Currently includes Facebook, Instagram, and Linked In). Use these platforms to showcase local success stories, share incentives, and engage with potential leads.	Ongoing
78	Develop and maintain an Economic Development image archive of successful projects, business activity, and available sites.	Ongoing
79	Draft press releases and provide interview information regarding Urban Renewal programs, projects and committees.	Ongoing
80	Present information about Urban Renewal programs to civic and constituent groups.	Ongoing
81	Complete video project with Brent Clapp Media promoting Urban Renewal in La Grande.	2022
Objective 6b: Promote and Celebrate Business Successes within the Urban Renewal District		
82	Increase online presence of URA and Economic Development using website, social media, etc.	2022
83	Develop section on City Website for project and program updates, as well as celebrations for business successes.	2022