



Wasco County Economic Development Commission 2014 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY

VISION : Wasco County and its communities are *economically-robust*.

MISSION: Cultivate *economic and business development* in Wasco County.

ROLE: Accomplish countywide economic development objectives. As an advisory commission to the Wasco County Board of Commissioners, provide the following services:

1. Act as an information source for communities, the County, employers and residents about economic development opportunities ;
2. Provide advice and guidance to the Wasco County Board of Commissioners on countywide economic development and quality of life issues for citizens at the grass roots level; and,
3. Be a forum for citizens to request assistance from the Board of Commissioners on accomplishing economic development projects and solving economic development problems.



Economic Ecosystem: In supporting economic and business development in Wasco County, we take a holistic view of the economic ecosystem, recognizing the interplay between the business and regulatory environment, adequate infrastructure, workforce and education, innovation capacity, available financial capital, and the natural environment. The following goals reflect that view.



GOAL #1: Information Source

Serve as an information source about and for economic development in Wasco County for use by companies, site selectors, municipalities and others.

Objectives

- Serve as a point of contact for companies and site selectors seeking information about doing business in Wasco County.
- Maintain information about commercial zones and available industrial land in Wasco County.
- Maintain up-to-date demographic and economic information about Wasco County.
- Provide information for companies seeking financing to grow businesses in the County and connection to appropriate state and federal resources.
- Statistically track the county's industry mix over time and maintain a list of largest employers in the county.
- Maintain easily accessible information on the EDC website of resources available to support businesses growing and expanding in the County.

GOAL #2: Business Support and Diversification

Support efforts to retain and expand existing businesses in the County. Support development of new business and industry that will provide family wage opportunities for existing residents.

Objectives

- Identify the areas for greatest economic growth opportunity in Wasco County, focusing to existing assets in the county.
- Support value added agriculture efforts and partner with organizations to further grow these opportunities in Wasco County.
- Facilitate development of new industry based upon identified areas for growth.
- Provide information regarding opportunities for growth and expansion in the County. Target recruitment efforts tailored to this information.
- Identify and address barriers to business growth, including regulatory concerns, workforce challenges and other issues.
- Partner with statewide efforts in recruitment, export assistance and other efforts to leverage resources.



GOAL #3: Coordination Activities

Serve as a forum for citizens and businesses to request support in accomplishing economic development projects and solving economic development problems.

Objectives

- Provide advice and guidance on countywide economic development and quality of life issues from citizens and businesses at the grass roots level.
- Maintain a clear working relationship with the Board of County Commissioners on work being undertaken by the EDC and support for EDC activities.
- Collaborate closely with economic development partners throughout the County. Provide support for local governments engaged in economic development activities in the County.
- Ensure a membership on the EDC representative of the entirety of Wasco County.

GOAL #4: Ensure Solid Footing for Activities

Develop a countywide inventory of infrastructure projects of economic importance. Support projects on the Inventory that improve Wasco County's business climate and competitiveness.

Objectives

- Annually assess and prioritize projects in the county, based on their potential to support economic growth.
- Support priority projects listed on the inventory.
- Provide information on financing opportunities for projects, including grants and loans.
- Connect projects to financing through appropriate tools, such as the Agora Investment Platform.

GOAL #5: Organization Stability

Ensure a stable organization capable of addressing and responding to economic opportunities in Wasco County.

Objectives

- Analyze EDC organizational structure and financial contributions to ensure long term stability.
- Develop an annual Strategic Action Plan.
- Annually measure the success of initiatives and projects undertaken by the EDC and make adjustments as necessary.
- EDC acts as a vehicle for Wasco County to pursue economic development activities and operates with the final approval of the Board of County Commissioners.



IMPLEMENTATION- FY 2015 Workplan

| Goal | Action | Staff Time | Commission Role | Reasoning | Key Partners |
|---|---|------------|---|-----------------|--|
| <p>GOAL #1: Information Source Serve as an information source about and for economic development in Wasco County for use by companies, site selectors, municipalities and others.</p> | Ensure current Business Siting Guides are up-to-date and distributed to appropriate local partners. | 1% | Support distribution of guides. | | Cities, Chambers, Port, |
| | Create additional business siting guides to ensure the process of locating or growing a business in Wasco County is clear. This will include development of a guide for Dufur and support for the Maupin guide currently underway through their Economic Development Group. | 2% | Utilize the guides developed, and get the word out about the resource available. | | Cities and Planning Staff |
| | Update major employers list and other information on industry mix in the county to help provide foundation for other efforts related to business support and diversification. | 3% | Provide input on businesses to contact and local knowledge about their areas of the county. | | Businesses, Oregon Employment Dept |
| | Maintain and improve the EDC website. Work with partners to develop materials promoting the County and local businesses. | 2% | Review of materials, as needed | County Priority | County, OEN, Port |
| <p>GOAL #2: Business Support and Diversification Support efforts to retain and expand existing businesses in the</p> | Support Business Retention, Expansion, and Recruitment activities with partners. These activities include engagement with other organizations (Port, cities, SBDC, chambers, etc), providing referrals and support when requests for information come in, meeting with companies, acting as a point of contact for state leads and providing tours of potential | 7% | Sharing information and leads with staff where appropriate. | Scope of Work | Cities, Port, County, Chambers, Business Oregon, |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|----|---|---|---|
| County. Support development of new business and industry that will provide family wage opportunities for existing residents. | locations when appropriate. | | | | |
| | Engage in the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership efforts to understand and support the unmanned vehicle, composite engineering, and value added agricultural industries in Wasco County. <i>Note: leveraged with IMCP funding.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore options to support Makerspace conversations - Participate in forums: tree fruit, value added, energy efficiency for manufacturing, composites and UAV applications - Explore options with AUVSI, SOAR and Warm Springs for supporting the UAV industry | 7% | Participate in conversation and activities as able. | Leveraged to bring in additional funding to support these sectors | Gorge Tech Alliance, MCEDD, Industry partners, Gorge Grown, OSU/WSU Extension, CGCC |
| | Participate in the Columbia Gorge Renewable Energy Zone to ensure Wasco County is positioned to take advantage of renewable energy opportunities where appropriate. | 2% | Participate in conversation and activities as able. | Leveraged with additional efforts | Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler, Klickitat, and Skamania counties |
| | Influence policy at the state and local level through engagement with organizations like the Oregon Business Council. | 2% | Engage with broader regional and state efforts to provide perspective from Wasco County | Leverage of additional Commission and staff roles | |
| GOAL #3: | Coordinate meetings of the Wasco County Economic Development Commission at locations across the | 5% | Participate in meetings | Scope of Work | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|---|-----------------|---|
| Coordination Activities Serve as a forum for citizens and businesses to request support in accomplishing economic development projects and solving economic development problems. | county. | | | | |
| | Through the Industrial Lands Committee, utilize the economic impact study done by University of Oregon on major events in Wasco County as a starting point to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - explore opportunities to responsibly pursue events - identify the necessary policies, infrastructure and conditions for these events and - further identifying the economic impact of these events | 12% | Reconvene the Industrial Lands Committee to provide input and support for barrier identification and action to address through committee participation where appropriate. | County Priority | Wasco County Planning Department |
| | Convene the Industrial Lands Committee. Work with partners, including the Wasco County Planning Department, to identify specific barriers to economic development, and develop and implement plans to address these barriers. Already identified barriers include outdated comprehensive plan, land use regulations, and lack of access to broadband. | 10% | | County Priority | Wasco County Planning Department, Cities, communities, and chambers |
| | Support the South Wasco Alliance group as they develop, and engage with them on the best way to partner and support efforts around economic development throughout Wasco County in order to ensure that existing resources are being used efficiently. | 15% | Continued engagement through their communities with SWA. | County Priority | SWA, SWA committees, partner non-profits, |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| <p>GOAL #4: Ensure Solid Footing for Activities</p> <p>Develop a countywide inventory of infrastructure projects of economic importance. Support projects on the Inventory that improve Wasco County's business climate and competitiveness.</p> | <p>Conduct Community Enhancement Projects inventory and prioritization. Ensure projects are uploaded and up-to-date on the Agora Platform to increase their visibility.</p> | 10% | Work with Staff to prioritize projects submitted. | Scope of Work | Non-profits and local governments |
| | <p>Provide technical assistance for select projects prioritized through the community enhancement process. This could include referrals to funding sources, technical assistance with grant writing, and meeting with potential funders. Number of projects is dependent upon staff time available and will focus to lower capacity communities and Community Enhancement priorities.</p> | 15% | Community Enhancement Project Prioritization and connecting staff to projects of particular importance to their communities | Scope of Work | Project owners, funders |
| | <p>Support increasing broadband infrastructure and access to allow businesses and residents better access to high speed internet connections as well as opportunities to share best practices for utilizing connections available. This work will leverage additional funds through a Google Grant and will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a business case for private investment in broadband infrastructure in underserved areas - Hosting additional Web Works: Anywhere! Forums focused around showcasing business | 0%--leverage grant funds | Continued engagement around broadband challenges and forums. | County, Regional Priority in addition to leveraging outside grant funds to support staff | SWA Internet Capacity Committee, County, ISPs, local communities |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|---------------|------|
| | <p>models successfully utilizing broadband</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in regional conversations around broadband access and adoption challenges and opportunities. | | | | |
| <p>GOAL #5: Organization Stability Ensure a stable organization capable of addressing and responding to economic opportunities in Wasco County.</p> | <p>Update annual work plan to reflect completed projects and to include new projects as they are prioritized by the Commission.</p> | 2% | Continue to support prioritization of workload and provide input on project priorities. | Scope of work | |
| | <p>Conduct general organizational and administrative activities such as developing annual contract and calendar and ensure appointments are made.</p> | 2% | | Scope of work | |
| | <p>Review accomplishments and share with Wasco County Board of Commissioners and other partners.</p> | 1% | Share EDC accomplishments with Commissioners and community to ensure | Scope of work | BOCC |
| | <p>Identify additional funding and in-kind sources that would expand the EDC's resources to accomplish projects.</p> | 2% | Refer staff to appropriate opportunities. | Scope of work | |