

Purpose

The City of Veneta's Economic Development Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) focuses on priority actions which can be accomplished within one-year (July 2004 – June 2005). The purpose of this short-term plan is to define specific economic development elements, actions, and activities which, once accomplished, will provide a foundation from which to define and pursue long term economic goals for Veneta; hopefully, resulting in an integrated approach to energizing economic development efforts in the broader Fern Ridge Area.

Background

An Economic Development Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) was developed in 2002-2003 as part of a grant to Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) using Lane Video Lottery Funds. This strategic plan:

- Provided relevant demographic and economic data to describe the community, its economic status and workforce;
- Described the city's assets that are useful in attracting and retaining businesses;
- Assessed issues that the community faces in developing its economy;
- Developed broad strategies to address those issues;
- Identified types of employers that would be compatible with the existing economy and workforce and that are most likely to be interested in locating in the Veneta area;
- Identified issues that would help Veneta prepare for the addition of such employers; and
- Assisted in the preparation of industry sector targets for the community.

From such background information the City decided to refine and prioritize the strategies identified in the Strategic Plan and assign specific actions and activities with which to implement them (Implementation Plan). An Economic Development Implementation Plan Team (Team) was established and consisted of the following members:

DeAnn Cherbas, Vice President and Manager, Citizens Bank
Thomas Cotter, City Councilor, City of Veneta
Leonard Goodwin, City Planning Commissioner, City of Veneta
Ric Ingham, City Administrator, City of Veneta
Tami Sakany, President, Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce
Kari Westlund, President & CEO, Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County

Denise Walters, Assistant Planner, Lane Council of Governments, worked in the capacity of facilitator to help develop the Implementation Plan.

Findings and Conclusions

In a series of meetings and a process of ongoing refinement, the Team identified five (5) key elements of an Implementation Plan, actions and activities under each plan element, lead agencies, timelines, and budgets. The key implementation elements are:

1. Marketing and Outreach
2. Workforce Readiness
3. Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure
4. Business Development
5. Economic Development Advisory Committee

Implementation Plan elements 1-4 emerged from what the Team considered basic nuts and bolts of economic development. Information from the Strategic Plan combined with Team members' experience provided a springboard from which to set the agenda of actions needed to develop an economic development "tool box" for the City. Each action was refined to the next level by defining specific activities that would have the cumulative effect of completing the action step.

While working through the process, the City and the Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce were either named as the sole lead or shared the lead on each one of the implementation activities. This raised the question as to whether or not there is a role for an ongoing Economic Development Team. If so, what would be its primary role? How would it be structured? Who would participate? If no Economic Development Team was in place, who would be responsible for keeping the Implementation Plan efforts on track? Who could provide guidance on questions which arise during implementation? Who and how would a long term economic development plan be established? Additional information and case comparisons are needed to determine the best structure for furthering Veneta's economic goals. Implementation Plan element 5-Economic Development Advisory Committee reflects the need for further investigation.

Discussion brought a number of issues to the fore, however the group returned again and again to one particular question: How can we define implementation actions if we do not have a community vision to work from or towards? After considering a number of issues, the group came to the conclusion that it is necessary to provide a number of basic elements with which to realize any vision. These basic elements became the Implementation Plan elements outline above. Another conclusion reached was that it would be timely to begin a community visioning process so that the City of Veneta and the Fern Ridge area are well poised for building on the accomplishments of this short term implementation plan and for addressing the issues the community faces as it continues to experience rapid growth.

Plan Element #1: Outreach and Marketing

Outreach

Action 1: Educate City Council, City Planning Commission and City Staff about the Needs of Relocating and/or Expanding Businesses.

Activities:

- Ask industry professionals on the most pertinent needs of businesses wishing to expand or relocate.
- Develop a relocation checklist.
- Presentation to City Council, Planning Commission, and Chamber of Commerce.

Lead: City of Veneta

Timeline: September 2004-December 2004

Budget: Staff Time

Action 2: Begin Community Visioning Process.

Activities:

- Discuss with City Council for input and support.
- Identify broad list of stakeholders.
- Seek stakeholder input and support.
- Establish a plan for funding of a visioning process.

Lead: City of Veneta and Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: July 2004-September 2004

Budget: Staff Time

Marketing

Action 3: Market commercial/industrial lands through a Targeted Industry Sector Approach with particular attention directed to:

- Organic and Natural Agriculture
- Secondary Wood Products
- Transportation/Recreational Vehicles
- Technology Transfer/Incubator
- Healthcare Industry

Activities:

- Utilize the State of Oregon-Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD) marketing templates to develop marketing materials (both print and web) to promote Veneta and to attract targeted industries.
- Upgrade and update City of Veneta's website.
- Seek assistance from Lane Metro Partnership in developing and disseminating marketing materials.
- Establish and strengthen relationships with other economic development partners (ex. become a member of Oregon Economic Development Association-OEDA).
- Gather testimonials and develop collection of press clippings and media exposures of local businesses.

Lead: City of Veneta

Timeline: July 2004-December 2004

Budget: \$2,500 (website development \$1,500; OEDA membership \$500; marketing materials \$500)

Action 4: Identify a process for the community to respond to questions or opportunities for economic development and to help organize the area's economic development resources.

Activities:

- Develop FAQ sheet.
- Designate a point of contact.
- Articulate Veneta's industrial/commercial permitting processes as a "how to" guide for business.

Lead: City of Veneta and Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: July 2004-September 2004

Budget: Staff Time

Action 5: Provide regular updates to the Lane Metro Partnership and economic development partners on potential developable sites.

Activities:

- Update City of Veneta's website to include listing of developable sites.
- Establish relationship with property owners of potential developable sites.
- Invite Lane Metro Partnership for a community tour.

Lead: City of Veneta

Timeline: July 2004-September 2004

Budget: Staff Time

Plan Element #2: Workforce Readiness

Action 1: Support Lane Community College (LCC) Elmira Learning Center's efforts to enhance development of tailored workforce training and distance learning opportunities.

Activities:

- Play a more active role on the Elmira Learning Center Advisory Committee.
- Assess workforce training needs in the area.
- Coordinate with Lane Workforce Partnership.
- Poll other communities to determine what programs other Learning Centers offer.

Lead: Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce & Veneta City Council

Timeline: June 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff Time

Action 2: Development and delivery of continuing skill enhancement opportunities to area business owners, their employees, and the community as a whole which complement LCC opportunities.

Activities:

- Identify appropriate courses (ex. E-myth video series).
- Utilize Chamber business survey results from February 2004 to identify business development and other workforce preparedness needs in the area.
- Repeat the survey with businesses who are not Chamber members.
- Work with LCC and the school district to maintain needed training facilities.

Lead: Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: September 2004-December 2004

Budget: Volunteer Time and Mailing Expenses

Plan Element #3: Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure

Action 1: Support the development and implementation of strategies to enhance Veneta's downtown area.

Activities:

- Reevaluate City of Veneta's Urban Renewal Plan.
- Explore funding options to support plan refinements.

Lead: City of Veneta

Timeline: November 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff Time

Action 2: Provide guidance on commercial/industrial building design standards

Activities:

- Review best practices/model code with Planning Commission in special work session.
- Link with longer term community visioning goals.
- Identify examples to show potential developers of development design options and community preferences.

Lead: City of Veneta Planning Commission and Community Groups

Timeline: September 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff Time

Action 3: Fiber optics and telecommunications.

Activities:

- Maintain involvement with Southwest Oregon's Regional Fiber Optic Consortia through Veneta's membership in the fiber South Consortium.
- Seek financing opportunities to improve broadband connectivity in Veneta.

Lead: City of Veneta

Timeline: July 2004- June 2005

Budget: Staff Time

Action 4: Acquire new municipal well sites.

Activities:

- Purchase acceptable property.
- Confirm water rights.
- Construction of on-site water facility.
- Pursue exploration of future well sites.

Lead: City of Veneta

Timeline: July 2004-November 2004

Budget: \$710,000 (property acquisition \$60,000; engineering \$90,000; legal \$10,000; facility development \$550,000)

Action 5: Secure funding for capital projects to provide highway access to the Northeast Employment Center.

Activities:

- Develop a concise document that identifies proposed expenses, available resources and funding limitations.
- Increase coordination with federal, state, and county agencies.
- Highlight the need with our congressional representatives.
- Bring the Governor's Economic Revitalization Team (GERT) for a tour of the community and the Northeast Employment Center.

Lead: City of Veneta

Timeline: July 2004-October 2004

Budget: Staff Time

Plan Element #4: Business Development

Action 1: Identify a entrepreneurship program which best suits the City of Veneta

Activities:

- Research existing programs (ex. Soreli, local, state and national).
- Compare models to survey response data.
- Determine resources to fund entrepreneurship program.

Lead: Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce and City of Veneta

Timeline: July 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff Time

Action 2: Investigate opportunities to develop an incubator facility.

Activities:

- Continue conversation with property owners of potential available sites.
- Coordinate with existing incubators and research barriers to start up.
- Complete feasibility study to determine viability.

Lead: Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: June 2004-June 2005

Budget: Volunteer Time and Cost of Feasibility Study

Action 3: Develop an outreach program to better understand and meet the needs of local businesses.

Activities:

- Establish processes and procedures for conducting one on one interview with local businesses.
- Conduct a community survey to determine what products and services residents would purchase locally.

Lead: City of Veneta (large businesses)
Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce (small business)

Timeline: June 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff Time

Timeline: June 2004-June 2005

Action 4: Identify resources to nurture business retention efforts

Activities:

- Identify materials and forums for educating local business owners about tools and resources for growth (visionary component to business).
- ESRI Business Information Solutions (ex. ArcView Business Analyst).
- Establish link with the University of Oregon School of Business.
- Establish assistance teams in the Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce (ex. Marketing Team, Accounting Team).

Lead: Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: June 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff Time

Plan Element #5: Economic Development Advisory Committee

Action 1: Recruit and hire a full time economic development City staff member to oversee economic development in the City of Veneta and the Fern Ridge Community. The staff member will work with business recruitment, job development, and business retention. The staff member will also be responsible for developing marketing strategies designed to promote the City as a business destination.

Activities:

- Insure that the funds are available to support the hiring of new economic development staff member.
- Actively recruit new staff member through active advertising.
- Secure office location and office furnishings and equipment.

Lead: Economic Development Committee and the City of Veneta

Timeline:

Budget:

Action 2: Identify steps that would move the City toward a long-term plan for economic development.

Activities:

- Coordinate with state and county efforts.
- Integrate with community visioning goals.

Lead: City of Veneta & Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: September 2004-June 2005

Budget: Volunteer and Staff Time

Action 3: Explore the potential role of an Economic Development Committee in the development of a community visioning process for the Fern Ridge area

Activities:

- Survey other small cities to see if they have an Economic Development Committee, what role it plays, and how it works.
- Survey regional efforts of economic development to identify other potential structures to facilitate economic development.

Lead: City of Veneta & Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: June 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff and Volunteer Time

Action 4: Development of Advisory Committee to Oversee Actions within the Implementation Plan.

Activities:

- Determine Advisory Committee composition.
- Recruit Advisory Committee members.
- Define Advisory Committee role and implementation process.
- Serve as a trouble shooting team if obstacles are encountered or momentum slows.

Lead: City of Veneta & Fern Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: June 2004-June 2005

Budget: Staff Time and Volunteers