

**Oregon's Economic Revitalization Team:  
A Comparative Case Study of  
Two Development Projects  
Within the Willamette Valley Region**

By

MATTHEW FISHER

TERMINAL PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

**OREGON'S ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION TEAM:  
A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF TWO DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS  
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By Matthew Fisher

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee: Professor Jean Stockard  
Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management

In order to prepare for incoming industry and economic growth opportunities, local government and private interests alike must receive guidance from a host of state agencies regarding land use, water resources, building codes, and the like. The Economic Revitalization Team (ERT), consisting of ten state agencies, was created in 2003 by House Bill 2011 to streamline state and local efforts and coordinate state resources for economic development projects around the state of Oregon. The purpose of this study is to look into how the ERT's efforts at streamlining and coordination contribute to its goal of better serving local and regional government through a comparative case study of two Willamette Valley ERT projects, one in Newport, Oregon, and one in Junction City, Oregon. While customer satisfaction surveys serve as one assessment of the ERT's efforts, this study compares and collates the perceptions of both service recipients (customers) from the public and private sector as well as representatives from the ERT member agencies. The results include an analysis of the primary themes that comprise the ERT's streamlining and coordinating efforts as well as recommendations for enhancing these efforts going forward.

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## INTRODUCTION

Economic and community development researchers have noticed that throughout the United States, states are moving away from so-called “industry attraction efforts, or “smokestack chasing” strategies and economic policies that place a huge emphasis on job creation (Bradshaw, 1999, 230). Previously, if a state or local government needed to revitalize their receding economy, it was commonplace for them to offer tax incentives and creative subsidies to attract specific businesses from all over the country to their location. In today’s global market, economic development at the state level has shifted away from focusing on single corporations toward the development of marketplace establishments. The advantage of this economic development strategy is summed up by Ted Bradshaw and Edward Blakely (1999):

“With the complexity of the global market, a region must be coordinated to compete and...the advantages of one state over another lie in how resources are networked and mobilized to ensure growth of a whole economic cluster” (p. 243).

Oregon’s current economic development system was brought into existence by executive order in 1997 to develop a collaborative approach to community building efforts in the state (FHWA, 2006, 1997). The ultimate focus of this program was livability, which complemented the state’s popular land use and environmental protection policies. However, in 2003 the 72<sup>nd</sup> Oregon Legislative Assembly, via House Bill 2011 (HB 2011), declared a state of emergency and required immediate action for economic revitalization throughout the state. As stated in HB 2011 (2003), “half of Oregon’s counties were currently listed as economically distressed” and it had “the highest unemployment rate of any state” in the country (p. 1). Around the time that Governor Ted Kulongoski was sworn into office in January 2003, economists suggested that Oregon was facing one of its “largest budget deficits since the Great Depression” (Governor Kulongoski’s Biography, 2008).

One way that Governor Kulongoski responded to this emergency was to make a priority of “improving state agency service delivery on community and economic development” (GERT, 2003, p. 1). Thus the Community Solutions Team was restructured, becoming what is now the Economic Revitalization Team (ERT). This new program shifted the focus from community livability toward increasing industrial development. According to HB 2011 (2003), one of the reasons to focus on industry was that Oregon was predominantly a small business environment in which the average number of employees per business was twenty-five (p. 1). Coupled with an eroding infrastructure, this created a great need for change in economic development policy.

In an attempt to rebuild the economy and respond to the demands of this new direction of economic development, Governor Kulongoski, by way of an executive order in 2003, placed emphasis on the important role that industrial land plays in today’s global economy. Within this order, he made numerous references to the relationship between Oregon’s distressed economy and its shortage of industrial lands.

As Governor Kulongoski states on the ERT’s website, the ERT’s role is “to be a connection between my office and local government and to work with state agencies to coordinate, leverage and streamline state agency actions, investments and permits on

local economic and community development projects” (<http://www.oregon.gov/gov/ERT/message.shtml>). One of the core principals of this initiative is to encourage agencies to work across “boundaries and in partnership with local government and businesses to create and sustain healthy, vibrant and economically resilient places to live while maintaining the integrity of Oregon’s natural systems by restoring and protecting for present and future generations.” With regard to land use policies, building clearance, road alteration and the like, several state agencies need to interact with each other and provide efficient guidance to local agencies and businesses in order to identify and prepare sites for incoming industry, in effect streamlining the regulatory system.

The ERT is comprised of ten different state agencies. These agencies, are the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), Department of State Lands (DSL), Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD), Department of Consumer Business Services (DCBS), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE), Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), and Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS). The ERT is charged with coordinating funding and providing technical assistance in local development projects. The ERT itself has five dedicated staff members based in the Governor’s Office, each assigned to two of the ten ERT regions. In addition to the Regional Coordinator (the ERT-dedicated staff person), each ERT region has designated contact people from within the various ERT member agencies, one of whom serves as a chairperson for the regional team (this position rotates periodically).

In 2006 the Oregon Progress board conducted a survey to determine how satisfied “customers” were with the services of six agencies that participate in the ERT. The overall focus of the study (2006) was to:

Gain an “understanding [of] the value customers place on a variety of customer service characteristics...participating agencies are able to quantify, through actionable data, the level of satisfaction customers have with the services they provide. The participating agencies may utilize results to track progress toward customer service standard goals, set new measurement benchmarks, and enhance planning and decision-making processes” (p. 7).

The customer satisfaction survey found that the ERT’s strength was in the area of knowledge and expertise. However, the ERT rated poorly in the area of availability of information. The 2006 survey had a response rate of 53% for the 196 subjects surveyed.

Although it is important to measure the satisfaction of those to whom services are provided, it seems equally important to understand the impressions of those providing the services and to view the perceptions of both providers and receivers together within the context of a given project. Thus, the objective of this study is to add a more comprehensive view of the services provided by the ERT by examining the perceptions of a range of people involved in a particular ERT project. This study is not an attempt to supplement the customer satisfaction survey but, rather, to put into context, through a comparative case study, how the ERT serves its clients in regional and local level governments.

Using the case study approach as a research strategy is appropriate, given the nature of this study. As Robert Yin explains, “‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are more

explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies...this is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence.” (Yin, 6). Gathering perceptions from all of those involved (both service providers and recipients) in a particular ERT-assisted project and pinpointing those “operational links” is one of the overarching goals of this study. Therefore, this study will compare and contrast the perceptions of the ERT of two groups, those receiving services at the local level and those providing services from the state level, in two distinct ERT projects.

To help narrow the scope of this study, I will focus on two aspects of the ERT’s process, the foundation of which are coordinating and streamlining, by attempting to answer the following question:

How do Oregon’s Economic Revitalization Team’s (ERT) streamlining and coordination efforts contribute to its ultimate goal of better serving local and regional governments?

As a way to consolidate the array of service elements involved in the ERT process, the words streamlining and coordination will represent the larger, overarching topics under which varying themes discovered within this study will be organized. For the purpose of this study, streamlining is defined as making a system or organization more effective and efficient by employing faster or simpler working methods and coordination is bringing the different elements of a complex activity or organization into a relationship that will ensure efficiency or harmony (Oxford American Dictionaries, n.d.).

## **PREVIOUS LITERATURE**

Economic development programs at all levels of government have been a relatively popular topic in policy literature. Some of the popular themes found within this literature, relative to the focus of this study, include: The evolution of state and local approaches to development, different reasons for development strategy adoption, and third-wave development efforts.

With the evolution of state and local approaches to development, Enid Beaumont and Harold Hovey (1985) describe the wavering contention between the autonomy of state and local development strategies and their dependence on federally funded programs, which often come with rigid regulations. In their view, state and local governments are tied to the federal tax system in a way that disadvantages both sides. Overall, they appear to favor a system in which national-level funding would be funneled directly to smaller communities and the “priority-setting, resource allocation, and administration would be performed by state and local, not federal, employees” (p. 332). With regard to the different reasons for development strategy adoption, Martin Saiz (2001) uses three “conceptual frameworks,” competitive federalism, fiscal comfort, and state ideology to explain why various governments choose different development strategies to arrive at the same projected outcomes. His findings suggest that at the local (state and municipality) level of government, “interjurisdictional competition not only seems to produce policies of questionable efficiency, but hampers innovation.” As for



third-wave development efforts, Ted Bradshaw and Edward Blakely (1999) suggest that states are moving away from development incentives focusing on retention and expansion of a state's existing firms and toward local industrial development efforts by "creating the context for economic growth through public-private partnerships, networks that leverage capital and human resources to increase the global competitiveness of a group of strategically linked firms" (p. 230). They claim that "the key to [such] programs is a supportive economic development marketplace rather than payments to firms" (p. 230). In Oregon, the ERT addresses some of these themes, particularly the notions of partnering to strategically allocate and leverage resources and relieving competition between jurisdictions by enacting planned collaboration across state agencies and vertically between state and local government. Again, it is the ERT's responsibilities of helping to streamline and coordinate these efforts and strategies that is the focus of this study.

## METHODS

In an effort to gain a more in-depth view of the ERT process, two elements of its service—its collaborative tools and its streamlining methods—will be assessed using a multiple case study approach. The perceptions of both ERT services providers and recipients will be examined. Gathering the perceptions of stakeholders providing services at the state level as well as those of current recipients of the services can complement the satisfaction surveys that have been conducted and provide an additional perspective.

### *Participants*

Due to time and budgetary constraints the scope of this study comprises just two ERT projects taking place in the Willamette Valley/Central Oregon region of the ERT (WV/CO ERT). This region accounted for 105 of the 196 ERT service recipients sampled in the previous ERT study. Because information on ERT recipients is not publicly available, I first conducted informal discussions with both the ERT Coordinator and the Chair of the WV/CO ERT. The aim of these discussions was two-fold: To generate a list of past or current ERT projects in the region to target as possible cases and to identify the two projects that are most relevant to the purpose of this study. The two projects identified were a project in the coastal City of Newport to develop its South Beach area and a project in Junction City, where the complex task of laying the groundwork for constructing a prison and a mental health hospital has encouraged the ERT's participation.

After identifying an initial contact for each project, I telephoned them to express my interest in conducting an interview to discuss their outlook on the ERT's handling of their project. From the beginning, I used the snowball approach to gain additional participants. After each interview, I asked the participants if they knew of any other ERT service providers or recipients who might be a good addition to my study. This technique enabled me to conduct six 40-minute interviews for each case study (for a total of twelve). For both cases combined, the interview subjects included five ERT service providers who represent the project-related agencies that make up the ERT and one non-

ERT state agency representative as well as service recipients, comprised of four local level government officials and two local business leaders.

### *Interview and Research Design*

John Creswell (2003), in explaining the advantages of using interviews as a data collection method, said that interviews were “useful when participants cannot be observed directly, participants can provide historical information, [and it] allows researcher ‘control’ over the line of questioning” (p. 186). Recognizing the interview to be closely aligned to the needs of this study, I used it as the primary means of collecting data. I created a list of fourteen questions to be used in every interview. To help shape and maintain the appropriateness and integrity of each question, I used an in-depth interview guide (Boyce, 2006). (See Appendix A)

Following the first step of the guide, I identified my stakeholders and the type of information I needed from them. In this study my stakeholders are those directly involved in the ERT process in each of the two projects studied. My intention was to examine perceptions of the ERT process, particularly those perceptions related to the ERT’s coordinating and streamlining efforts. As it was important to get input from stakeholders on both sides of the process, for the South Beach project in Newport, for example, I gathered the views of the ERT process from members of the ERT representing their respective agencies within the ERT, as well as the perceptions of City of Newport officials. The goal was to create a collective perspective that would provide a richer, broader view of the ERT’s activities.

The second step involved developing an interview design that included a protocol for how I would introduce, conduct, and conclude the interview, engage each participant and record their responses, and what I would do following each interview. The third step focused on how to craft questions: creating only open-ended, factual as opposed to opinion-based questions, and probes to better guide and elicit the answers I was looking for.

In relationship to my research question, my main topics were the streamlining and coordinating efforts displayed by both the ERT service providers and service recipients. So last, I outlined the important themes associated with each topic that I wished to explore during the interview process. After completing the guide, I used it to help craft and shape the questions I would use during the in-depth interviewing process. (See Appendix A)

### *Data Gathering*

I conducted each interview using a digital voice recorder and a telephone recording jack to record entire conversation. I served as the interviewer, asking each participant a series of questions closely related to the experiences they had while working within the ERT process—with the intent of eliciting responses that would help answer the overarching ideas fostered by my research question. I initiated each interview by acquainting my participant with the salient features of the interview topic. Additionally, before each interview, I reiterated the rights that my interviewee had as a research subject according to the rules of conduct established by the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon. Each participant was reminded that their participation was voluntary, that their decision whether or not to participate would not affect their

relationship with the ERT and its affiliates, the University of Oregon, or me. To establish a rapport, the first question was treated more as a way to ease into the rest of the interview—providing comfort and building trust in order to elicit a rich response to each question.

It may be worth noting that, in the interest in confidentiality, the use of the plural pronoun “they” is used throughout this study when referring to individual participants. This is done to protect, insofar as gender is concerned, the identity of the participants. Also, all interviews are cited herein using “Interview Participant” and a number in an attempt to protect the anonymity of the interview subjects.

### *Data Analysis Phase I*

After each interview, the data gathered was carefully and completely transcribed from the original digital voice recording into Microsoft Word format. To help facilitate this arduous process, I used Macintosh-friendly transcription playback software called Express Scribe which replaces the transcription foot pedal with designated “hotkeys” on my computer’s keyboard. Transcripts of all twelve recordings resulted in over eighty pages of data.

For each ERT project, I then saved all six transcribed documents first in Rich Text format and then downloaded them into TAMS Analyzer software, a Macintosh-enabled qualitative analysis program. Next, I inductively analyzed each transcript allowing various themes, concepts, and relationships to emerge out of the data (Tesch, 1990, 87). Each topic and related theme was subsequently assigned a code within TAMS Analyzer and each code was assigned to various pieces of information within the transcript. When the coding process was completed, I had generated two primary categories, based on my overall topics, streamlining and coordination. As noted above, for the purpose of this study, streamlining is defined as making a system or organization more effective and efficient by employing faster or simpler working methods and coordination is bringing the different elements of a complex activity or organization into a relationship that will ensure efficiency or harmony (Oxford American Dictionaries, n.d.). I also generated sixteen subcategories based on related themes (e.g., communication, facilitation, engagement) within streamlining and coordination.

After coding the data, I printed a list of each code (which included a category (topic) and subcategory (theme)) with its relevant text. Next, to determine the data that would be used in the findings section of each case study, I identified the most pertinent pieces of information from within each list.

### *Data Analysis Phase II*

In an attempt to uncover the “how” in how do the ERT’s streamlining and coordination efforts contribute to its ultimate goal of better serving local and regional level government and to help better inform the discussion section of this study, each of the case study’s findings were further analyzed. Because the discussion section is an interpretation of the findings and the responses that make up the findings were subjective, I decided to divide the responses into positive, negative, and neutral categories in an attempt to lessen, to some degree, the subjectivity inherent in this study. By looking at all responses collectively, as opposed to case study by case study, this would also help to compare parallel themes in both cases.

To do this, I divided the coded information (participant responses) into three categories, those that reflected positive experiences or opinions, those that reflected negative experiences or opinions of the ERT's streamlining and coordination efforts, and those that were neutral toward the ERT's process or concerned activity outside the ERT, but integral to the project. This allowed me to provide a simplistic numeric representation of all the themes discovered during the first phase of data analysis and to pinpoint which were the primary themes that appeared to offer the greatest explanation of the contributions to streamlining and coordination.

Next, I compiled the following information in a table (see Appendix D): the number of responses tallied for each theme, the percent of each theme's responses in relation to the total for all responses, and the number of positive, negative, and neutral responses for each theme. From this list I determined three primary themes under each topic (streamlining and coordination) on which to focus. The primary themes were those that received the greatest percentage of responses in both cases within each topic. For instance, under streamlining, the themes of compromise, facilitation, and understanding have been identified as primary themes. The remaining themes were less often mentioned and thus are not addressed in the discussion section.

### **CASE STUDY ONE: SOUTH BEACH PROJECT (Newport, Oregon)**

In recent years the City of Newport has witnessed an increase in population, which has consequently placed greater pressure on both the private and public sectors to encourage opportunities for economic growth. One way the City wishes to accommodate its growth is to increase the level of commercial and industrial land available within the City of Newport's urban growth boundary (UGB). According to its 2005 Plan Amendment draft, the City suggests that "to address the commercial land need, the proposed strategy is to meet a third of the commercial land need in the South Beach area" (p. 9). To both accommodate the projected economic growth of Newport and maintain an adequate level of commercial land within its UGB system, as required by the DLCD's statewide Land Use Goal 9, Newport officials have pushed to rezone and re-designate part of the South Beach area. This move has led to increased scrutiny from state agencies, particularly ODOT and DLCD.

Apart from the mitigation needed to accommodate wetlands impacted by the City's proposed changes, most of the issues raised in relation to this activity have to do with impacts to the South Beach area's transportation corridors. As one document illustrates, "the circumstances in Newport are similar to many other coastal communities. Highway 101 [Newport and the South Beach area's main transportation corridor] is constrained by geography, topography, amenity-based transportation patterns, [and] natural resources (wetlands)" (Newport Transportation White Paper). This is further complicated by a more technical view of ODOT's "mobility standard... [as] a volume to capacity ratio..." and the assumption that "capacity is measured at the thirtieth highest hour, kind of the peak travel times." "And so Highway 101 actually has a pretty high mobility standard." In other words, mobility standards are put in place to minimize congestion in areas where highways intersect with other roadways. But in Newport's case, where the primary road is a state highway already close to full capacity, any further

development along this transportation corridor could push the area beyond its capacity limit. Furthermore, Newport's peak travel times are on the weekends rather than during weekday commuter hours, as experienced by other Oregon cities. Because of these inherent complexities, one of the larger issues faced by the stakeholders in this project is how to reduce the impacts that the proposed development will have on the transportation corridor within the South Beach region of Newport. That is, how can they achieve the needed industrial development while maintaining or lowering the current levels of traffic congestion experienced along the South Beach section of Highway 101?

The issues raised by ODOT and DLCD postponed Newport's proposed land use changes and subsequent development. It was at this point that Newport officials turned to the ERT for help, with the expectation that the ERT would coordinate efforts from all sides, streamline the efforts of the various parties, and get the City back to where it needed to be in relation to permit approval and state level endorsement of their project. To a large extent, this expectation was met and continues to be met as ERT members, collectively and individually, find ways to mitigate and correct most of the issues surrounding the project. The transportation corridor issue, however, required more effort. As mentioned above, ODOT and the City of Newport, along with other ERT member agencies, realized that any development along Highway 101 could put it at or above capacity. As a result, ODOT devised an Alternative Mobility Standard, used only one other time, as a way to mitigate this issue. One ODOT representative argues:

We kind of looked back into the agency and said, okay, there's just no way we can meet the mobility standards on this section of highway because, gosh, we have this fabulous old bridge, this historic bridge in Newport and there's no way we're going to get rid of that bridge, so—and we don't have the money and we don't have the desire. So how are we going to leave that constraint in place and still help this to happen? And that's where we work through these different scenarios of, well we can have alternative mobility standards, but what does that look like? So they came up with some options of it could look like this or it could look like that, or maybe we could do a combination of things. So that's what we've done kind of behind the scenes as well as maybe identifying those phase one-type—here you can get started on your project, you can get your initial thing off the ground; you can have your highway connection at this location; this is what you have to do in the very immediate time frame to get started. (Interview Participant 6, personal communication, December 11, 2008)

In the results section below I discuss the participants' views of the process that the ERT used, and, especially, how the process met goals of coordination and streamlining these areas related to economic development.

## **Results**

The discussion below is organized around the two pivotal topics of streamlining and coordination and examining participants' views of how the ERT's service providing process involved these topics. Within each topic a number of specific themes emerged during data analysis.

### Streamlining

The interviews with participants in the South Beach ERT project revealed a number of themes related to producing a system that was streamlined. These included compromise, frankness and proactivity, flexibility, timeliness, understanding, and facilitation. Streamlining, once again, is one of the two elements at the core of the ERT's service-providing process and is defined within this study as making a system (or organization) more effective through the use of faster or simpler methods.

*Compromise.* Here, compromise is defined as a middle state between conflicting opinions or actions reached by mutual concession or modification to better the streamlining process. Numerous participants in the South Beach project described occurrences of compromise as one way in which activities were streamlined.

As the nature of this project has placed significant stress on the transportation corridor that runs through the area, both the DLCDC and ODOT are the primary agencies engaged in the City of Newport's South Beach project. Most of those interviewed agreed that ODOT's use of the Alternative Mobility Standards (AMS) as an affordable way to find that balance between the project and its effect on traffic was a testament to ODOT's commitment to finding a solution. As some participants put it, ODOT is "open to considering changes to their policies..." and the "Alternative Mobility Standard is "new ground for them" but "they seem willing to explore that possibility." Another participant mentioned the interest ODOT had in "accommodating urban growth and a compact development pattern in the City of Newport." They expressed their agency's continued effort to forge a relationship with other ERT agencies and "discuss ways that they can meet their interest" while considering "changes to their [own] standards."

Despite the willingness and the intent of ODOT to support the South Beach project, a few participants witnessed unnecessary roadblocks to the streamlining effort. One went on to explain the administrative rigidity of some of ODOT's staff members and the challenge of finding a balance between ODOT and the larger community interest of the City of Newport. And another explained that they "feel like we don't get very far, very fast with ODOT because they're entrenched in one-size-fits-all for their policies."

Because ODOT is the largest and, as many participants suggested, the most bureaucratized of the agencies serving on the ERT, it seems that they gained most of the attention when it came to the ERT's level of willingness to compromise. However, the City of Newport received its fair share of criticism. Most of those interviewed agreed that the City's willingness and enthusiasm helped push the early stages of the process along. Nonetheless, with regard to the flexibility needed to work through some of the policy differences between state and local level governments, one participant suggested that there is a general lack of agreement to "additional land-use controls on the intensity of development that occurs along the highway." This particular issue pits the DLCDC and ODOT's policies and regulations against the needs of the South Beach project. As many pointed out, the need for facilitation by the ERT on this particular project hinged on what the City of Newport needed and also on what had taken place before the ERT services were solicited. According to the perceptions of a few ERT members, the streamlining taking place between the ERT and the City would have been drastically improved and expedited if the City would have heeded their warnings early in the process. It was acknowledged that compromise must come from both sides of the bargaining table and

one specific ERT interview participant warned the City of the possible repercussion of moving forward without first addressing crucial issues.

*Frankness and Proactivity.* Frankness is defined as being forthcoming; that is, divulging information to help create a better environment for streamlining. Proactivity is the ERT's ability to create or control a situation by causing something to happen rather than responding to an event after it has happened. Both elements appeared in participants' discussions of Newport's experience with ERT.

Most of those interviewed suggested that both the City of Newport and ERT member agencies were eager to help facilitate and offer the information needed to streamline the process. Some ERT members said the City had been "very forthcoming" in their efforts, that "city planners and the city managers were both forthcoming about the things the City could do to facilitate ODOT's interest and research a solution." Another, reflecting on the initial engagement of the process, said that "city planners and the city managers were both forthcoming about the things the City could do to facilitate ODOT's interest and research a solution." It is clear that most of the ERT members interviewed were happy with the information provided by the City and their complete willingness to offer this information.

As to the frankness between members of the ERT, one participant suggests that "it would be worthwhile for the state agencies to have a frank discussion between the agencies that are going to be involved, about what the regulations are...what the issues are" so as to "operate from a common level of understanding."

Thinking and responding proactively was another area within streamlining that made a good impression on ERT members. For example, when asked about their impressions of working with City of Newport officials, one participant expressed that the City has been "perceptive about ODOT's policy and the expectation of that policy..." Others acknowledged this proactive behavior, but insisted that the City had missed opportunities to take charge and make things happen at their end. One example suggests that a "point-person" be instituted to ensure that "things made it through our [the ERT's] process". From the City's perspective "it would be more helpful if they [the ERT] had more authority to make decisions." The same participant also acknowledges that the primary agencies within the ERT process are "limited by what level of administrative rules and permitting processes that already exist in a state statute or state regulation." One way they could help mitigate this issue is to have ERT members "help direct staff time or put more emphasis on a particular project to get a quicker resolution."

*Flexibility.* Flexibility is defined as a particular agency's or service recipient's ability to adapt to the often-changing circumstances involved with streamlining. When it came to the ability of one agency to adapt to the needs of another agency within the ERT, one participant recognized that "there was some concern and some resistance to participate by a least one ERT agency early on." One explanation for this sort of reaction may be that "there has to be a certain amount of comfort level attained to actually move forward and to develop trust and finding solutions." One testament to the importance of comfort and trust-building suggests that the most helpful thing would have been for the City to "actually follow our advice. It would have been so much easier had, you know, we not had to file the appeal [against the City's interpretation of ODOT's transportation planning

rule] and get to this agreement on how to proceed because it just made the whole situation uncomfortable,” and “being more upfront and flexible at the beginning of the negotiation phase, well before the ERT was involved, would have been more helpful.”

Another ERT member suggests, reflecting on the transportation issue of road capacity on and around the location of the projected development in Newport, that “the City needs to...more fully understand that the [transportation] system is going to be operating over capacity” and as a result, the City should “consider how land use could be restricted.” In other words, the City will have to somehow adapt their plans to accommodate this need for balance within the transportation corridors of the project area. A City of Newport perspective on the same issue revealed that one ERT service provider was “considering some changes to some of the wetland permitting regulations to help better address...wetland permitting issues or impact issues associated with infrastructure or transportation facility development.” This particular participant felt that by “amending some of their administrative rules in certain areas,” ERT agencies can better serve the local government’s interest.

An example of the inherent difficulties that some agencies within the ERT face when trying to help numerous unique projects was revealed when one participant suggested that the Alternative Mobility Standard, the tool used to find different ways to accommodate the transportation side of a project, was “really a Highway Commission issue...it goes beyond what we’re able to fix on a local level.” And so the larger problem, as set out by this participant, is “how can we use the tools we have to solve this problem and make it fit within the framework that our transportation commission has set out for us?” That is, how can an agency become increasingly flexible within the larger ERT process?

*Timeliness.* For the purpose of this study, streamlining efforts done efficiently or occurring at a favorable or useful interval address the theme of timeliness. When I asked one participant if they thought the point of streamlining was to “expedite the process—push it through,” they suggested that if one were to look “at the outcome that would have taken place without this process, it’s a definite streamline.” But, “if you’re looking at, you know, how long this specific process took, it could be viewed as being a long one.” This sentiment was reiterated by another participant who suggested that both sides of the ERT should “cut through the early processes where we get to know one another and relationship building and trust and all of that because “we’ll be able to get right into the meat of the issues a little bit faster...” And although this individual didn’t “want to speak for” the City, they were still sympathetic to the level of frustration the City representatives must have been experiencing when trying to get things moving through each of the state agencies for the project.

There were a few who thought the ERT and the City were doing their best to not get hung up on trivialities and to push the process forward. When asked about the changes that were made within one participant’s ERT member agency that helped “make the process more helpful and efficient,” they explained that although their agency did not notice any significant change take place, they did witness that it was “quite easy” to “have a place at the table” and that they “were able to get the people who needed to be [at the discussion] there and in a timely way.”



*Understanding.* Being sympathetically or knowledgeably aware of the nature of another agency's or ERT affiliate's situation characterizes understanding. Because there may be rules on the permitting process within one agency that inadvertently have an effect on other agencies, an awareness of other stakeholders' perspectives is important.

However, as one ERT member mentioned, this is precisely one of the reasons that the streamlining process within the ERT is at times difficult. As a result, there is a push and pull that happens as agencies within the ERT try to better understand what policies have to be modified to accommodate the ultimate goal of the project, which should remain at the forefront of each of those involved in the permitting process. For example, responding to a question related to the City of Newport's Transportation Plan, one ERT member suggested that by "having a plan, it doesn't ensure that the process goes smoother." Furthermore, when reflecting more on the role that the City of Newport played in crafting a transportation plan for this particular project, the same participant expressed a little frustration when City officials "triggered a land use change," setting off a series of events that could have been avoided if the proper channels had been used in the first place. This change has made it difficult for ERT members to coordinate their efforts and streamline the needed permits to proceed with the City development plans.

Most of the participants acknowledged a general lack of awareness relating directly to how one agency's policies could have affected the policies of another. One ERT member even reflected on their own unawareness, conceding, "had I been a little bit more aware, I probably could have made... a more specific outreach to the City, and tried to get their elected officials to understand the consequences" of their decisions before they were made. As a way to both acknowledge the problem and offer a suggestion, another participant asserted "it would be worthwhile for the state agencies [associated with the ERT] to have a frank discussion between the agencies that are going to be involved, about what the regulations are... what the issues are... so that all the agencies are operating from a common level of understanding."

*Facilitation.* This is defined as helping to guide the streamlining process and make it easier for other ERT service providers and recipients. When asked about their impression of working with City of Newport officials on this project, one ERT member said, "Oh, it was great! I think that we... have felt like that we were partners with local government." The mayor, city manager, city attorney, public works director, and especially the community development director, "have been really good to work with and have been trying to roll up their sleeves and help."

The City's view of the role that facilitation has played within the ERT process has been favorable, although different from that of the ERT participants' view and not always constructive. One participant said that they "appreciate the ERT being able to at least listen and provide input in the process." Another stated that the ERT "can't change state statutes for state administrative rules. They can't change state processes. All they can do is help facilitate the coordination among the agencies, which I think they've attempted to do." Additionally, "whether it's the ERT itself or individual members of the ERT,... I think having the ERT aware of the process and in support of the project of what we're trying to accomplish has been able to help maybe facilitate resolution of some of those transportation planning issues, related to the access permit."

Even though it was understood that administrative rules and state statutes largely dictate what the ERT can do, one participant said that one way the ERT could improve its streamlining process would be to encourage individual ERT members to “help direct staff time” in order to put “more emphasis on a particular project” and to “get a quicker resolution.” Another way agencies could better facilitate and serve local level governments is to have both creative and constructive alternatives to agency policies. Most agreed that ODOT’s Alternative Mobility Standard allows ODOT to start with the outcomes and find creative ways to shepherd the City’s efforts toward them.

In summary, the themes found in the South Beach project that concerned streamlining were compromise, frankness and proactivity, flexibility, timeliness, understanding, and facilitation. Ultimately, these themes help explain and give insight to the level of efficiency and effectiveness performed by the ERT when providing services within this project. However, there are other themes, such as those found within the area of coordination, that are also integral to the efficacy of a collaboration-centered organization like the ERT.

### Coordination

As one of the ERT’s primary functions, coordination results when the various elements of a complex activity or organization are brought together in a way that ensures efficiency or harmony. Participants from the South Beach project uncovered several themes related to coordination, namely, accommodation, compromise, facilitation, frankness, timeliness, and communication.

It is worth noting that four of these themes (compromise, facilitation, timeliness, and frankness) were also identified in the streamlining section above. For the purposes of streamlining, these themes emerged in response to questions about expediting and simplifying processes whereas for coordination, the corresponding themes related to relationships and interactions between stakeholders.

*Accommodation.* One agency or ERT member accommodates another agency or ERT member by fitting in with the needs of the other. Whether working with Newport city officials or members of the ERT, most participants were largely happy with the way one agency or city official accommodated another.

There was a general exhibit of productive exchange. For example, when one participant was asked about coordinating efforts among various ERT members, they claimed that the agencies within the ERT have “sort of, cross-pollinated and know what other agencies are doing...” The ERT has been effective in being “able to have that framework in place that we can coordinate very well.” Another participant suggested that city officials have “come to the table and rolled up their sleeves and provided.” “A lot of people I’ve seen have said, ‘we just want out of this regulation,’ but I don’t believe the City of Newport has done that at all.” Instead, “people have been given assignments and come back to the next meeting and provided us good information.” “They’re invested and engaged.”

When asked whether the City of Newport was responsive to the ERT’s requests, one ERT member suggested that it was important to consider that the coordinating

process “involves an exception or a variation from the agency’s standard approach.” This participant felt that there are central questions that are important to address, such as, “what are the other things that a local government can do that substantially advance the state’s interest, what are the criteria or standard for treating a local government differently, or how does the agency adapt its practice and what is a reasonable set of things to expect from local government when there is some variation from the standard?” Trying to see things from a local government perspective, this participant suggested that if a particular agency is “uncertain about what its expectations are” that it inherently “creates problems for the local government.”

Reflecting on their agency’s accommodating nature, one participant argued that “when somebody comes with a specific project...this triggers a whole series of things... So what we have done is try to facilitate kind of behind the scenes...what is it that we can do? ...Let’s problem solve here so that we can offer them [City of Newport]... how we’d recommend going about that.” Another ERT member witnessed this accommodating attitude as they pointed to a key figure within the ERT that wasn’t necessarily appointed as its champion, but has assumed this position as a result of their tireless effort to pull the various agencies together so that there has been “more consistent agency response for the project.”

There were very few suggestions for improving the accommodation aspect of the ERT process. However, one participant advocated that “agencies...need to be buying off on the ERT process and getting comfortable with moving forward on the assistance.” Keeping the “end objective” of the project in perspective and not getting “hung-up on each of the particular administrative rules or barriers.”

*Compromise.* This is defined as a middle state between conflicting opinions or actions reached by mutual concession or modification to better coordinate efforts between agencies or individuals. Reflecting on the level of compromise between this project’s two pivotal ERT agencies, the DLCD and ODOT, one participant stated, “I think DLCD, and the staff of DLCD and the Governor’s Office have [been]...very active and supportive in helping us coordinate with the different agencies as well; and, to support the overall concepts of a project...” Looking at the role ODOT played, this participant was sympathetic to the way in which ODOT assisted the City side of the South Beach project. Granted, “It [ODOT’s approach] may not be best...or smoothest process for accomplishing what they want to accomplish. But, that’s not necessarily staff responsibility, it’s more of how the administrative rules are...either applied or written—the process they have to follow.”

Directing attention to the City of Newport’s numerous concessions in the name of better coordination between state and local level efforts, one participant states that the City may “not like some of the solutions, some of the things that people have asked of them, but they sort of...continue the process.”

There were a couple of participants that felt there was a general lack of compromise within the ERT process. When asked if they had any recommendations for future ERT service recipients, one participant suggested that the “agencies also need to be buying off on the ERT process and getting comfortable with moving forward on the assistance. And trying to have a cooperative attitude...” One question the ERT should collectively consider is “how do we address these issues and how can we reach the end

objective if they all agree that the end objective is worth reaching?” Another participant said, “It... was difficult to get beyond, you know, ‘this is the way we do things and so live with it.’” Others also felt there were times when some of the ERT members showed no signs of moving beyond the immediate needs of their respective agencies in order to cater to the larger needs of the entire project starting with the outcomes and figuring out ways to achieve those outcomes.

*Facilitation.* In terms of coordination, efforts at facilitation related to relationships and collaborating with others and is concerned with helping to guide the coordinating process.

One area that created greater facilitation between City officials and members of the ERT were smaller group meetings. From the ERT service provider perspective, the question surfaced, “we need to solve this problem and how are we going to do it?” The answer, as one participant remembers it, was to suggest getting “a smaller group together and do that.” They reflected, “after that initial meeting, when the small group started to meet, that’s the point at which we became more able, you know you’re just more nimble with a smaller group, and more able to maybe focus on some solutions or potential solutions.”

Some participants recognized a need for improvement in how the ERT conducts itself as a facilitator of each agency’s permitting process and showing their respective service recipients how to arrive at their ultimate goals. When one ERT member was asked what could be done to improve coordinating efforts for future ERT service recipients, they explained, “You know, there’s probably something I could have done better to kind of bring them [City Officials] along.” They continued “I would like to maybe develop a work plan or action items...something more tangible so everybody’s working off the same sheet of music,” create a framework to “identify milestones...to get from point A to point B.”

*Frankness.* This is defined as being forthcoming and up-front by divulging information in order to help build trust and spur coordination. Drawing attention to the importance of the stakeholders’ frankness when trying to coordinate efforts toward large-scale projects like this, one participant points out “the community [City of Newport] provides us with notices of land use actions that are proposed land use actions for any development that is happening in town” “And these measures are both excellent...for keeping the agency informed as to what sort of things could affect the highway operations and transportation within Newport and allows us...an opportunity to coordinate what our needs are with the City’s land use process.” When asked about the responsiveness of Newport City Officials, one ERT member said, “They’re very cooperative with regard to meeting location. They have provided information and suggestions, you know, how they can see moving forward with this. They’ve sketched-out what they believe is a problem statement.”

Some felt there were times during the process when the City officials were less forthcoming and therefore counterproductive. One participant suggested that City of Newport officials should have been more forthcoming when a subcommittee meeting got “together and an issue that really wasn’t planned for the agenda came up early, that

actually threatened the entire project, was whether or not we could actually do alternative mobility standards or not... And I hoped that that would have come up way earlier so we could have worked that out prior to that first meeting.” Another participant sheds light on this issue by raising the question of “whether or not the City’s going to be forthcoming on additional land use controls... “I can’t say the City hasn’t been helpful in doing that. It’s just that the conversation hasn’t gotten to that point, yet... I... think that’s...going to be the litmus of whether this works out.”

*Timeliness.* Coordination efforts made at a favorable or useful interval address the theme of timeliness. Reflecting on whether or not the ERT was timely, one participant suggested that “the issue for the larger agencies is more difficult than smaller ones. It’s harder to get that authority chain kind of all worked out... But I think that [the] ERT has helped pull that all together. Basically, they’re a coordinator, but also, it sort of enables the state agency staff members to try to think that they need to work on getting all those authorities worked out ahead of [the] meeting.” A different participant had another suggestion about timeliness: “as a result of being better prepared for the discussion, the process about...how to move forward would be able to move more quickly...” This would happen because “everyone would already understand what is on the table and what’s not on the table.”

Most participants were less impressed with the timeliness of the ERT process. Regarding a clash of cultures between some of the bigger agencies that make up the ERT, one ERT member acknowledged that their agency has “a transportation group, too. And, you know, a lot of times, our folks feel the same as ODOT’s. We’re sister agencies. What I’ve seen in this process is that even our transportation people that are specialized come to the table thinking that there’s another solution to this from the status quo. And I think that ODOT has started to come around to that, but it’s been slower.” Another view of ODOT’s timeliness suggests that “in bigger agencies, sometimes you have to do extra work to go up and down the leadership chain to make sure you have authorization to move forward with collaborative solutions.”

*Communication.* Communication is the flow of interaction or approach used by agencies and service recipients that either helped or hindered coordination efforts.

One ERT member describes their experience communicating with the City of Newport as a form of “collaborative communication. More of a face-to-face, more of a sit-around-the-table instead of across-the-table.” The communication was “not an agency letter at the last minute prior to a hearing to a city council or to a planning commission. It’s early—that’s very important.” Another participant shares this sentiment explaining that “informal communication with other [agency] staff members is always helpful in identifying what the issues are.” In addition to the open and relaxed approach to communication some other ERT members see the “internal communication...between and within state agencies...is... very transparent [and]... couched in more of a partnership.”

Some participants found that making the meetings and communication environments smaller was helpful. An ERT member said that they “received a request to get together as state agencies to make sure we were all on the same page...” Out of this engagement they “identified a subcommittee group that would continue to work on these

issues.” An indication that this action was helpful came from another participant, who suggested that after an initial meeting with ODOT to help define the alternative mobility standard and how it may apply to the South Beach project, that they formed “a subcommittee and met several times and we communicated by email.” They suggested that “most of the work happens in our subcommittee meetings.” The smaller group seemed to make for less convoluted communication.

Another helpful communicative tool was the use of presentations to help contextualize the issues surrounding the project. One City official said they thought “it’s been helpful at the ERT meetings being able to do presentations that show kind of what we’re doing and show what issues are in making the agency folks involved in the ERT process more familiar with the project so that when the permitting stuff comes through that they have the understanding of what’s going on.” They continue, “Being able to have more familiarity with the overall concept of what the City is doing and attempting to do, I think it’s useful [that] the members of the ERT [are] able to do those types of presentations and have communication with the individual members and individual agencies...”

*Engagement.* Engagement is establishing a meaningful contact or connection with another agency, an agency member, or a local level official. One way ERT agency members and City of Newport officials have engaged one another was to start early in the process. An ERT agency member said that the ERT has “helped because we’ve been able to use the ERT coordinators ... the people out the Governor’s Office to sit down with us and meet with us internally and our agency and discuss some of these issues so we can get on the same page when we go out and meet with folks.” Another member felt that it was their agency that has “been one of the more motivated to coordinate with other agencies...” they have “...crossed-pollinated and know what other agencies are doing and we developed those relationships that we need to have those discussions.” “And it has been a tremendous amount of help when we get onto one of these projects...to be able to have that framework in place...”

Coupled with this early engagement process was an interest from some of the ERT members to meet “as state agencies before we came to the table with the City to make sure that we had our deck in-line and that we were kind of understanding...what the City’s perspective was...and how we would propose to help with that.”

Other factors that helped better engage and coordinate efforts between the ERT and the City, were the initiative, level of interest displayed, and how invested each player was in finding a solution. As one ERT member said about their experience with city officials, the City “was always in attendance, they came with ideas, [and] they were always very engaged in the dialogue. So they’re interested in solving the problem and not just making [the agency] solve the problem for them.” They added, “I find that to be really the basis for any successful project...whoever you’re working with, they have to be just as interested and invested in a solution, and take responsibility for it.” Another member, having had a similar experience, said that the City of Newport “brought ideas, how they could modify their development codes and things like that. Again, they’ve been a willing participant and a collaborator versus just somebody who just sitting at the table saying... “How are you going to fix my problem?”

Although most of those interviewed felt that both sides were well engaged, there were still a couple who thought otherwise. When asked if improvements can be made to the coordinating effort for future ERT service recipients, an ERT member responded “I think that we could do better at coming to the table, probably getting managers within state agencies fully engaged in [the] ERT would help.” When asked if there was “any isolated agency within the ERT system that you felt was unhelpful,” another member suggested that one particular agency could be more helpful, but largely understood the obstacles that the agency itself faced—“obviously they’re bound by the process.” To add greater detail to their explanation this member added that “if there’s an agency process that has been...frustrating or has been taking longer than would be anticipated...it’s probably going through the ODOT permitting process... Then again, part of that is not necessarily a function [of] ODOT’s unwillingness to help the city facilitate the project. Part of it probably [is] also a function of what ODOT administrative rules require, or how they’re implemented by the individual staff.”

For coordination, the themes found in the South Beach project included accommodation, compromise, facilitation, frankness, timeliness, communication, and engagement, some of the keys to synchronizing the efforts of ODOT, DLCDC, and the City of Newport. Ultimately, these themes have been identified to help explain *how* the ERT services come together in an effective and well-balanced way. A look at all the themes found within both streamlining and coordination reveal the ERT’s methods and relationships, which give insights to its effectiveness with regard to these two key areas.

While no two ERT projects are the same, the subject of the next case, the Junction City Project, shares some key ingredients with the South Beach project in Newport. Not only are both located in the Willamette Valley/Central Oregon ERT region and are lead, or facilitated, by the same ERT team, but in both the ERT’s involvement was initiated by a city government, the projects are still ongoing, and they include heavy involvement from two of the larger ERT member agencies, ODOT and the DLCDC. In the South Beach project, however, these two agencies are the primary state agency stakeholders, but in Junction City, this is not the case.

## **CASE STUDY TWO: JUNCTION CITY PROJECT (Junction City, Oregon)**

Upon learning that the construction of two new state facilities in Junction City had been proposed by the Oregon Departments of Corrections (DOC) and Human Services (DHS), the City of Junction City held a meeting with state and local officials to determine next steps. The WV/CO ERT was contacted and was instrumental in planning that initial meeting. Out of the meeting came a plan to request a “customized periodic review” of the city’s comprehensive plan. While a standard periodic review is an assessment that takes place at scheduled intervals to ensure that a local government's comprehensive plan, land use regulations, and provisions for housing, employment, transportation and facilities remain in compliance with the statewide planning goals and other rules identified in the related Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), a customized periodic review is a process through which “the Economic Revitalization Team may work with a city to create a voluntary comprehensive plan review that focuses on the unique vision of the city, instead of conducting a standard periodic review” (Department of Land Conservation and

Development). The customized periodic review, completed in 2008, informs Junction City's current comprehensive plan, which consists of a five-year work plan that includes such tasks as reviewing existing buildable commercial/industrial lands in Junction City and exploring UGB expansion options, completing a wetland inventory, and analyzing the potential for growing industry and employment in the City.

The customized periodic review allows cities to have a "more focused periodic review and it doesn't open up [their] entire comprehensive plan or implementing ordinances to scrutiny by a whole bunch of state agencies... That really helps keep things focused on track and gets the work done in a much shorter time frame... [and] allows cities to be... more visionary" (Interview Participant 12, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

However, the completed customized periodic review itself has also led to some debate in this project and, consequently, some challenges to the ERT's efforts. Because this type of review is a new, recently available option, several interview participants have noted that although the review was intended to tailor the city's plans to its unique circumstances, some participants have described instances in which some state agencies have been reticent to adapt their interpretations of their own administrative rules accordingly. For example, "Originally the ERT recommendation, which would include funds so that Junction City could hire... [a] staff person that could take over the day-to-day duties of the city planner so the... planning manager/planning director could work strictly on... the CPR [customized periodic review]... ran into a bit of a funding quagmire... when [one state agency]... decided they didn't like it because they didn't want to go along with that because they typically don't pay for staff" (Interview Participant 12, personal communication, January 21, 2009).

In addition to the newness of the customized periodic review, there are several other factors that point to the complicated nature of this project which, unlike the South Beach project, further challenges the ERT's process. These include the construction of a new prison and a hospital as well as plans to expand the City's UGB. Some of the city's infrastructure, namely its water and sewer facilities, as several participants have pointed out, will need to be upgraded in order to accommodate the new state facilities. And, in addition to the DOC and DHS projects, the area may also accommodate a new site for Grain Millers, Inc., a private business looking to expand its operation. Wetland mitigation, another costly adjustment, will impact not only the state agencies planning construction and the city itself, but also any potential private industry planning to build.

The most significant potential cause for challenges in the project—and another difference between this and the South Beach project—is the number of stakeholders. IN addition to the two key entities this study looks at, the ERT member agencies and the local governments they serve, other key players in this case include members of private industry as well as representatives of non-ERT member agencies, the DOC and DHS, to name just two. In essence, this latter group may also be considered service recipients, but it does appear to add a level of complexity in terms of the ERT's process.



## Results

Again, some of the pivotal figures in this project were agencies that do not have a place within the ERT process. Nevertheless, the ERT is still a major facilitator and finds itself in a unique position, in this case, of trying to streamline and coordinate for a larger variety of stakeholders. The findings illustrate themes that emerged during data analysis that are related to both streamlining and coordination.

### Streamlining

The nine themes that emerged regarding streamlining in the South Beach case also appeared in the Junction City case.

*Compromise.* Here, compromise is defined as a middle state between conflicting opinions or actions reached by mutual concession or modification to better the streamlining process. Several participants in the Junction City project expressed a need for greater compromise.

From an ERT member's point of view, those in decision-making positions within the ERT seemed less willing to compromise than others with whom they had been involved. Part of this, as one participant suggested, was an "internal" struggle. Many agency representatives within the ERT seemed to not fully grasp the difference in this project from others. Because of the size and the various state and local level agencies involved, it was agreed by both the DLCDC and Junction City officials that customized periodic review (CPR) was the right facilitating tool to use. However, it was hard for this participant to have fellow ERT members put their respective agencies rules and regulations aside "and realized this [CPR] is different than any other kind of periodic review."

The same participant pointed to an issue within their own agency as another example of need for greater compromise within the ERT streamlining process. Because, they said, Junction City is a relatively poor city and the staff at the City were overworked, the ERT originally recommended some funding go toward hiring "a full time staff person that could take over the day-to-day duties of the city planner" to allow Junction City's planning director to "work strictly...[on] the CPR." This led to an internal problem within one of the state agencies that "didn't want to go along with that because they typically don't pay for staff." For this participant, those agency decision makers did not fully understand the special needs of this particular project and the benefit this funding for staff would provide.

*Frankness.* Frankness is defined as being forthcoming; that is, divulging information to help create a better environment for streamlining. Most of those interviewed mentioned little or nothing on the forthcoming nature of the ERT or its service recipients. However, one private sector participant working closer with Junction City than the ERT had favorable things to say about the ERT's coordinator, Marguerite Nabeta. In Nabeta's quest to organize and facilitate the ERT meetings, the participant suggested that her efforts have "helped us in getting to know the right people, putting names with faces...and letting us know what information is needed." Furthermore, she has put together follow-up meetings with this participant, which again helped this individual

know what information was needed “to provide to Junction City which will meet the State’s requirements for their review process.”

Some participants described experiences that point to a lack of frankness on the part of the ERT; these perceptions had more to do with the lack of a cohesive timeline that both the ERT and local level officials agreed on and stuck to. One participant was growing increasingly frustrated with the inconsistency of the projects timeline. First, certain stages of the project were to close at “the end of this year [2008], then it was thought to be January, February of ’09.” They continue, “Now, you know, that timeline is probably the middle of next year [2009] and I still don’t know for certain that it will not be pushed back again.”

Although DHS and DOC do not participate in the ERT, one Junction City official mentioned that it would be helpful to know more about “some of the decision-making internally.” This participant felt the ERT could help by encouraging these agencies to better inform their service recipients.

*Proactivity.* For the purpose of this study, proactivity is the ERT’s ability to create or control a situation by causing something to happen rather than responding to an event after the fact. This was a theme that garnered a less than favorable reaction. When asked to describe their impression of working with Junction City and the ERT during the [ERT’s] streamlining effort, one participant, highlighting the ERT’s shortcomings, suggested that “Junction City is very open to problem-solving solutions,” unlike the ERT, which is entrenched in rules and regulations so much that it is difficult for the ERT to think “outside the box.” Other participants had similar concerns. One participant alluded to the ERT’s “disorganized” nature and another pointed to its lack of after-meeting “follow-ups.” Many of those interviewed had concerns about the ERT’s ability to take charge of certain meetings and negotiating situations in order to help push the needs of Junction City forward.

Some participants suggested that the service recipients also need to work more proactively. Reflecting on the unique elements of this project, one participant said it would be a better help to the ERT if local governments already had certain infrastructure in place before calling on the ERT.

*Flexibility.* Flexibility is defined as a particular agency’s or service recipient’s ability to adapt to the often-changing circumstances involved with streamlining. Because of the unique circumstance of the project and its impact on Junction City’s infrastructure and housing, the City was required to work with the ERT on the agreed elements within its customized periodic review (CPR). The CPR provided opportunities for flexibility on both sides of the project. The CPR was a relatively new process at the time, an alternative to the standard approach that state agencies take with local level governments. As one participant explains “Junction City... [was] the first child to be birthed through the customized periodic review” process. As a result, this participant continues with the analogy, “you have certain labor pains... a big part of it is just kind of getting to the point where you understand this new process.” One of the issues that the City had to understand with the new process was its expense: some of the necessary changes outlined by the state agencies involved in the CPR process were going to be too costly for Junction City. So, the City and ERT member agencies worked together to spread the cost

“over two biennia, instead of one.” Overall, this participant believed that both the City and their agency “were doing a fairly good job of getting through these birthing pains under customize periodic review.”

Some elements of the CPR process showed less favorable signs of flexibility. For example, one participant explained the difficulty of working with the periodic review advisory team, a group charged within reviewing Junction City’s CPR. This team, as explained by this participant, “is like a representative from all the different agencies that [each] have administrative rules” and they all “want to jump in and say, ‘Oh, you got to deal with this, you got to deal with that’... And we’re [one of the ERT agencies] kind of going ‘No, the commission approved this customized periodic review’” and, because of the uniqueness of the project, the CPR outlined only particular actions.

*Timeliness.* For the purpose of this study, streamlining efforts done efficiently or occurring at a favorable or useful interval address the theme of timeliness. Trying to describe what appears to be an often misunderstood process of the ERT, one ERT representative suggested that “the thing that probably is the most problematic [referring to the ERT process]” is whether the issues brought to the attention of the ERT are presented in a timely manner. This participant went on to say that a large number of the problems presented to the ERT originate outside of the ERT’s control. Because the ERT sometimes becomes the face of a particular issue, there are many on the outside (in the private sector or local level governments) who perceive the ERT as “not helping a whole lot because it just seems like more bureaucracy to them.” Thus, the timeliness issue appears to be a result of the ERT process. Although many on the receiving end of the ERT’s services may hold this view, this ERT representative believes that the ERT does provide a “platform for dialogue,” which in the long run helps better push the project along.

Participants representing Junction City and the private sector offered less than favorable responses regarding the ERT’s timeliness. Most of those working with the ERT suggest that timeliness is of grave concern to their projects. One participant explains that “it’s such a complex and major project and one in which timing is very critical in terms of making sure if they [ERT service recipient] are to succeed in anything, their opening dates, then decisions have to be made in a very timely way and that really doesn’t happen.” They continue, “And I don’t blame that on the people we’re dealing with [the ERT], but there are—there’s somewhere in the mass of bureaucracy an inability to react quickly and officially to necessary decision-making...And I don’t blame it on the ERT... [It] is there to cut through that morass...”

Some responses centered on the interactions between local government and private interests. One participant said that Junction City officials were “extremely accommodating and helpful,” but then suggested that they had a general “lack of knowledge” when it came to understanding what it was the ERT needed from them: The “State is having to really walk them through that process one step at a time.” Consequently this participant believed their own “timeline is limited by their [Junction City’s] timeline, so as they push back, we, of course, have to push our timelines back as well.” This participant claimed to not be making a judgment call on the City’s efforts or capabilities but, rather, was instead simply pointing out the assumption and honest

misunderstandings that some have about what is expected from them at the state level and the time it takes to right the course.

*Understanding.* Being sympathetically or knowledgeably aware of the nature of another agency's or ERT affiliate's situation characterizes understanding. When it came to this theme, all interview participants had very few strong opinions (or judgments) about the character or level of contribution of those involved in this ERT project. One suggested that most were willing to work "with the ERT and saw [understood] the benefit," while another felt the relationship they had with the ERT could have been more fruitful had it been more formal and offered more information outlining what it is the ERT does and how exactly it planned on facilitating this large, uniquely complex development project.

On the other hand, most participants did offer more neutral, suggestive information about streamlining efforts conducted outside of the ERT. Notably, one private sector participant talked about Junction City's knowledge of the repercussions associated with a UGB expansion project. Had they been "more knowledgeable about" this process, the participant said, they may have been able to give "us information as to what they needed from our company—that process could have been expedited significantly..."

*Facilitation.* This is defined as helping to guide the streamlining process and make it easier for other ERT service providers and recipients. Some of the comments regarding this theme were clearly positive. One Junction City representative said, "The ERT has met with us on several occasions to stay on top of the project and [tried] to find out how they can be helpful collectively and individually in processing permits and applications and the like to make sure that the two institutions [the DOC's projected prison and the DHS's projected hospital] are introduced into the community as smoothly as possible and that the community is prepared for their construction and opening." Another said it "has been great to work with" the ERT and the leadership and those in champion-type positions in the ERT did a "great job of getting people together when we needed them and helping us to facilitate the project as best they can at their level."

Regarding the usefulness of the ERT quarterly meetings, a Junction City representative claimed (on four separate occasions during their interview) they "don't know how effective they really are" largely because "there's no follow-up afterward." This participant placed great emphasis on the need for the ERT to follow-up after meetings and other engagements during the life of the project. Another suggestion was to have a person within the ERT that would provide a "consistent contact person," better coordination between associated ERT member agencies, and someone to better channel the collective ideas to those on the ERT service recipient side of the table—in essence, a champion. A private sector interview participant also shared the importance of having a champion.

From the perspective of the Junction City officials, talk of facilitation centered on the need, as one participant put it, for "regular meetings...so that there's really an expectation that they will just happen all the time." This would force all those participating in the ERT's process to consistently revisit the timeline and work plan and evaluate where the project is in relation to these facilitating tools. Additionally, another suggested that all those involved in the process generate an agreement listing what "the

goal and objectives of the project are” and, more importantly, “what everybody is expecting from each of the individual players as part of making that project successful.” An ERT representative also recommended a more goal-oriented approach to facilitating the project: “I think having an agreement on what success looks like at the beginning is really critical.”

*Engagement.* Engagement is establishing a meaningful contact or connection with another agency, an agency member, or a local level official. When one ERT representative was asked whether other key ERT representatives (those working closer than others with the Junction City project) helped or hindered the ERT process, they first acknowledged the difficulty of working on such a complex project, one involving numerous players from all sectors. Because of the complexities, as this participant explains, it is easy for individual ERT representatives to become “entrenched in their own particular niche” and their focus is on the parts of the project that only relate to their particular agency. However, they commended the ERT on creating “a forum in which various state agencies...are almost required to get together” and engage in a “dialogue.” A Junction City official had similar praise when claiming that there were key agencies represented within the ERT that made “sure [the] ERT was always involved.”

Some participants were less than enthusiastic about the ERT’s involvement as they pointed again to the ERT’s need for a champion. A Junction City official, commenting on the ERT’s quarterly meetings, said, “It’s no different from having an interdepartmental meeting where various departments come together on an issue, everyone goes away and sort of is still then not connected or coordinated.” When asked if there were any recommendations they had for improving ERT services, another participant did not see the ERT as being engaged in the project. They said, “The ERT flies in once every quarter and tells us all the good things we can do and then they fly away and we never hear from the again.” Because the ERT is not “engaged in the process” more frequently or regularly, this participant said that “it’s difficult for them to be of much assistance.”

*Communication.* The communication flow or approach used by agencies and services recipients, within the ERT process, that either helped or hindered streamlining efforts.

Most agreed that communication is a vital and important component of a project this size and of this complexity. However, compared to the responses that related to other themes, not much was said about communication and what was said was largely negative. Nevertheless, one ERT representative did highlight the misperception that some have, on the service recipient side of the process, about the punctuality and timeliness of the ERT. This participant explains that there are times that issues have spent a considerable amount of time worsening outside the ERT’s sphere of influence before they are brought to the ERT’s attention. Most of those on the outside, frustrated by what they see as the ERT’s unnecessarily bureaucratic process, are unaware that the problem was just brought to the ERT’s attention—highlighting a break-down in communication.

Other participants said that some problems with communication were a little more visible. One Junction City representative thought the ERT could do a better job getting some of the information internal to the ERT, and its individual agencies, to the ERT’s service recipients. Another participant pointed out that it would be helpful “to know what

their [ERT representatives'] thoughts are" relating to the outcomes and goals the ERT has outlined. Some other communication issues noted include no "serious effort" made in "communication with our public" and the lack of resources, such as an official communication plan to bolster and improve relations and connections throughout the project.

Again, like the South Beach project the themes found in the Junction City project that concerned streamlining were compromise, frankness, proactivity, flexibility, timeliness, understanding, and facilitation, engagement, and communication. Ultimately, these themes help explain and give insight to the level of efficiency and effectiveness performed by the ERT when providing services within this project. However, there are other themes, such as those found within the area of coordination, that are also integral to the efficacy of a collaboration-centered organization like the ERT.

### Coordination

Similar to the South Beach project, coordination is one of the ERT's primary functions within the Junction City project and results when the various elements of a complex activity or organization are brought together in a way that ensures efficiency or harmony. Participants from the Junction City project uncovered several themes related to coordination, namely, accommodation, compromise, facilitation, frankness, timeliness, communication, engagement, and understanding.

Again, several themes (compromise, facilitation, timeliness, frankness, engagement, and communication) overlap with the streamlining section above. In terms of coordination, the corresponding themes relate to relationships and interactions between stakeholders. For streamlining, these themes emerged in response to questions about expediting and simplifying processes.

*Accommodation.* One agency or ERT member accommodates another agency or ERT member by fitting in with the needs of the other. Most participants had favorable things to say about the ERT's accommodating nature. One participant talked about the difficulty "on any project to keep that energy going throughout the entire...two years...and they're [the ERT's] doing the best they can" to accommodate Junction City. Pertaining to the ERT's availability, a Junction City representative said that they were "perfectly available and make it clear that they're willing to help us out [with] whatever we need." Another said that their relationship with the ERT is "cordial, professional..." and they felt like they "could pick-up the phone anytime and contact anybody...and be taken seriously and get a prompt response." This participant later suggests that the ERT service has "been a big aid...to our community...having those inroads into the agency, agencies."

Some of the less complimentary responses pointed to the ERT's need to work more directly with private interests and not get hung-up on administrative rules, the need to approach some of the problems from varying perspectives, and to do a better job following-up their meetings to offer needed information. One ERT member, reflecting on Junction City's accommodating nature, said that some of the problems that significantly slowed the project, could have been avoided if they would have heeded the ERT's advice

and stayed on the project path. This participant suggested that sometimes you have to “go slow to go fast,” noting that although the ERT’s assistance was not the fastest means of the City moving forward on its project, the ERT’s was the right path to follow. In other words, this participant believed that had the City taken the path that the ERT laid out for them (and gone slow), they would at this time be further ahead (to go fast).

*Compromise.* Again, this is defined as a middle state between conflicting opinions or actions reached by mutual concession or modification to better coordinate efforts between agencies or individuals.

Most interviewed had little or nothing positive to say about the ERT’s compromising nature. A Junction City official said the ERT approached its coordinating efforts with a “top-down mentality,” giving the impression of state agencies “telling the local jurisdiction what to do.” Reflecting on this same issue, an ERT representative said that those in some ERT member agencies could use a more creative approach to find solutions within their respective agencies. “The ERT person for each particular department should be a broker with their departments to try and make things work...”

A private sector interview participant who spoke about the State of Oregon’s interest in attracting businesses to the state had witnessed “six or seven ODOT guys” absolutely unwilling to find a solution for” their client. Comparing this attitude to the way the ERT conducts itself, this individual claimed that “we want to be this business-friendly environment, but I don’t believe the State of Oregon, with all their rules, is able to be business-friendly.”

*Facilitation.* In terms of coordination, efforts at facilitation related to relationships and collaborating with others and is concerned with helping to guide the coordinating process.

Regarding the development of a work program with Junction City, one ERT representative recalled bringing a particular specialist from their agency that could “bring...their knowledge set to the table to help craft the final language for the work program.” Another way the ERT can help facilitate is to be that “calm voice” when trying to “temper” the anxiousness or frustration a local level official may feel due to an imposed state level administrative rule. And, as another participant declared, the ERT’s “ability to generate constructive and creative ideas” was very helpful to Junction City coordinating efforts.

There were negative responses related to the ERT’s level of facilitation. The ones that occurred most frequently were the need for follow-up and debriefing with those directly involved with the project as a courtesy to keep stakeholders properly informed. The lack of timeliness and not addressing some of the “outstanding issues” that were collectively identified by those involved in the project served only to provoke this issue.

*Frankness.* This is defined as being forthcoming and up-front by divulging information in order to help build trust and spur coordination. The only participant that said anything positive about the ERT’s frankness, or forthcoming nature, was an ERT member. They spoke very highly of their frank and transparent manner when explaining who they were and where they planned on going with the project

There were several negative comments on the ERT's willingness to share information, mostly from the private sector perspective. The overriding theme among the responses related to building trust by way of mitigating the risk of sharing private information among public officials. One participant said that "there's stuff that I would [not] tell the ERT for fear..." they would respond negatively. This individual also mentioned the "risk" involved with speaking at the ERT's larger, less secure-feeling quarterly meetings. As they put it, "The more people you get in the room, the less you're going to resolve because people are not willing to open up and find innovative solutions to the problem because there's risk to them." If ERT member agencies are interested in engaging private interests and encouraging a willing to share important information, this participant said, it would behoove them to create a more accommodating environment through the use of smaller, more personal meetings in which information-sharing is reciprocal.

*Timeliness.* Most participants didn't offer strong opinions about the ERT's timeliness, or coordination efforts made at a favorable or useful interval. For those who did address this theme, the majority were from the private sector or non-ERT member agencies that had no use for the ERT's platform.

One ERT representative did reflect on Junction City's "haste to move forward," noting that the City's not heeding a particular ERT member agency's advice ultimately led to a large amount of time wasted. A private sector participant criticized the ERT's misleading advice, saying that it eventually cost them quite a bit of time and money.

*Communication.* Communication is the flow of interaction or approach used by agencies and service recipients that either helped or hindered coordination efforts. With the exception of one participant's comments the ERT's ability to maintain "an ongoing communication," all the responses about communication in the ERT's coordination efforts were unfavorable. One ERT representative talked about the inappropriate (unofficial) communication channels that are sometimes used between the City and the ERT. Again, eagerness to get the project going led to either breakdowns in communication or to complete bypassing of a pre-established means of channeling information. In such situations, alternative routes to resolving a situation might be sought, but this participant suggested that it is always better to "think it through well and once you get it all put together [follow the proper path], things will flow a lot smoother and you'll get to where you need to be when you need to be there."

*Engagement.* Engagement is establishing a meaningful contact or connection with another agency, an agency member, or a local level official. When asked about the ERT's engaging attitude, one Junction City official said that they didn't "want to somehow say that they're never contacting us, because that's not the case. I think they are perfectly available and make it clear that they're willing to help us out..." Another participant felt that the ERT was engaged, noting, "They did follow through on some issues that we identified..."

And, although this participant made it clear that they were not complaining, they said it would have been nice to keep that level of engagement going, "to keep that energy going throughout the entire [project]." A private sector participant echoed that sentiment



saying that aside from “some of the meetings we had with the groups, the positive feedback that we got immediately following our meeting...the calls of gratitude and best wishes for success, these types of things, there have only been a few follow-up calls to even see how our progress is going.” Although some ERT member agency representatives had called to see how things developed, most had not.

*Understanding.* Being sympathetically or knowledgeably aware of the nature of another agency’s or ERT affiliate’s situation characterizes understanding. The general sentiment of those interviewed was that the ERT could have done a better job at trying to understand their service recipient’s point of view before offering them support. One private sector participant said that during a couple of ERT meetings that ERT representatives “took the tack of saying [telling]” them what their company needed in the form of a site. This participant felt that this was a backwards and unhelpful approach, concluding that they did not “think it’s up to the ERT to determine or define what their [the company’s] long term needs are.”

For coordination, the themes found in the South Beach project included accommodation, compromise, facilitation, frankness, timeliness, communication, and engagement, some of the keys to synchronizing the efforts of ODOT, DLCDC, and the City of Newport. Ultimately, these themes help explain *how* the ERT brings various elements of their services together in a way that ensures efficiency or harmony. And collectively, the themes found within the topics of streamlining and coordination also offer insight to the inner workings, social networks, and the effectiveness of the established services provided by the ERT. This assortment of themes offers a rich data set from which to investigate the question, how do the ERT’s streamlining and coordination efforts contribute to its ultimate goal of better serving local and regional governments? The data itself, or participants’ perceptions of these efforts, includes valuable input from not only service recipients in two distinct development projects, but also from representatives of the ERT member agencies as well, which clearly gives us detailed insight into answering this question.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine views of participants in ERT projects of coordinating and streamlining efforts. Coordination and streamlining are the pillars of the ERT’s service to local level governments and private sector interests. The study was not designed to evaluate the ERT’s services, but instead to gain a better understanding of *how*—“emphasizing the process...not merely judging the outcomes”—streamlining and coordinating occurs in the ERT’s efforts to provide these services (Tesch, 51).

This involved an analysis framework that captured the general direction of every interview participant’s perception. It is important to note that all responses in this study were carefully analyzed and weighed according to the contribution they would have to this discussion, as explained in the discussion of methods above. However, some themes revealed themselves to be more common than others. This chapter discusses these primary themes because they seem to have more relevance to those who have had direct

experience with the ERT and its work. For streamlining, the primary themes include facilitation, timeliness, and understanding. The primary themes for coordination were determined to be accommodation, engagement, and communication.

The remaining question is, “what do these primary themes say about *how* the ERT streamlines processes and coordinates the needs of its service recipients?” Most of the interview participants in both cases offered positive, encouraging information about their experiences working with the ERT on their respective projects. Throughout the interviews, most participants appeared to be making efforts to preserve their relationships with their colleagues in the public sector by being careful and deferential when responding to questions. Because of this, the findings that were most telling were those in which the participants felt strongly enough about a shortfall or a needed service within the ERT process to offer a critique of it. Therefore, in an effort to both continue focusing on the “process” of the ERT’s services and offer ERT representatives an opportunity to see the areas within their services that may need greater attention, I center the discussion below on the more telling (and often less favorable) participant perceptions related to these primary themes.

### Streamlining

One of the most central themes related to streamlining ERT practices was facilitation. Concerns related to this area are largely centered around improvements on how the ERT conducts its meetings. The most sweeping criticisms were that there is a need to conduct meetings more frequently and a need to provide follow-up after every meeting. The findings for the Junction City project suggested that one of the greatest things missing (this sentiment was shared by most interview participants in the Junction City case) from the meetings, and the ERT process as a whole, was a position (during those key moments of streamlining and coordination) solely designated as a champion or, perhaps more aptly, a liaison. This opinion was echoed by participants in the South Beach project. Interview participants mentioned the importance of guiding the staff working behind the scenes within each agency and coordinating by looking at each ERT member agency’s administrative rules and the State’s various statutes to discover areas of flexibility. Both of these procedures could be better achieved by channeling such activities through one individual, a liaison, who identifies links between the ERT member agencies.

The second primary theme related to streamlining was timeliness. As the definition of streamlining indicates, making an organization “more efficient and effective by employing faster or simpler working methods” certainly involves this all-important element. With that said, one interesting discovery in both cases was the way that participants described the organizational composition of their projects and how this inadvertently affected timeliness. The general sentiment of those on the South Beach project was that certain parts of the ERT process were unnecessary and time-consuming. In a project in which the issues were clearly outlined and involved just two of the seven ERT member agencies, timeliness should not have been a major problem. However, participants on the service recipient side of the project believed that the slower pace was due to the ERT’s bureaucratic nature. Although some found the Junction City project to be bureaucratic, most did not believe the ERT was at fault for the slow pace of the process. While several participants cited the need to move ahead independently of the

ERT process because of time constraints, others seemed to believe that these actions held the project back later because ERT procedures had not been followed closely enough.

Most of what was said about the theme of understanding, the third primary area related to streamlining, came from the South Beach project and was generally negative. However, the comments offer some insight into the connections between the three primary themes (facilitation, timeliness, and understanding) in relation to streamlining within the ERT. Newport interview participants felt that the better one understands the process in which they are involved (including the roles of some of the other project's players), the more informed their decisions will be. Consequently, this understanding may lead to saving time and meeting deadlines as opposed to having to backtrack as a result of an ill-informed decision. Facilitation may also improve as the stakeholders are kept informed and up-to-speed on the details of a specific project, ideally by a champion or liaison who provides useful instruction and guidelines to those relying on them.

### Coordination

When it comes to the ERT's coordinating efforts, the findings revealed accommodation to be the most prominent theme. Comparing the findings of the two cases, the participants in both the South Beach and Junction City projects had largely positive responses to the ERT's efforts at accommodation. In fact, interview participants from both projects (and both sides of each project) were generally pleased with the attempts that state agency representatives and city officials made to assist and try to meet the needs of one another. Nonetheless, the level and tone of positive responses differs in each case. For example, participants on the Junction City project generally believed that the ERT was "doing the best they could" when it came to trying to meet the needs of the City, conceding that they were aware of the unique complexity of the project and the unusual demand it likely placed on the ERT. Participants from the South Beach project, on the other hand, did not qualify their observations: they simply perceived the ERT as accommodating.

When it came to how engaged the ERT was, the findings revealed a parallel between the ERT's accommodating nature and its level of engagement and, as there are only subtle differences between these two themes, I had relative difficulty distinguishing between them while labeling the response data as one or the other. Accommodating, as it is used in this study, is when one ERT representative, city official or private sector representative tries to *fit in with* the needs of another. Engagement refers to when an ERT representative, city official or private sector representative tries to *establish a meaningful contact or connection* with another. With this nuance established, it becomes easier to recognize why engagement became such a dominant and positive theme in the South Beach project. Interview participants in this case have cited examples in which the ERT coordinator proactively engaged both City of Newport officials as well as state-level agency representatives, internally and with each other. The ERT's level of engagement, for Junction City interview participants, seemed high when dealing with issues that came up, but was maintained at a lower level at other times during which the ERT representatives were always available but not actively engaged. Some participants noted that maintaining a higher level of engagement would have been beneficial.

The relaxed, transparent, and frequent level of communication seen by the participants in the South Beach case lent itself to a constructive partnership between the

two ERT member agencies and City of Newport representatives. For instance, presentations were used to both update fellow stakeholders as well as provide background on various aspects of the project. In Junction City, perhaps because of the presumed bureaucracy of the ERT or because the scope of the project clearly slowed things down, service recipients' eagerness to move forward (often cited in relationship to concerns about financial and other resources) had undesirable repercussions as state agencies' procedures were circumvented and had to be addressed after the fact.

### *Alternative Perspective*

It is hard to discuss the themes that may have a considerable effect on how the ERT streamlines and coordinates its services without also discussing some of the differences between the two projects, which is also one of the limitations discussed below. One difference between the two cases is the size of the each project. This may account for the stark contrast between how participants in each case view the ERT's capacity to facilitate (see Appendix D). The South Beach project is the smaller of the two in scope and in relation to stakeholders. Primarily, it involved only two of the ERT's eight participating agencies, ODOT and the DLCDC. Because the ERT's services were largely funneled through these two agencies, the frequency of positive responses relating to how the ERT facilitated the project could have something to do with the project's smaller, less convoluted network, whereby communication channels were more easily established and the element of reciprocity more readily attained. On the other hand, the Junction City project concerned several state agencies, those within the ERT and outside of it, as well as private interests, and also had a number of large-scale plans converging within it. This leads to another clear difference between the projects that influenced these results: the degree to which actual ERT member agencies played a role in providing services necessary to the project. In the South Beach project, the City of Newport dealt with considerable direct involvement with the ERT because the two state agencies integral to the project's goals are ERT member agencies. Conversely, in the Junction City project, the local government is mostly collaborating with non-ERT state agencies such as the DOC and the DHS because of their plans to build state facilities within the projected UGB expansion.

Although there were no obvious parallels relating to timeliness between the two projects, a look at the findings did reveal a difference in where the responses, or perceptions, originated. In the smaller South Beach project, for example, most of the complaints came from those working within the ERT, whereas in the case of Junction City, the concerns came from local level government representatives. Although, there are numerous factors that could help explain this difference, including some of the other themes discovered in this study that were not seen frequently enough to be included in this discussion, the most plausible interpretation is, again, the difference in size of the two projects. As previously noted, the Junction City project is considerably larger and more complex than the South Beach Project. With this comes a greater demand on the internal and external networking system. For instance, one interview participant explained that "because the ERT sometimes becomes the face of the issues they adopt," there are many on the outside (either in local level governments or the private sector) that perceive the ERT as "not helping a whole lot because it just seems like more bureaucracy to them" (Interview Participant 12, personal communication, January 21, 2009). It does

not take a familiarity with the ERT, its process, and these two projects to understand that as a project grows in size and scope, factors like facilitation, timeliness, and level of understanding need to be adjusted. There is a possibility that this adjustment never materialized within the Junction City project, and that some of the timeliness issues which to some extent hampered the ERT's ability to streamline the South Beach project, were magnified in the Junction City case.

### *Limitations and Recommendations*

The alternative explanation above highlights a crucial limitation of this study: the differences in the type, size, and scope of the two ERT projects used in this study added variables that could not be altogether accounted for. There was an immeasurable amount of differences found, as the study progressed, between the South Beach and Junction City projects. Everything about the Junction City project was bigger than the South Beach project: the number of stakeholders (state (ERT member versus non-member) agency representatives, local level government agents and private sector participants), the amount of issues surrounding the projects, the tangible objectives of each project, and the level of state agency involvement. This made it increasingly difficult to find commonalities shared between the two projects.

Another limitation to this study was that data collection did not reach a level of saturation. Pointing to Lincoln and Guba's explanation of knowing when one has "collected enough data," Merriam (1998) suggests considering these four criteria: exhaustion of sources, saturation of categories, emergence of regularities, and over-extension (p. 164). The criterion of greatest relevance to this study's research design is exhaustion of sources. The snowball approach I used to recruit subjects was effective and provided numerous interview subjects for this study. However, considering the incredibly busy schedule of each subject, most of those working high-level positions in government, I found myself spending more time and effort recruiting particular individuals and, at times, receiving less than expected in return. Because recruiting subjects presented far greater demand on my time and effort than anticipated, I decided after a certain amount of time that I had exhausted my sources (interview subjects) and ceased to collect additional data. It is also worth noting that, in each case, there was only a finite number of potential participants to utilize in the first place and that had I been able to interview all potential interviewees, data saturation may still have not been attained. It is thus, possible, of course, that what might appear to be a lack of "saturation" in fact reflects the diversity of views of the subjects. Given the broad range of participants in the projects one could, perhaps, expect that there would be a corresponding large variety in views and perceptions.

A third significant limitation was the necessity of maintaining participant anonymity in the reporting of the findings. Yin best sums up this limitation,

“...anonymity is not to be considered a desirable choice. Not only does it eliminate some important background information about the case, but it also make the mechanics of composing the case difficult. The case and its components must be systematically converted from their real identities to fictitious ones, and you must undergo considerable effort to keep track of

the conversions. The cost of undertaking such a procedure should not be underestimated.” (Yin, 158)

The subjects in this study influenced the way I could use the data. I made a pledge to every interview subject, before each interview was conducted, that their name would not be used in association with either the data collected or quotations used in the report. This choice was made because both projects, at the time of the interviews, were still ongoing, and anonymity was key in eliciting the most honest responses from participants that anticipate continuing relationships with each other going forward. Yin’s explanation was right: crafting the findings section of the report under these conditions made the process difficult—a lot of background material (material that could have added greater meaning to my findings) could not be revealed for fear that a subject’s identity would be discovered, putting this individual’s relationship with others at risk.

In order to overcome some of these limitations in further study of the ERT’s processes, one might consider studying more than two cases. This could have several benefits such as reducing the challenges inherent in comparing two projects of such different scope and size and adding to the number of potential interview participants, which would allow a greater chance for data saturation and reduce the adverse consequences of anonymity. Another suggestion would be to increase the number of researchers as this would, funding permitted, allow more time for interviews with a larger number of participants and break the project into more manageable segments.

## CONCLUSION

Although the intent of this study was to examine how the ERT’s streamlining and coordination efforts contribute to its larger goal of serving local government, this study, in effect, resulted in a number of suggestions for improving on these two areas. Collectively, it’s difficult to say if the primary themes identified within streamlining and coordination really offer a better understanding of the process by which the ERT serves local level governments, that is, without over-interpreting the results or offering groundless speculation. One thing is for sure, the end result of this study’s analysis, those primary themes and the participants’ perceptions of them, does offer a closer assessment of areas within the ERT’s service process that may benefit from making changes or conducting further study. Whether it’s the designation of a liaison to really encourage action and interaction or providing more frequent meetings to its service recipients, what I learned about the ERT process surely illuminates areas for further study.

I believe that the information elicited by this study, particularly in the form of these tangible suggestions for the ERT from not just its service recipients but also its own member agency representatives, is worth more than simply knowing *how* the ERT’s streamlining and coordinating efforts impact the service it provides. And given that the ERT was introduced in 2003 to help expedite economic development at a time when, as stated in the introduction, economists believed Oregon was in the throes of one of the “largest budget deficits since the Great Depression,” (Governor Kulongoski’s Biography, 2008) the results of this study may prove especially useful to the ERT as it seeks to fine tune its services, particularly as our nation wades through the current economic crisis.

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## Appendix A: In-depth Interview Guide and Questions

### What is the Process for Conducting In-Depth Interviews?

*The process for conducting in-depth interviews follows the same general process as is followed for other research: plan, develop instruments, collect data, analyze data, and disseminate findings. More detailed steps are given below.*

#### 1. Plan

- *Identify stakeholders who will be involved.*
  - Both ERT service providers (primary service providers) and service recipients (local government officials, private interests, etc...)
- *Identify what information is needed and from whom. (See “What are Potential Sources of Information?”)*
  - Information elicited about the streamlining and coordination efforts of the ERT process.
  - Info from both sides.
- *List stakeholders to be interviewed. Identify stakeholder groups from national, facility, and beneficiary levels and then identify individuals within those groups—additional interviewees may be identified during data collection. Determine sample if necessary.*  
Kirk Jarvie, Chair WVERT.
  - Marguerite Nabeta, Coordinator WVERT

#### 2. Develop Instruments (interview design)

- *Develop an interview protocol—the rules that guide the administration and implementation of the interviews. Put simply, these are the instructions that are followed for each interview, to ensure consistency between interviews, and thus increase the reliability of the findings. The following instructions for the interviewer should be included in the protocol:*
  - *What to say to interviewees when setting up the interview;*
  - *What to say to interviewees when beginning the interview, including ensuring informed consent and confidentiality of the interviewee (see Appendix 1 for an example);*
  - *What to say to interviewees in concluding the interview;*
  - *What to do during the interview (Example: Take notes? Audiotape? Both?):*
    - Ask question
    - Take notes on response observation → things that can't be identified through audio recording.
    - Audio recording

- *What to do following the interview (Example: Fill in notes? Check audiotape for clarity? Summarize key information for each? Submit written findings?).*

### **Interview Questions Tips**

I will craft questions by combing through white paper research on each case study (in this case, each study is a particular project conducted by the WVERT) provided by Kirk Jarvie, the Chair of the WV region of the ERT.

I will also use the open-ended responses to the “2008 Oregon Joint Customer Satisfaction Survey” and the “2006 Oregon Economic Revitalization Team Customer Satisfaction Study”—these were responses from recipients of ERT’s services.

- *Questions should be open-ended rather than closed-ended. For example, instead of asking “Do you know about the clinic’s services?” ask “Please describe the clinic’s services.”*

- *You should ask factual question before opinion questions. For example, ask, “What activities were conducted?” before asking, “What did you think of the activities?”*  
factual questioning → leading toward opinion questioning

- *Use probes as needed. These include:*
  - *Would you give me an example?*
  - *Can you elaborate on that idea?*
  - *Would you explain that further?*
  - *I’m not sure I understand what you’re saying.*
  - *Is there anything else?*

### **Interview Guide**

- Important topics to be explored in study:
  - Streamlining the permitting and organization process
  - Coordination between ERT service providers and recipients
- Subtopics for each topic:
  - Streamlining → “making a system or organization more effective and efficient by employing faster or simpler working methods”
    - initiating the permitting process
    - engaging recipients in the permitting process
    - define streamlining
    - approach to recipients
    - make process faster → speed of follow through
    - make more efficient
    - stakeholders involved

- Coordinating efforts → “bring the different elements of a complex activity or organization into a relationship that will ensure efficiency or harmony.
  - bring together ERT and local level participants
  - role of communication
  - engaging local governments or private companies
  - proactivity
  - helpful, unhelpful elements
  - responsiveness
- Questions → for ERT service providers and recipients (Questions will be actively supplemented with the probing questions listed above)

One of the pillars of the ERT initiative is to help streamline the permitting process for each unique project that you’re involved in.

1. Could you explain some of the salient features of your agencies permitting process?
2. Could you now tell me how it is you streamline (“employ faster or simpler working methods”) this process when working with ERT service recipients?
3. Please explain what elements within your agency where changed to help make the process more helpful and efficient.
4. What particular activities where used to expedite this permitting process?
5. Please describe your impression of working with X during the streamlining effort.
6. Could you describe some things X could have done to be more helpful to your end of the process?
7. Do you have any recommendations that would improve this effort for future ERT service recipients?

Another pillar of the ERT initiative is to better coordinate efforts between state and local level activities.

8. Could you describe some of the activities within your agency that are used to better coordinate efforts with your service recipients?
9. Please explain the role that communication may play in this effort.
10. Please describe your relationship with X during these coordinating efforts.

11. Please describe any characteristics of working with X on project X that were unhelpful to your coordinating efforts.
12. Please describe any characteristics of working with X on project X that were helpful to your coordinating efforts.
13. Would you say that X was responsive to your coordinating efforts? Please explain.
14. Do you have any recommendations that would improve this effort for future ERT service recipients?

## **Appendix B: Recruitment Script (Telephone)**

Hello –

My name is Matthew Fisher from the Planning, Public Policy and Management Graduate program at the University of Oregon. I'm calling to talk to you about participating in my graduate research study. This study will explore how the Oregon Economic Revitalization Team's (ERT) streamlining and coordination efforts improve and expedite their economic development initiatives. The study will also ask if the ERT's strategies have proven successful and if they have improved local access to state services and resources.

You're eligible to be in this study because you were at some point associated with one of the ERT's projects. I obtained your contact information from both the Chair and Coordinator of the Willamette Valley/Central Oregon region of the ERT.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked approximately 15 questions in an in-depth interviewing format. The interview will involve audio recording. This is to ensure that the transcription of our interview is as precise as possible.

Following the interview, transcripts will then be created, labeled and stored in a file cabinet, secured by lock and key. Labeling the transcripts involves assigning each completed transcript a number and using this number as a way to reference the work within my final report. All of these steps will ensure the anonymity of your interview and protect your confidentiality.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate, we can go ahead and schedule a time for me to meet with you to give you more information. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also call or email me with your decision.

Do you have any questions for me at this time?

If you have any more questions about this process or if you need to contact me about participation, I may be reached by email at [mfisher3@uoregon.edu](mailto:mfisher3@uoregon.edu) or by phone at 941-704-4301.

Thank you so much.

## Appendix C: Recruitment Script (E-mail)

Dear [*insert name*],

My name is Matthew Fisher from the Planning, Public Policy and Management Graduate program at the University of Oregon and I am writing to invite you to participate in my graduate research study. This study will explore how the Oregon Economic Revitalization Team's (ERT) streamlining and coordination efforts improve and expedite their economic development initiatives. The study will also ask if the ERT's strategies have proven successful and if they have improved local access to state services and resources.

You're eligible to be in this study because you were at some point associated with one of the ERT's projects. I obtained your contact information from both the Chair and Coordinator of the Willamette Valley/Central Oregon region of the ERT.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked approximately 15 questions in an in-depth interviewing format. The interview will involve audio recording. This is to ensure that the transcription of our interview is as precise as possible.

Following the interview, transcripts will then be created, labeled and stored in a file cabinet, secured by lock and key. Labeling the transcripts involves assigning each completed transcript a number and using this number as a way to reference the work within my final report. All of these steps will ensure the anonymity of your interview and protect your confidentiality.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you would like to participate, we can go ahead and schedule a time for me to meet with you to give you more information. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also call or email me with your decision. You can reach at [mfisher3@uoregon.edu](mailto:mfisher3@uoregon.edu) or 941-704-4302.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Matthew Fisher  
Master of Public Administration Candidate  
University of Oregon

**Appendix D: Aggregated Table of Cases One and Two**

Topic/Themes	Total Responses		% of Total Responses		# of Positive Responses		# of Negative Responses		# of Neutral Responses	
	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2
<b>Streamlining</b>	53	78			22	17	16	38	15	25
Compromise	9	6	17%	8%	4	0	5	3	1	3
Expectations	2	0	4%	-	0	-	2	-	0	-
Facilitation	11	22	21%	28%	8	3	0	12	3	7
Flexibility	8	5	15%	6%	3	2	3	2	2	1
Frankness	6	4	12%	5%	3	2	0	2	3	0
Proactivity	3	7	6%	9%	1	1	0	3	2	3
Timeliness	5	11	10%	14%	2	3	1	4	2	5
Understanding	8	7	15%	10%	1	2	5	1	2	5
Engagement*	-	10	-	13%	-	3	-	6	-	1
Communication*	-	6	-	8%	-	1	-	5	-	0
<b>Coordination</b>	70	99			50	22	17	37	3	40
Accommodation	16	22	23%	22%	15	9	1	7	0	6
Communication	13	13	19%	13%	12	1	0	6	1	6
Compromise	6	6	9%	6%	2	5	4	1	0	0
Engagement	15	14	21%	14%	10	1	4	6	1	7
Facilitation	7	21	10%	21%	6	3	1	5	0	13
Frankness	6	8	9%	8%	3	2	2	5	1	1
Timeliness	7	5	10%	5%	2	0	5	2	0	3
Transparency	0	2	0%	2%	0	1	0	1	0	0
Understanding	0	8	0%	8%	0	0	0	4	0	4

\*Appears only in Case Two