



AGENDA

VENETA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

August 18, 2025 3:30 PM

Veneta City Hall – J.W. “Bill” Smigley Room
88184 8th Street, Veneta, Oregon

City of Veneta Public Meetings can be accessed via teleconference. To listen to or participate in this meeting, call 541-935-2192 (Participant Code 793738#).

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - a. Speaker will be limited to 3 minutes each.
3. MINUTES APPROVAL
 - a. Approval of the August 18, 2025 Minutes (pgs. 1-7)
 - b. Review September Email Correspondence (pgs. 8-9)
 - i. No Official Meeting Held
4. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES
 - a. General Updates from EDC Members (verbal)
5. STAFF REPORTS
 - a. Management Analyst Jacob Thode
 - i. Economic Opportunity Analysis (pgs. 10-66)
Project Details and Timeline
 - ii. Review of Grant Programs (Handout)
 1. Overview of City’s Grant Award History
 2. Total Amount Awarded Compared to Total Reimbursed
 3. Review of Current Grant Programs
 - iii. City Management and Communications Internship Timeline (verbal)
 - iv. Our Daily Bread Façade Grant Approval (verbal)
 - v. The “Attic” Project Extension Request (verbal)

Times are approximate. This meeting will be digitally recorded. Location is wheelchair accessible (WCA). Individuals needing special accommodations, such as sign language or foreign language interpreters, should make such requests by contacting the City Recorder at 541-935-2191(voice) or by e-mail at: mmichel@ci.veneta.or.us. Requests made after 10:00 a.m. two working days prior to a meeting may not be accommodated.

Los tiempos son aproximados. Esta reunión se grabará digitalmente. La ubicación es accesible para sillas de ruedas (WCA). Las personas que necesiten un alojamiento especial, tales como lenguaje de señas o intérpretes de idiomas extranjeros, deben hacer tales peticiones poniéndose en contacto con el registrador de la ciudad en 541-935-2191 (voz) o por correo electrónico a mmichel@ci.veneta.or.us. Las solicitudes hechas después de las 10:00 a.m. dos días hábiles antes de una reunión no pueden ser acomodadas.

To access Veneta Economic Development Committee materials please go to

<http://www.venetaoregon.gov/>

6. OTHER

- a. Meeting Date and Time
- b. Harvest Festival Follow-up
 - i. Bridge Lane – Career and Resource Fair

7. NEXT MEETING

- a. November 17, 2025 at 3:30 p.m.

8. ADJOURN

CITY OF VENETA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MEMBERS:

HERB VLOEDMAN (CHAIR)
BRITTANY LEHMAN (VICE-CHAIR)
JOHN TRIBOLET
RIC INGHAM
AARON GARCIA

GINA HALEY-MORRELL
LEN GOODWIN
ROBBIE MCCOY (LIAISON)
LEWIS RUCKER

MINUTES

Economic Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, August 18, 2025, 3:30 PM
Veneta City Hall — J.W. "Bill" Smigley Room
88184 8TH Street, Veneta, Oregon

Present: Chair Herb Vloedman, Vice Chair Brittany Lehman, Council Liaison
Robbie McCoy, Member John Tribolet (phone), Member Len Goodwin,
Member Ric Ingham, Member Aaron Garcia
Absent: Member Lewis Rucker (excused), Member Gina Haley-Morrell (excused)
Staff: Management Analyst (MA) Jacob Thode, City Recorder (CR) Jennifer
Mirabile
Other: Heather Blake, RAIN Catalysts

1. CALL TO ORDER/REVIEW AGENDA
Chair Vloedman called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
There was no public comment.
3. MINUTES APPROVAL
 - a. Review of the July 21, 2025 Meeting Notes

Discussion ensued about the corrections to the meeting notes and minutes.

Chair Vloedman stated the meeting notes should be kept with the official meeting minutes for future reference.

- b. Approval of the June 16, 2025, meeting minutes as amended.

Moved to approve the June 16, 2025, meeting minutes as amended.

Moved by Member Goodwin. Second by Member Lehman
The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

4. COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Council Liaison McCoy shared the Veneta Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce was working on the Chili-Cook Off and a Corn Hole Tournament for the Harvest Festival.

Member Goodwin shared that the Planning Commission approved the Georgiou Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan for Delphi Engineering.

5. STAFF REPORTS

- a. Management Analyst

- i. August Economic Report

MA Thode shared there was considerable uncertainty in the U.S. economy due to changes in federal tariff policy and budgeting. He reported that the Producer Price Index (PPI) rose 9/10 of a percentage and was the largest increase since June 2022.

MA Thode reported that the City continued to see an increase in the number of building permits and learned from the Planning Department they expected permits applications to continue to increase.

Member Garcia shared that he worked the Wiechert Open Houses for the Wiechert Neighborhood and three homes were sold which indicated there may be more sold in the coming weeks. He further stated realtors were hopeful that interest rates would decrease.

Member Goodwin shared a special session of legislature was scheduled for next week which included revenue options to close the budget gap.

Discussion ensued about the housing industry, rates, and current industry challenges .

ii. Overview of Awarded Grant Programs (Handout)

MA shared the following program updates:

- 4 applicants for the Business Grant Program (Hillbilly Brews, Sun Frog Products and Delphi Engineering)
- 7 applicants for the Community Building Grant; Emporium, Movies in the Park 2023-25), Veneta Haunts, The Way of the Donkey and Veneta Fourths; funding for this program was moved to the Park Board's portfolio
- Delphi Engineering was awarded the Commercial Development Grant in the amount of \$9,000
- 4 awards were funded by the Vibrant Veneta Grant Program, with an approximate award amount of \$17,000 (The Emporium, West Lane Fitness, & Broadway Mini Storage).

MA Thode shared that Sun Frog Products would probably not submit their funding request this year because they were having trouble with their build site.

MA Thode stated he was working with West Lane Dance and Ho Ho's awardees to submit their reimbursement requests.

MA Thode shared that the Signage, Streetscape, and Façade Grant Programs had a combined budget of \$15,000.

Discussion ensued about a former grant recipient, Iron-Clad RV & Boat Storage.

Member Lehman asked for a list of awards (past and present) and where they fell within the new program structure.

Chair Vloedman asked if there were any applications for 2025-26; he reported he was talking with businesses that may apply as early as October.

iii. Evaluating Business Grant Applications for Startups

MA Thode presented his agenda item summary for evaluating Business Grant Program applications from business startups.

MA Thode mentioned that the challenge with startups was typically that they had no financial documents to evaluate.

MA Thode stated the last applicant did a good job submitting his documentation; however, there was no profit and loss statement available for review.

MA Thode asked members what criteria the Business Assistance Committee (BAC) should use to review applications from startup businesses.

Discussion ensued about criteria required for business startups.

Member Lehman stated a Business Plan was critical piece of a the application.

Member Goodwin believed that the City should be reviewing the same documents that a bank would review for a loan.

Chair Vloedman agreed a three to five-year pro forma document would help the BAC members decide if there was reason to believe the applicant could be successful.

CONSENSUS: Members reached consensus to have startups submit a comprehensive Business Plan, Proforma documents outlining their forecast for a minimum of three years, applicant resume and qualifications demonstrating their financial capacity and banking records.

MA Thode shared he would bring more information to the Committee at their next meeting.

iv. Review of Signage Assistance Grant Program

MA Thode reviewed the updated signage, streetscapes, and facades grant programs with a total annual budget of \$15,000.

MA Thode reviewed the criteria for the grant awards.

Member Ingham stated the criteria was very subjective and he believed they should be more objective.

Discussion ensued about the grant criteria used to determine awards.

Member Lehman proposed the BAC could address the vague discretionary language by increasing the amount of the award.

MA Thode confirmed applicants were given one path to receive the \$1,000 grant award and if the BAC believed the project was worthy, they could fund another \$1,000.

Member Goodwin believed the Council's involvement outside of the BAC's recommendation was problematic.

Member Ingham remembered that these grants were about helping those business that needed to upgrade their sign because of blight; not for established businesses.

Member McCoy stated her shopping area where her business resided was a perfect example of how that grant could be utilized.

Discussion ensued about new businesses vs. established businesses

Member Vloedman agreed clear and objective standards were needed upfront for applicants.

CONSENSUS: Members agreed the signage, façade and streetscape grant programs should be for existing businesses Signage (\$1,000) Façade Grant (\$10,000), Streetscape (\$5,000)

CONSENSUS: Members agreed the Signage Grant funding level should be increased to \$2,500 for existing signs

Motion to recommend the changes to the Signage Assistance Program for Existing Signs up to a \$2,500 match award and that the CC adopt this with the approval of the BAC

**Moved by Member Lehman. Seconded by Member Goodwin
The motion was approved unanimously (7-0)**

v. Façade Grant (\$10,000)

MA Thode presented his agenda item summary on the Façade Grant Program..

MA Thode believed the discretionary language could be removed for this grant and applicants should already have existing facades.

Discussion ensued about façade improvements in the City and how-to clarity maintenance expectations.

Member Rogers proposed creating a covenant for conditions or a clause that states the award recipient will generally maintain the property and keep it in good order.

MA Thode stated he would work with the City's Code Enforcement Officer to include language that would encourage maintenance of the improvement.

Member Lehman proposed adding a question to the application about a property maintenance plan.

CONSENSUS: Members agreed that language should be included to maintain the curb appeal and discretionary language by City Council should be removed in all three of these grant programs.

Motion to recommend Veneta City Council adopt the Façade Program Application Packet as amended upon approval from the Business Assistance Committee.

Moved by Member Lehman. Second by Member Goodwin.
Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

vi. Streetscape (\$5,000) Grants

MA Thode presented his agenda item summary on the Streetscape Grant Program.

Member Goodwin stated awards should not fund those things that require Conditions of Use Approval.

Motion to recommend the Veneta City Council adopt the Streetscapes Improvements for existing businesses and should not fund those items that require Conditions of Use approval.

Moved by Member Lehman. Second by Member Goodwin.
Motion passed unanimously (7-0)

vii. Economic Opportunity Analysis

MA Thode stated the grant funding from BLCD opened later this year and he planned to apply for the grant in October.

6. OTHER

a. Harvest Festival

i. Bridge Lane – Career and Resource Fair

MA Thode shared that Collaborative Economic Development Organization (CEDO) visited the committee last month and were scheduled to host a job fair during the Harvest Festival.

Member Tribolet left the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

ii. Tabling with other Committees

MA Thode shared that the BAC planned to table at the Harvest Festival event on Saturday, September 13th and EDC members were invited to participate starting at 10:00 a.m.

Chair Vloedman asked MA Thode to send a reminder email to members about this opportunity after Labor Day Weekend.

b. Rural Opportunity Initiative Grant (ROI)

MA Thode stated the Rural Opportunity Initiative Grant was opening and would help build the City's entrepreneur ecosystem.

MA Thode announced he would work with RAIN Entrepreneurs to apply for the grant and to identify resources for the community.

7. OTHER

Member Ingham asked for clarification on CEDO's purpose.

Member Lehman announced September 13th was Realtor Food Drive Day.

8. NEXT MEETING

a. The next meeting was scheduled for September 15, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

9. ADJOURN

Chair Vloedman adjourned the meeting of the Veneta Economic Development Committee at 5:12 p.m.

Chair Herb Vloedman

ATTEST:

Jennifer Mirabile, City Recorder

From: [Jacob Thode](#)
To: [Jacob Thode](#)
Cc: [Jennifer Mirabile](#); [Matt Michel](#)
Bcc: ["heather@raincatalysts.org"](#); [Aaron Garcia](#); [Brittany Lehman](#); [contact@gratefulgraffix.com](#); [haleyscurves@gmail.com](#); [herb@vloedman.com](#); [lenelmira@gmail.com](#); [Lewis Rucker](#); [Ric Ingham](#); [Robbie Mccoy](#); [Veneta](#)
Subject: September EDC Email Update In Place of Meeting
Date: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 8:57:00 AM

Good Morning EDC,

Since we decided to cancel this month's meeting, I wanted to provide you with a brief update on current projects, the economic outlook, and a few housekeeping items.

Economic Opportunity Analysis

This month marks the opening of the Department of Land Conservation and Development's (DLCD) Technical Assistance Grant, which the City will be applying to for funding to update our Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA).

For those who weren't on the committee earlier this year: Veneta's first EOA in 2015 produced the EDC's original 5-year strategic action plan. In 2020, the City updated only the strategic plan. Now that the EOA is more than 10 years old, it's time to revisit and update key portions of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The full scope of work for this project will include:

- Updating the Economic Opportunity Analysis (2015), with a new 5-year strategic plan and SWOT analysis.
- Updating the Residential Buildable Lands and Housing Needs Analysis (2014).
- Developing a new Market Retail Analysis.

The grant opened in early September and applications are due October 10th. I will be working with the City's Community Development Director and Associate Planner to develop our proposal and submit the grant by mid-next month. Project costs are expected to be \$40,000–\$60,000. Based on my research and discussions with DLCD, I believe the City will be competitive for around \$20,000 in grant funding, with the possibility of securing more for the full scope of this project. Additionally, we've earmarked \$20,000 in this year's budget to ensure the project moves forward regardless of the award outcome. And in the circumstance that grant funding is not awarded, the City will reprioritize the project and focus the scope on developing a new Economic Opportunity Analysis.

If you'd like more information, you can review the grant details here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CPU/Pages/Community-Grants.aspx>

I plan to present the full project scope of work and the City's grant application to DLCD at next month's meeting after it's been submitted.

Economic Report

This month's economic report once again reflects ongoing uncertainty. Concerns about tariffs, federal fiscal policy, and tax reforms have started to ease, but forecasts still anticipate slower U.S. GDP growth in coming months. This year GDP growth has trended downward, dropping

a full point compared to the previous year. As this trend continues, it could have an impact on unemployment and may be an early signal of an approaching recession.

Additionally, U.S. hiring slowed significantly in July, with new job creation falling to nearly one-quarter of the pace reported in July 2024 and the lowest 3-month hiring period since the pandemic. Hiring and firing both seem to be low, though there are concerns that a sharp increase in layoffs could lead to a quick and drastic rise to the unemployment rate in coming months.

For those interested, you can review the State of Oregon's Economic and Revenue Forecast here: <https://www.oregon.gov/das/OEA/Pages/forecasts.aspx>

The Attic – 1-Year Contract Extension Request

The Business Assistance Committee reviewed a proposal from the Smith Family to extend their Disposition and Development Agreement (DDA) for the W. Broadway Attic property by one year. Their current contract ends in December, but due to project delays, they are expecting to complete construction by spring/summer 2026. They have asked City Council to extend their contract one full year to ensure that they have the time they need to complete the project. The BAC has recommended approval, and City Council will consider the request in October.

Committee Meeting Date/Time

Lastly, I'd like to note a topic for discussion for our next in-person meeting to discuss the EDC's current meeting date and time. Our original meeting time was the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2:00 p.m., but we shifted to the 3rd Monday to accommodate committee member's schedule. However, since we've had a change in members since that time, it's been brought to my attention that the previous date and time worked better for some individuals. In October, we can discuss this topic more. Please take a look at your own calendars and if enough of the committee would benefit from another meeting date, we may discuss whether to return to the original time, keep our current schedule, or adjust again to better fit everyone's availability.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if there's anything I missed in this month's update.

Warm Regards,

Jacob Thode

Management Analyst

City of Veneta

Office: 541-935-2191 Ext. 312



Public Records Law Disclosure: This email may be considered public record and subject to public disclosure.

Confidentiality Notice: This email may contain confidential or privileged information. It is intended only for the use of the recipient named above. If you are not the intended recipient, any use or disclosure of this email is strictly prohibited. Please

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



TITLE/TOPIC: Five-Year Economic Development Strategy – DLCD Grant Submission

Meeting Date: October 20, 2025
Department: Economic Development

Staff Contact: Jacob Thode
Email: jthode@ci.veneta.or.us
Telephone Number: 541-935-2191

ISSUE STATEMENT

Staff is seeking consensus from the Economic Development Committee (EDC) on the City's current plan to develop a new Economic Opportunity Analysis.

BACKGROUND

The City of Veneta's Five- Year Economic Development Strategy spans from 2021-2025. The Five-Year plan was first created in 2015 by University of Oregon's Community Service Center (CSC), now the Institute of Research, Policy and Engagement (IPRE), as part of the scope of work to develop Veneta's Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) for purpose of recommending actionable steps for the City to take to achieve the goals and aspiration of the City's economic development vision. The plan was last updated by IPRE in 2020.

On March 12, 2025, the EDC directed staff to begin the process to update the outdated components to Veneta's Comprehensive Plan. This includes the following:

- Veneta's Economic Opportunity Analysis (2015),
- Buildable Lands Analysis (2014),
- Retail Market Analysis (2006), and
- A new Five-Year Strategic Plan and SWOT Analysis, to be incorporated into the EOA update.

Additionally, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) recently awarded the City funding to update the Comprehensive Plan's Housing Analysis. The scope of this project will be citywide, with a primary focus on the downtown district. While the Housing Analysis will be a separate project from the EOA update, the projected timelines currently align, allowing for the housing update to potentially be incorporated into the finalized EOA.

Furthermore, the City anticipates that the documents produced through both projects will inform the development of a new Downtown Master Plan, which is nearly 20 years old and will need updating in the near future as well.

An updated EOA is expected to cost between \$20,000 and \$60,000, depending on the inclusion of supplemental materials such as the Five-Year Strategic Plan, AND SWOT Analysis. Additional supporting documents to the EOA, including the Buildable Lands Inventory and Retail Market Analysis, are expected to cost an additional \$30,000–\$50,000. To ensure that the project can move forward regardless of grant funding, the Veneta City Council has allocated \$50,000 for the EOA update. On October 10, 2025, staff submitted a \$60,000 grant request to Oregon’s Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to cover the remaining costs of the project (see Attachment 1).

Staff anticipates receiving notice of the grant award by December 2025. The scope and final deliverables of the project will be dependent on whether the City is awarded additional funding. However, whether or not the grant is awarded, staff expects the project to take approximately two years to complete, concluding in July 2027. See project details below.

Project Task	Start Date	End Date
Task 1-2: Develop and Award Contract	January, 2026	March, 2026
Task 3: Buildable Lands and Retail Market Analysis	April 2026	August, 2026
Task 4: Economic Opportunity Analysis	September, 2026	March, 2027
Task 5: Supplemental Documents, 5-year Plan/SWOT Analysis	March, 2027	May, 2027
Task 7: Final Report Preparation and Adoption	May 2027	July, 2027

With this updated timeline, and understanding that the current Economic Development Strategy will expire at the end of this year, staff is seeking direction from the EDC regarding the EOA project’s timeline, final deliverables, and whether alternative steps should be taken to complete a new strategic plan for the committee.

RELATED CITY POLICY

Veneta Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Element, Policy 15:
Conduct an analysis of the community's economic patterns, potentialities, strengths, and deficiencies as they relate to state and national trends every 5 to 10 years as conditions change.

RELATED CITY DOCUMENTS

Veneta Comprehensive Plan
Economic Opportunity Analysis
City of Veneta Economic Development Strategy 2015- 2019
City of Veneta Economic Development Strategy 2021 – 2025

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2025-27 Technical Assistance Grant Application –Veneta’s Economic Opportunity Analysis Update
2. City of Veneta Economic Development Strategy 2021 – 2025



Department of Land Conservation and Development

2025-27 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION

Please complete each section in the form below. Type or write requested information in the spaces provided. **Submit completed applications by October 10, 2025.**

Date of Application: *October 10, 2025*

Applicant: *City of Veneta*

(If council of governments, please also include the recipient jurisdiction name if applicable)

Street Address: *88184 8 Street*

City: *Veneta, Oregon*

Zip: *97418*

Contact name and title: *Jacob Thode, Management Analyst*

Contact e-mail address: *Jthode@venetaoregon.gov*

Contact phone number: *541-935-2191*

Grant request amount (in whole dollars): *\$60,000*

Local Contribution (recommended but not required): *\$50,000*

Project Title:

Periodic Review of Veneta's Economic Opportunity Analysis and Supporting Documents

Project summary: (Summarize the project and products in 50 words or fewer)

Veneta will update key economic development plans, focusing on the Economic Opportunity Analysis (2015) and supporting plans including the Residential Buildable Lands Analysis (2014), Retail Market Analysis, SWOT Analysis, and a five-year strategic plan to reflect current conditions, guide future growth, and maintain compliance with Statewide Planning Goals 9 and 10.

Grant Type:

Direct Grant: Will this be a direct grant? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, will a consultant be retained to assist in completing grant products? Yes ☒ No ☐

DLCD-provided Consultant: Do you want DLCD to provide and manage a consultant to assist in completing grant products? Yes ☐ No ☒

Project Description & Work Program

Please describe the proposed project, addressing each of the following in an attachment.

Project Details

This project is part of a multi-year program to modernize Veneta's economic development planning. The City recently received a Housing and Planning Assistance grant through DLCD to update the development code and housing strategy. While this EOA update is independent of the housing analysis project, findings from both projects will be incorporated where possible. This phase will conclude with the updated Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA), which will later inform an update to the City's Downtown Master Plan.

Project Goals and Objectives

Primary Goal: Update the Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA)

The primary goal is to update Veneta's Economic Opportunity Analysis as part of the Comprehensive Plan, in compliance with Oregon's statutory Goal 9. The last EOA was completed in 2015, and the City's economic conditions, growth patterns, and priorities have changed significantly over the past decade. Veneta experienced record growth during this period, and a new plan is required to sustain and plan for new commercial and residential development.

Goal 1 Objectives:

- Update the EOA using previous plans, a new Buildable Lands Analysis (2014), Retail Market Analysis, and updated Housing Strategy.
- Analyze current and projected employment trends, labor force conditions, and land demand for employment uses.
- Develop an economic development vision aligned with community priorities and regional trends.
- Recommend amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code to support sustainable growth.

Secondary Goal: Update the Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI)

The secondary goal is to update the Comprehensive Plan's BLI, in compliance with Oregon's statutory Goal 10. The previous BLI, completed in 2014 alongside the Housing Needs Analysis, informed the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. An updated BLI is necessary to accurately support the EOA update.

Goal 2 Objectives:

- Incorporate findings from the previous BLI.
- Analyze current conditions, including land use, zoning, and infrastructure constraints.
- Identify buildable commercial and residential land and compare supply and demand for employment and housing.

Final Goal: Update EOA Supplemental Documents

The final goal is to supplement the EOA with a Retail Market Analysis, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis, and Five-Year Strategic Plan. The last Retail Market Analysis was completed in 2006, and the current 5-year plan will conclude in December of 2025. These documents will guide City staff, Veneta Economic Development Committee and the Planning Commission in implementing the City's economic development vision.

A. Goals and Objectives. State the goals or overall purpose of the project. Describe particular **objective(s)** the community hopes to accomplish. Please indicate whether this is a stand-alone project or is part of a longer multi-year program. If it is the latter, describe any previous work completed, subsequent phases and expected results, and how work beyond this project will be funded.

Goal 3 Objectives:

- Finalize a Retail Market Analysis identifying market gaps, shortages, and current supply and demand trends.
- Complete a Five-Year Strategic Plan to guide City staff, Economic Development Committee and Planning Commission.
- Conduct a SWOT Analysis to identify internal and external factors affecting Veneta's economic development and inform strategy decisions.

B. Products and Outcomes. Clearly describe the product(s) and outcome(s) expected from the proposed project. Briefly describe any anticipated significant effect the project would have on development, livability, regulatory streamlining, and compliance with federal requirements, socioeconomic gains, and other relevant factors.

By the end of this project, the City of Veneta will produce several key planning documents to guide long-term economic development, inform land use decisions, and ensure compliance with Statewide Planning Goals 9 and 10.

Primary Product: Updated Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA)

The EOA will serve as the foundation for updating the Comprehensive Plan's economic development policies. It will include:

- Analysis of current and projected employment trends, labor force conditions, and sectors with growth potential.
- Comparison of employment land demand with supply identified in the updated Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI).
- A new economic development vision aligned with community priorities and regional trends.
- Recommended amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Ordinance to support employment growth and regulatory efficiency.

Expected Outcomes:

- Data-driven understanding of Veneta's economic direction and land needs for employment over the next 20 years.
- Stronger foundation for zoning decisions and infrastructure investment.
- Improved alignment between the City's economic goals and regulatory framework.

Secondary Product: Updated Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI)

The BLI will identify and categorize land available for future residential and employment uses, based on:

- Review of zoning, land use, and infrastructure constraints.
- Analysis of land availability by type (residential, commercial, industrial).
- Comparison of projected land need vs. supply to assess sufficiency within the Urban Growth Boundary.

Expected Outcomes:

- Reliable data for housing, economic development, and infrastructure planning.
- Identification of potential zoning or Urban Growth Boundary adjustments.
- Alignment w/ Veneta's updated Housing Strategy and Code Update work.

Supplemental Products: Supporting Documents for the EOA

- **Retail Market Analysis** –identifying retail leakage, supply-demand trends, and strategies for attracting and retaining commercial activity.
- **SWOT Analysis** – Community-informed assessment of Veneta's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to guide vision-setting and strategy.

- **Five-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan** – Short-term action plan for City staff and the Economic Development Committee, with prioritized strategies, timelines, responsibilities, and resource considerations.

Expected Outcomes:

- Immediate, actionable direction for City Staff, and City advisory committees (Economic Development Committee and Veneta Planning Commission.)
- Tools to support grant applications, local businesses, development, recruitment, and strategic partnerships.

C. Equity and Inclusion Considerations. Using the [TA Grant Equity Guidance](#), identify priority populations in the project planning area. Describe the anticipated impact of your proposed project on priority populations. Describe a preliminary outreach and engagement plan with specific goals and outcomes for participation of priority populations in the project. Include specific tasks and products related to the outreach and engagement plan in sections D and E.

Priority Populations

1. Households w/ Low Income

- a. While Veneta has a lower poverty rate (~8%) than the state average, its median household income is lower than both Lane County and the State of Oregon. This indicates that many working households may be economically constrained, despite not meeting federal poverty thresholds. By updating the City's economic outlook, the project aims to identify pathways to higher-wage employment and create local job opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled labor, helping to lift incomes and reduce economic vulnerability.

2. Seniors

- a. Veneta has a higher-than-average proportion of older adults, with 10.7% of the population aged 65 or older, and a median age of 47.5, over 7 years older than the median age for both Lane County and the state. Seniors often face fixed incomes, mobility constraints, and housing accessibility issues. This project will consider how land use, retail access, and housing supply can better serve this aging population.

3. Youth and Children

- a. Children and youth under the age of 18 account for over 20% of Veneta's population, reflecting a need for long-term livability, family-friendly development, and future employment opportunities.

Anticipated Impact

1. Identification of employment sectors with growth could lead to new job creation; zoning changes could expand affordable commercial space for minority owned or small businesses.
2. Analysis may reveal need and opportunity for more affordable housing; code amendments might ease regulatory barriers; more buildable residential land could reduce cost pressures.
3. Improved retail amenities and services might fill gaps that benefit LEP, low income, seniors; better land planning may improve walkability, transit, recreation.

Primary outreach

1. City Communication
 - a. The City will develop materials to disseminate throughout the community, on the City's website, and on social media. Flyers will be strategically placed at areas that serve our priority populations, including at the local schools, library, and senior centers.
2. Opportunities for Engagement and Public Comment
 - a. Consultants will be asked to include members from our priority populations to participate in workshops, when applicable.
 - b. The City will also disseminate information regarding reviews and adoption of our plans ahead of upcoming Council and advisory committee meetings, encouraging participation from all citizens.

D. Work Program, Timeline & Payment.

1. Tasks and Products: List and describe the major tasks and subtasks, with:

Task #1: Develop Request for Proposal (RFP) and Scope of Work

Subtasks:

- Draft RFP outline, including scope of work, deliverables, evaluation criteria, and budget.
- Release RFP to relevant consultants and planning firms.
- Advertise on City website, planning forums, and regional networks.

Final Product:

- Finalized RFP
- Internal Scoring Rubric

Task #2: Review Proposals and Award Contract

Subtasks

- Evaluate proposals using scoring rubric.
- Select preferred consultant and negotiate contract.
- Conduct project kickoff meeting with selected team.

Final Product:

- Executed contract with selected consultant.
- Kickoff meeting summary and finalized project timeline.

Task 3: Complete Buildable Lands and Retail Market Analysis

Task 3.a: Buildable Lands Analysis

Subtasks:

- Analyze existing land use data, zoning, and infrastructure constraints.
- Identify buildable commercial and residential land, employment, and comparison of supply and demand
- Prepare draft report
- Engage with stakeholders (e.g., local businesses, developers).
- Review and finalize findings for report.

Final Products:

- Final Buildable Lands Analysis Report.

Task 3.b: Retail Market Analysis

Subtasks:

- Analyze current retail market conditions (market profile, supply and demand, economic constraints.)
- Prepare draft report
- Engage with stakeholders (e.g., local businesses, developers).
- Review and finalize findings for report

Final Products:

- Final Retail Market Analysis Report.

Task 4: Complete Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) Update

Subtasks:

- Identify target employment sectors and growth trends.
- Conduct research and incorporate findings from Retail Market Analysis and Downtown Master Plan Update to analyze local labor force, commuting patterns, and industry gaps
- Conduct research and incorporate findings from Buildable Lands Analysis to analyze local employment land demand to available supply.
- Develop Economic Development Vision aligned with City goals.
- Identify key constraints and opportunities for job creation.
- Draft recommendations for Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code changes.

Final Products:

- Updated Economic Opportunity Analysis Report.
- Maps and data tables.
- Policy recommendations and implementation steps.

Task 5. Complete EOA's Supplemental Planning Documents

Subtask 5.1: Five-Year Economic Development Action Plan

Subtask:

- Define short- and mid-term economic development priorities.
- Establish goals, actions, timelines, and responsible parties.
- Align actions with EOA recommendations and funding opportunities.

Final Product:

- Five-Year Economic Development Action Plan.

Subtask 5.2: SWOT Analysis

Subtasks:

- Facilitate stakeholder workshop or online survey.
- Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
- Summarize in matrix format.

Final Product:

- SWOT Analysis Appendix to EOA.

Task 6: Draft and Final Report Preparation and Adoption Process

Subtasks:

- Consolidate all findings and recommendations.
- Prepare public review draft for Veneta Planning Commission and Economic Development Committee.
- Present draft in public hearing
- Revise based on feedback.

- 2. Timeline:** List all dates for the project including tentative start date after the contract is signed, task completion dates, and project completion date. If the project is part of a multi-year program, provide an overview of the expected timelines in sequence of expected start dates and completion date for each phase and describe subsequent phases to be completed.

Task	Start Date	End Date
Task 1-2: Develop and Award Contract	January, 2026	March, 2026
Task 3: Buildable Lands and Retail Market Analysis	April 2026	August, 2026
Task 4: Economic Opportunity Analysis	September, 2026	March, 2027
Task 5: Supplemental Documents	March, 2027	May, 2027
Task 7: Final Report Preparation and Adoption	May 2027	July, 2027

- 3. Payment Schedule:** Develop a requested payment schedule showing amount of interim and final payments. Include the products that will be provided with each payment request. The payment schedule should generally include no more than two payments – an interim and final payment.

Payment	Award Amount	Final Deliverables
Initial Payment	50% of Total Award	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalized Request for Proposal and Signed Contract 2. Buildable Lands Analysis Report 3. Retail Market Analysis Report
Final Payment	50% of Total Award	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final Economic Opportunity Analysis Report; to also include, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A Five-Year Economic Development Action Plan; and b. A SWOT Analysis.

E. Evaluation Criteria. Include a statement in the narrative that addresses the program priorities and evaluation criteria presented in the application instructions ("Eligible Projects and Evaluation Criteria").

This project aligns with TA grant priorities, with economic development as the primary focus. It will:

- Promote economic development by updating the City's EOA, BLI, and supporting documents to guide employment growth and commercial and residential development.
- Update local plans and implementing codes to reflect current conditions and ensure regulatory efficiency.
- Support inclusive planning by engaging priority populations.
- Plan for future development by analyzing land supply and projected employment growth.

Additionally, this project contributes to a voluntary periodic review program, providing a framework for integrating housing, employment, and retail market analyses into comprehensive economic planning, serving as a model for other communities addressing growth and alignment with statewide planning goals.

F. Project Partners. List any other public or private entities that will participate in the project, including federal and state agencies, council of governments, city and county governments, and special districts. Briefly describe the role of each (*e.g.*, will perform work under the grant; will advise; will contribute information or services, etc.).

1. **Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)** – Provides funding through the Technical Assistance grant (if funded), offers guidance on compliance with Statewide Planning Goals, and currently funding/assisting with the City's concurrent Housing Analysis update
2. **City of Veneta Staff** – Project management, data collection, coordination of public outreach, and implementation of recommendations.
3. **Consultant Team (TBD)** – Conduct technical analyses, including updates to the Economic Opportunity Analysis, Buildable Lands Inventory, Retail Market Analysis, SWOT Analysis, and Five-Year Strategic Plan. =
4. **Veneta Economic Development Committee (EDC)** – Advisory role, provide local economic insights, review draft materials, and support public engagement efforts.
5. **Veneta Planning Commission** - Advisory role, provide local planning insights, review draft materials, recommendation to City Council, and support public engagement efforts.

- G. Advisory Committees.** List any advisory committee or other committees that will participate in the project to satisfy the local citizen involvement program. Include specific goals for participation by priority populations in advisory committees.

The City will establish a joint advisory committee to guide both the Technical Assistance Grant and Housing Focused- Downtown Master Plan Update, of which the City was just awarded funding through DLCD. This committee will include Planning Commission and Economic Development Committee members and a mix of community representatives with expertise in housing, development, equity, and land use. The Planning Commission may also serve as the recommending body for code amendments and the Housing Production Strategy (HPS), helping ensure alignment across both projects. The Economic Development Committee may serve as the recommending body for reviewing draft reports and key documents, along with the Planning Commission.

If the TA grant is not funded, the City will still form a dedicated advisory group with similar representation. The Planning Commission will serve in its advisory capacity and additional housing-focused members will be appointed to guide the work, review key materials, and support adoption of the final products.

- I. **Cost-Sharing and Local Contribution.** DLCD funds are only a part of overall project costs; please identify sources and amounts of other funds or services that will contribute to the project's success. Cost-sharing (match) is not required but could be a contributing factor to the success of the application.

The City of Veneta will contribute significant in-kind staff time toward project management, coordination, and public engagement, including support from the Community Development Director, Associate Planner, Management Analyst and other staff. The Planning Commission and Economic Development Committee will also serve as an advisory body.

In addition, the City recently received a Housing and Planning Assistance grant from DLCD to fund an updated Housing Analysis, with a primary focus on the downtown area.

The City will also provide a \$50,000 cash match toward this project to support its successful completion. Combined, these contributions demonstrate strong local investment and capacity to implement the project effectively.

Local Official Support

The application ***must include a resolution or letter from the governing body*** of the city, county, district, or tribe demonstrating support for the project. If the applicant is a council of governments on behalf of a city, a letter or resolution from the city council supporting the application must be included. *The application will not be complete if it does not include this item.* The letter of support may be received by DLCD after the application submittal deadline, but it must be received before a grant is awarded.

The City of Veneta will provide a resolution from the City Council demonstrating support for this project. The resolution will be presented in November, prior to the grant award date

Product Request Summary

Product	Grant Request	Local Contribution	Total Budget
Economic Opportunity Analysis	\$ <u>50,000</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>50,000</u>
Retail Market Analysis	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>20,000</u>	\$ <u>20,000</u>
Buildable Lands Inventory Analysis	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>30,000</u>	\$ <u>30,000</u>
5-Year Action Plan	\$ <u>5,000</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>5,000</u>
SWOT Analysis	\$ <u>5,000</u>	\$ <u>0</u>	\$ <u>5,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ <u>60,000</u>	\$ <u>50,000</u>	\$ <u>110,000</u>

Submit your application with all supplemental information to:

DLCD's Grant Administrator

E-mail (required): DLCD.GFGrant@dlcd.oregon.gov

Mail: Department of Land Conservation and Development
635 Capitol Street N.E., Suite 150
Salem, OR 97301

Phone: 971-239-2901

APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 10, 2025

City of Veneta Economic Development Strategy 2021 - 2025



Photos courtesy of City of Veneta

December 2020

Final Report



Institute for Policy
Research and Engagement

Prepared for
City of Veneta
88184 8th St
Veneta, OR 97487

Prepared by
The University of Oregon
Institute for Policy Research & Engagement
School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management

Acknowledgements

The Institute for Policy Research and Engagement wishes to thank the following individuals for their assistance with this project:

Veneta Economic Development Committee

Thomas Cotter, City Council Liaison

Herb Vloedman, Committee Chair

Len Goodwin, Committee Vice Chair

Jason Alansky

Dalen Corbett

Ryan Frome

Gina Haley-Morrell

Tulsi Elizabeth Strickland

John Tribolet

City of Veneta Staff

Matt Michel, City Administrator

Jana Weaver, Management Analyst

Bradleigh Jenkins, Economic Development Specialist, AmeriCorps RARE

Institute for Policy Research and Engagement Research Team

Michael Howard, Program Director

Robert Parker, Director Strategy and Technical Solutions

Student Researchers:

Corum Ketchum, Lead Author

Olenka Warble, Research Associate

About the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement

The Institute for Policy Research & Engagement (IPRE) is a research center affiliated with the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon. It is an interdisciplinary organization that assists Oregon communities by providing planning and technical assistance to help solve local issues and improve the quality of life for Oregon residents. The role of IPRE is to link the skills, expertise, and innovation of higher education with the transportation, economic development, and environmental needs of communities and regions in the State of Oregon, thereby providing service to Oregon and learning opportunities to the students involved.

About the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments

Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) is a unique AmeriCorps Program serving rural Oregon to strengthen communities, economies, food systems, and the natural environment. Housed at the University of Oregon's Institute for Policy Research & Engagement in the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management, we aim to link the energy, expertise, and innovation of the University of Oregon with rural Oregon communities' most pressing needs.

RARE AmeriCorps' mission is to assist Oregon's natural resource-tied rural communities while providing supported, applied experience to college graduates from across the US.

RARE members live in rural communities for 11 months and serve cities, counties, non-governmental organizations, or state agencies to improve economic and environmental conditions in rural Oregon. Now in its 26th year, the RARE AmeriCorps Program has placed over 550 volunteers and served every Oregon County. Placement focus areas include:

- City, County, and Regional Planning
- Travel & Tourism
- Food Systems
- Resilience Planning
- Community & Economic Development
- Main Street & Downtown Development
- Natural Resource Planning
- Renewable Energy Planning

About the EDA University Center

The University of Oregon Economic Development Administration University Center (EDAUC) is a partnership between the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement, the UO Department of Economics, the Oregon Small Business Development Center Network, and UO faculty. The UO EDAUC provides technical assistance to organizations throughout Oregon, with a focus on rural economic development. The UO EDAUC seeks to align local strategies to community needs, specifically with regards to building understanding of the benefits of sustainable practices and providing technical training to capitalize on economic opportunities related to those practices. The UO EDAUC is partially funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. Additional EDA funding was provided via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Introduction	1
Background and Methods	1
City of Veneta’s Role in Economic Development.....	2
Organization of this Plan	3
Environmental Scan.....	5
Strengths	5
Weaknesses	6
Opportunities.....	7
Threats.....	8
Visioning and Goal Setting.....	9
Veneta Economic Development Goals and Vision	9
Goal 1: Economic Development Commitment	12
Goal 2: Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment [BRE] and Entrepreneurial Development	16
Goal 3: Retail and Commercial Development.....	21
Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvements	25
Appendix A: Review of Relevant Economic Development Documents	30

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

Veneta, Oregon is a small town with big ambitions. Veneta is a rural community with urban amenities. It finds itself on the banks of the Fern Ridge reservoir and in the middle of Oregon wine country – home to world class sailing opportunities and vineyards. The City of Veneta has pursued a forward thinking and innovative approach to economic development for the past five years. The City is bringing in new manufacturing jobs by partnering with brewers to create a vibrant downtown. Entrepreneurs have been swaddled in wraparound services by economic ecosystem builders at the City who are following the Kauffman Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Playbook.¹ The cultural landscape of Veneta and its economy has been forever changed by events like the Popup Retail District and the Veneta / By Design workshop. The City is fully invested in connecting its residents to the digital future through private public partnerships with internet service providers and utility companies.

Recognizing all the momentous investments that are catalyzing change in its economy, the City of Veneta is reviewing its economic development strategy and the land use documents and policies that support that strategy in order to create a new Economic Development Strategy. This update leverages the 2015 Opportunities Analysis [EOA] (compliant with Goal 9 and OAR 660-009); reviewing the economic and land use trends of Veneta over the past five years and conversations with key stakeholders to guide the development of a strategy and five-year action plan to guide economic development policy and actions in Veneta over the coming years. The update also considers actions to help Veneta recover from economic damage from the COVID-19 pandemic and to create a more resilient local economy.

Background and Methods

The City of Veneta hired the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement [IPRE] to prepare an update and expansion to their 2015-2019 Economic Development Strategy. It has been five years since the previous strategy was adopted so the City and its public partners within the Veneta Economic Development Committee [EDC] wanted to reexamine the community's economic development vision, goals, and related strategies.

The updated strategy was informed by conversations with the City officials, experienced local economic ecosystem builders and the EDC, as well as a review of the following documents provided by the City:

- Veneta Comprehensive Plan (2000, amended 2019)
- Veneta Economic Development Strategy (2015-2019)

¹ The Kauffman Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Playbook is a living document meant to guide economic developers in the techniques that create sustainable economic growth, currently in its 3rd iteration: <https://www.kauffman.org/ecosystem-playbook-draft-3/>

- City of Veneta Economic Opportunities Analysis (2014)
- Economic Development Committee Workplan (2015 – 2020)
- Retail Market Analysis (2016)
- Downtown Action Plan and Redevelopment Toolkit (2017 – 2018)
- Broadband Strategic Plan and Open Access Report (2017 – 2019)

IPRE used an iterative, facilitated method to update the CEDIS. The process included: (1) convening the Economic Development Committee; (2) updating data related to characteristics and economic trends in the region; (3) collaborating with City officials; and (4) preparing draft and final plan material for review and comment.

City of Veneta's Role in Economic Development

The focus of this project was primarily on the City of Veneta's role; what resources can the City commit to economic development and what roles are most appropriate for the City. Following are foundational assumptions about the City of Veneta's role in economic development:

- The City plays a support role in business development;
- The City is one of several organizations that provide and maintain infrastructure;
- The City has limited staff and financial resources that can be invested in economic development activities;
- The City has an obligation to adopt an economic development strategy, policies to manage employment lands, and maintain a 20-year supply of commercial and industrial sites under Goal 9 and OAR 660-009;
- The City is not the appropriate organization to coordinate and deliver workforce programs; and
- The City's unique understanding of its economy empowers it to make strategic partnerships with regional stakeholders to deliver necessary economic development programming.

Because economic development is a team activity and involves multiple organizations, it is important for the City to clearly define its role. Moreover, the City should only lead in activities that directly fall within its organizational mission and staff capacity. Several organizations are working on economic, business, and workforce development in the region. These organizations include:

- City of Veneta
- Lane County
- Cascades West Economic Development District
- Veneta - Fern Ridge Chamber of Commerce
- Lane Community College Small Business Development Center
- Lane Workforce Partnership
- Business Oregon

The economic development vision, strategies, and actions that follow primarily focus on those activities for which the City would be the lead organization or relate directly to a defined City function. This approach is consistent with the intent of this project: to articulate the City's role in economic development. It does not, however, provide details on the activities of partner organizations, nor does it commit partner organizations to any specific activity.

Organization of this Plan

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- **Environmental Scan** presents an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of economic development in Veneta.
- **Veneta Economic Development Vision and Five-Year Action Plan** presents a summary of the City's economic vision and goals strategies, considerations, and indicators to achieve the vision over a five-year period.

This report includes one appendix:

- **Appendix A: Key document review and vision setting reference** provides the information that IPRE shared with the City and the Veneta EDC; the resulting conversations formed the backbone for this update.

This page intentionally left blank

Environmental Scan

A SWOT (Strengths vs Weaknesses, Opportunities vs Threats) analysis is a tool used by organizations to identify internal and external factors relevant to that organization's future. An organization's strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that the organization has at least some control over. External to the organization are opportunities and threats, which are factors in the environment that are outside of the organization's control. Strengths and weaknesses can be fortified and addressed by internal changes, whereas opportunities and threats must be adapted to take advantage of a dynamic ecosystem.

To create a baseline assessment of the current state of Veneta's economic development programming, the IPRE team has conducted a SWOT analysis by:

- Analyzing economic development publications and plans related to Veneta
- Collaborating with City staff and stakeholders from the Veneta Economic Development Committee
- Reviewing current economic development programming

Strengths

Veneta's strengths arise from its unique blend of rural and urban lifestyles, with an emphasis on its citizens' progressive (defined as pro-change and pro-growth) mindset. These factors combine to create a community that is appealing to a range of people and businesses, lending itself to a diverse economy.

Geography

- Proximity to wineries, agriculture, and the Eugene/Springfield area
- Attractive, bucolic lifestyle opportunities
- Proximity to recreational opportunities in the Fern Ridge Area
- Last "urban" center between Eugene/Springfield and the Oregon Coast

Identity/Perception/Culture

- "Small town feel" with progressive attitude
- Placemaking and landscape architecture improvements to the downtown area are already underway
- Availability of "shovel-ready" industrial and commercial land

Infrastructure, Connectivity, and the Built Environment

- Adequate infrastructure to accommodate years of development at the Jeans Road commercial/industrial area and within Downtown Veneta
- Strong local identity related to the bioregion, agriculture, timber, and the Oregon Country Fair
- Public transportation connections between Eugene/Springfield and Veneta

Policy and Politics

- Political support of economic development from elected officials, engaged and supportive residents and City staff focused on economic development
- Willingness to adapt or change existing local government regulations to meet common development goals
- Growing culture of entrepreneurship ecosystem and economic development
- Robust partnerships with local economic development partners

Weaknesses

The community's weaknesses arise from its proximity to Eugene/Springfield, lack of accessible transportation infrastructure (except for the airport) and the chicken-and-egg problem of a lack of available retail/commercial space leading to a lack of diverse activities for consumers. Addressing weaknesses in the built environment and changing consumer habits will be crucial to growing Veneta's economy.

Economic Activity

- Limited local employers and employment opportunities
- Lack of diverse activities in the downtown
- Significant retail and service leakage to Eugene/Springfield

Geography

- Limited freight capacity via Highway 126 and Territorial Highway

Identity/Perception/Culture

- Branding efforts have not been established yet
- Weak regional awareness of the community, especially for the downtown

Infrastructure, Connectivity, and the Built Environment

- Fragmented utility service due to multiple utility companies serving the same small geography

- Limited stock of readily available commercial, retail, and industrial buildings
- Limited downtown visibility from Highway 126
- Limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Vulnerability to power and internet service disruptions due to winter storms, earthquakes, and wildfire
- Incomplete access to community-wide broadband fiber internet

Opportunities

Veneta can continue to capitalize on its blend of urban and rural lifestyles. Aside from being surrounded by world class outdoor recreation and agritourism destinations, the community is well positioned to capture much of the growth in the Eugene/Springfield metro, due to lower costs of housing. Leaders should look to capitalize in the growing number of teleworkers and any resources that come because of COVID-19 relief stimulus policies.

Economic Activity

- Growth potential in Veneta small scale agriculture, wineries, breweries, and businesses where face-to-face interaction (e.g., retail outlets) is not required
- Population growth increases the demand for local service
- Local labor force that currently commutes out of the City could meet the needs of new or expanding businesses

Geography

- Recreational activities draw visitors to the area

Identity/Perception/Culture

- Accelerated interest in livable rural communities from remote workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Ability to capitalize on local culture and events, like the Oregon Country Fair

Infrastructure, Connectivity, and the Built Environment

- Low-cost industrial land compared to nearby communities
- Proximity to the Eugene Airport (about a 10-minute drive) can be leveraged to attract potential industries based on proximity to airport
- Availability of lower-cost and moderately priced family housing in comparison to nearby communities, especially Eugene/Springfield area
- Expanding access to telecommunications infrastructure
- Compact downtown has the potential to be more bike or pedestrian friendly
- Ability to promote a small-scale boutique hospitality sector through formal “beds and breakfasts” and sharing economy services

- CapaCity enhancements underway along Highway 126

Politics and Policy

- Building on the success of redevelopment efforts in downtown Veneta
- Opportunity to leverage state and federal resources from COVID-19 response programs to invest in durable change
- Evolving the Management Analyst position role to include economic development programming makes Veneta capable of multi-tasking ED matters, and do so with increasing complexity over time

Threats

Veneta's long term economic health is threatened by a lacking built environment (housing, lodging, retail, manufacturing, and disaster resilient infrastructure) as well as the uncertain impact COVID-19 will have on state and local revenues. Veneta's leaders will need to find ways to draw positive attention and fiscal resources to sustain a growing economy.

Economic Activity

- Residents go to Eugene/Springfield for goods and services

Identity/Perception/Culture

- External perceptions of Veneta by the business community hinder the ability to recruit new industry to the area

Infrastructure, Connectivity, and the Built Environment

- Lack of hotels, temporary housing, and rental housing.
- Expected decline in taxable income and state support, due to the changing economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

Politics and Policy

- Limited amount of private and public investment to support continued growth

Visioning and Goal Setting

This presents the core framework of Veneta’s Community and Economic Development Strategy. It builds from a vision statement and includes four goals that will guide the City’s efforts. Objectives articulate the goals, and actions describe specific steps to implement the plan.

Veneta Economic Development Goals and Vision

Veneta’s economic development goals and vision are shaped by factors that influence the future of the City and available resources and opportunities including projected population growth, target industries, presence of entrepreneurship, and proximity to the Eugene/Springfield area. Veneta has significantly increased their economic development efforts in the last two decades and their active plans, programs, and projects support continued growth and development as the City flourishes. This economic vision is informed by the public participation included with the 2015 – 2019 Economic Development Strategic plan,² and focuses the community’s economic development strategies for the next five years.

With this vision in mind, Veneta has goals such as embracing a sustainable economic development approach and providing a vibrant, safe place for community members and visitors alike. Providing for basic needs and creating a unique, healthy community is also at the forefront of Veneta’s economic development goals.

Vision

The City of Veneta vision is that it will be a “complete community” that provides a variety of job opportunities, local services, and residential opportunities while focusing on collaboration and partnerships to implement community and economic development activities.

Additionally, the following “**Key Considerations**” have been included with each goal:

Resilience

The City aspires to be a close-knit community that is prepared to respond to natural, economic, and manmade disasters

Equity and Inclusion

The City and its partners are committed to building an economy that works for all of its residents by curating resources and targeting activities that are accessible to people of all race, income levels and status.

² Found in Appendix A: https://www.venetaoregon.gov/documents?field_microsite_tid=74&field_microsite_tid_1=All

Using the Goals and Strategies (Part 1)

**Key:**

Priority – “A” actions are identified to be of the highest impact and should be pursued first

Lead Role – Who will lead the implementation of the action? Veneta Economic Development Committee, Veneta Staff, or Key Partners?

Status:

- **Active** – A current priority of the City and is being implemented as of writing
- **Ongoing** – Established projects that are seeing consistent progress, but are not top priorities or new actions
- **Inactive** – Projects that were identified as City priorities in previous plans, but have no current action
- **New** – New projects identified in 2020

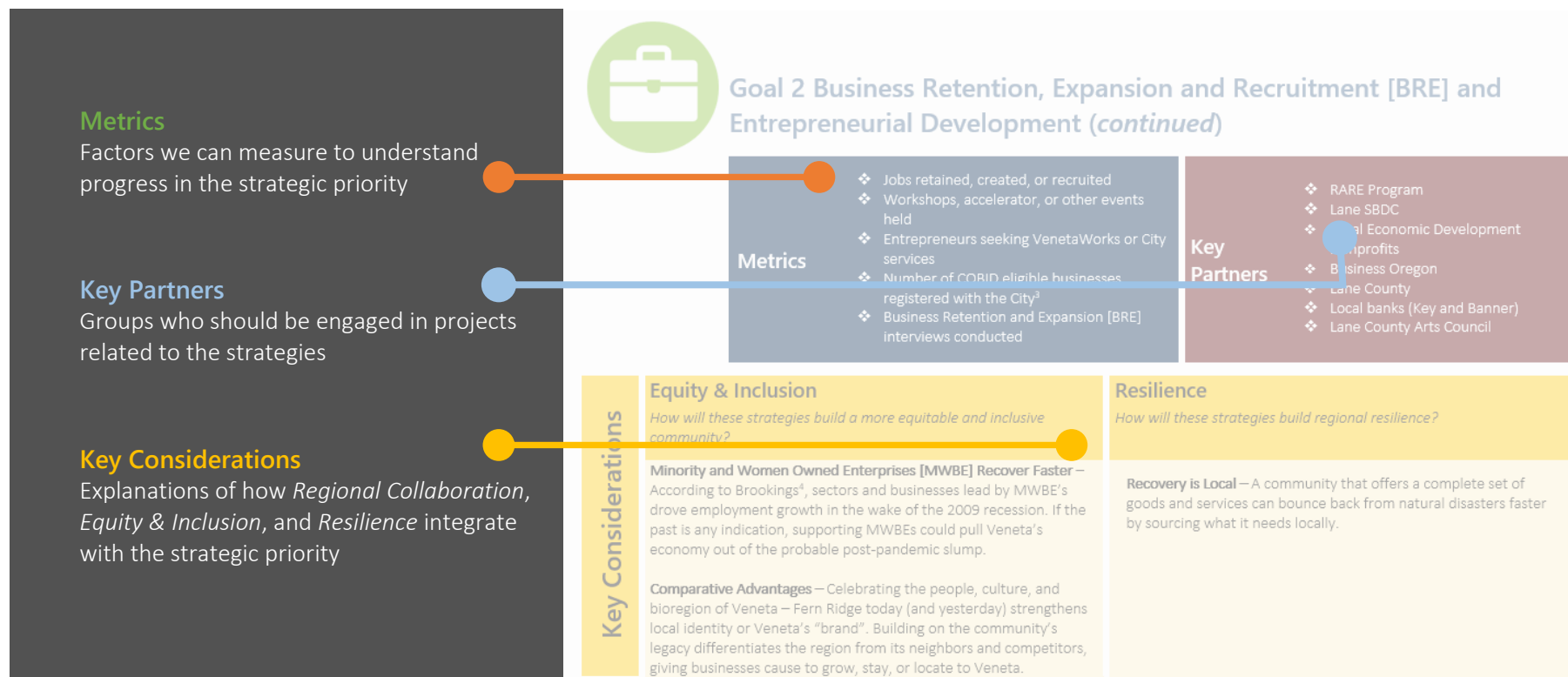
Priority
A, B, or C

Lead Role
EDC, Staff, Key Partners

Status
Active, Inactive, Ongoing, New

Timeline
During which years is the implementation to occur

Using the Goals and Strategies (Part 2)





Goal 1: Economic Development Commitment

Description: An effective economic development strategy requires that a community be transparent with its processes, take a collaborative approach toward delivering programs to foster growth and meaningfully engage local businesses in determining the future of Veneta's economy.

Veneta's Role: Is to be a coordinator of economic services through consistent communication with the public and by funneling the needs of its business community to relevant governments and providers.

Over the next five years, Veneta will identify ways to link and leverage regional, state, and federal resources to deliver services and connect businesses to specialist providers.

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1.1 Demonstrate consistent commitment and support for long-term economic development in Veneta	1.1.1 Continue to champion local entrepreneurs and small business owners by providing them promotion and small business support unique to their situation.	A	EDC	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.1.2 Invest in temporary and permanent changes to the built-environment to illustrate the evolution of Veneta's economy.	A	Key Partners	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.1.3 Collaborate with economic development, entrepreneurial development and workforce training organizations to strengthen the local labor market.	C	EDC	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Goal 1: Economic Development Commitment (*continued*)

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1.2 Establish and maintain relationships with business development partners and with local, state, and federal economic development organizations.	1.2.1 Collaborate with regional economic development agencies/groups and other communities to develop industry and businesses for the area.	A	EDC	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.3.1 Promote and track the dissemination of federal, state, and regional COVID-19 recovery resources, including business loans and grants and personal protective equipment [PPE].	A	Staff	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.3 Maintain transparency and open communication with the community on economic development topics to promote public participation and engagement.	1.3.2 Centralize economic and community development communications in a way that reaches most residents.	B	Staff	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[illegible]



Goal 1: Economic Development Commitment (*continued*)

Metrics

- ❖ Social media and email impressions
- ❖ Groups worked with
- ❖ Workshops and events hosted
- ❖ Event attendance
- ❖ COVID-19 resources distributed

Key Partners

- ❖ Economic Development Committee
- ❖ Lane Workforce Partnership
- ❖ Business and property owners
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Workforce and entrepreneurial development organizations
- ❖ Local banks (Key and Banner)

Key Considerations

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive community?

Outreach – Effort should be made to expand outreach to more than just the “usual suspects” of local business leaders and community developers.

Access – Meetings and other events should be well advertised, scheduled, and recorded so that the entirety of the community, regardless of race income and status, can choose to participate in economic development. Opportunities like surveys, providing written comment and social media allow for asynchronous community development, and are more accessible for people who are not comfortable or able to speak in front of groups or at public meetings

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Networks – Tighter-knit communities fare better during and after disasters and recessions.

Emergency response – Local businesses and leaders will be the first responders in case of emergency. Establishing relationships with service providers, contractors, renters, and property owners can lay the groundwork for rapid response, rescue, repair, and cleanup.

Encouraging Resilience Strategies – Providing local businesses with natural hazard mitigation best practices during their regular interactions with the City can encourage long-term thinking and emergency preparedness.



Goal 2 Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment [BRE] and Entrepreneurial Development

Description: A key to sustainable economic development is identifying, nurturing, and growing the businesses and entrepreneurs already present in the community. These businesses are more likely to put down roots and commit themselves to growing with the community into the future. However, being aware of Veneta's comparative advantages will allow it to attract outside interest when the moment presents itself.

Veneta's Role: Is to provide a central touch point for local businesses and those interested in moving to the community.

Over the next five years, the City will listen to its business community, support its entrepreneurs, and represent the best of what the community has to offer to prospective parties

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2.1 Facilitate economic development in Veneta through the retention and expansion of existing businesses.	2.1.1 Collaborate with business development partners to provide meaningful small business and entrepreneurial support.	A	Staff	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.1.2 Pursue new round of BRE interviews and asset mapping with a focus on COVID-19 related needs.	A	EDC	New	✓				
	2.1.3 Continue workshops, lecture series and other business and entrepreneur focused events development topics to promote public participation and engagement.	B	Staff	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Goal 2 Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment [BRE] and Entrepreneurial Development (*continued*)

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2.2 Make the community more attractive to businesses and residents through marketing efforts.	2.2.1 Ensure local policies are supportive of sharing economy lodging (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO) and formal small-scale boutique lodging.	A	EDC	New	✓	✓			
	2.2.2 Work with regional tourism associations and wine industry to increase tourism activity in the area.	B	EDC	Inactive	✓	✓	✓		
2.3 Catalyze current business owners in and outside the downtown area to encourage retail and commercial development (i.e., zoning amendments, public-private partnerships).	2.3.1 Be responsive to developers and business owners sharing their experience with Veneta's development policies with the EDC, Council and City staff.	A	EDC	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2.3.2 Identify sustainable policies to finance and lower the cost new development in Veneta, including but not limited to: urban renewal financing, grants from state and federal agencies, private-public partnerships, and offsetting fees for construction through waivers and long-term leasing.	A	EDC	New	✓	✓			



Goal 2 Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment [BRE] and Entrepreneurial Development (*continued*)

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2.4 Leverage the Unique Bioregional and Cultural Assets of Veneta - Fern Ridge to celebrate local identity for current residents and differentiate the community to prospective businesses and workers	2.4.1 Establish an arts and culture working group to further the intersection of economic and community cultural development.	A	EDC	New	✓	✓			
	2.4.2 Identify key imagery and messaging associated with Veneta and the Fern Ridge bioregion.	A	EDC	New	✓				
	2.4.3 Create a guiding document that creates a "brand kit" for Veneta's identity.	B	EDC	New	✓				
	2.4.4 Reflect Veneta's identity in the built environment by working with artisans to install, showcase, and sell their art.	C	EDC	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[illegible]



Goal 2 Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment [BRE] and Entrepreneurial Development (*continued*)

Metrics

- ❖ Jobs retained, created, or recruited
- ❖ Workshops, accelerator, or other events held
- ❖ Entrepreneurs seeking VenetaWorks or City services
- ❖ Number of COBID eligible businesses registered with the City³
- ❖ Business Retention and Expansion [BRE] interviews conducted

Key Partners

- ❖ RARE Program
- ❖ Lane SBDC
- ❖ Local Economic Development Nonprofits
- ❖ Business Oregon
- ❖ Lane County
- ❖ Local banks (Key and Banner)
- ❖ Lane County Arts Council

Key Considerations

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive community?

Minority and Women Owned Enterprises [MWBE] Recover Faster – According to Brookings⁴, sectors and businesses lead by MWBE's drove employment growth in the wake of the 2009 recession. If the past is any indication, supporting MWBEs could pull Veneta's economy out of the probable post-pandemic slump.

Comparative Advantages – Celebrating the people, culture, and bioregion of Veneta – Fern Ridge today (and yesterday) strengthens local identity or Veneta's "brand". Building on the community's legacy differentiates the region from its neighbors and competitors, giving businesses cause to grow, stay, or locate to Veneta.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Recovery is Local – A community that offers a complete set of goods and services can bounce back from natural disasters faster by sourcing what it needs locally.

³ Business Oregon's Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) – Leveling the playing field for business owners regardless of owner ethnicity, race or disability.

⁴ Brookings analysis, 2020: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/businesses-owned-by-women-and-minorities-have-grown-will-covid-19-undo-that/>



Goal 3: Retail and Commercial Development

Description: A business community cannot thrive without responsive land use policy and available real estate. Property owners in key districts, developers and entrepreneurs need to coordinate to create the kinds of spaces where business thrives.

Veneta's Role: Is to provide responsive and reasonable policy that will guide the development of a desirable, "livable" complete community by the private sector.

Over the next five years the City will work with landowners, developers, and business owners to create the conditions necessary for retail and commercial growth.

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
3.1: Encourage W. Broadway commercial property owners to envision a vibrant downtown core area that encourages residents and visitors to shop and spend time.	3.1.1 Collaborate with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to increase consistent and attractive wayfinding signage and direct traffic off Highway 126 into downtown Veneta and to Veneta businesses.	A	EDC	Inactive	✓	✓	✓		
	3.1.2 Solicit feedback and regular dialog with landowners and developers on how Veneta's various land use policies and practices effect potential development.	A	EDC	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.1.3 Work with consultants, government assessors, real estate agents and developers to determine the economic value of underutilized properties in and around downtown Veneta.	B	Staff	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.1.4 Continue to update vacant, blighted, abandoned, and underutilized (also known as "zombie") property ordinances.	C	EDC	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Goal 3: Retail and Commercial Development (*continued*)

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>					Timeline				
	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Strategy 3.2: Focus on quality retail and commercial development that will offer a full spectrum of products/services for the community.	3.2.1 Widely share market research on what sectors and industries are primed to thrive in Veneta.	A	EDC	Inactive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.2.2 Make connections between local entrepreneurs/businesses and potential developers to help fill speculative commercial space construction.	A	Staff	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3.2.3 Continue to update and publicize an inventory of available commercial and vacant real estate.	B	Staff	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

[illegible]



Goal 3: Retail and Commercial Development (*continued*)

Metrics

- ❖ Social media and email impressions
- ❖ Groups worked with
- ❖ Workshops and events hosted
- ❖ Event attendance
- ❖ COVID-19 resources distributed

Key Partners

- ❖ Veneta Economic Development Committee
- ❖ Local landowners
- ❖ Developers
- ❖ Entrepreneurs and small business owners
- ❖ Local banks (Key and Banner)

Key Considerations

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive community?

Access for Existing Businesses – barriers to entry and promotion in business have been higher for some demographic groups than others, resulting in business ownership and leadership that is not representative of the general population.⁵ Programs and policies targeted at supporting groups that are underrepresented in business ownership and leadership will help bring representation back into balance.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Diversification of Industries – encouraging business growth, particularly growth into new sectors, will help the region weather shocks by ensuring the region does not have “all of its eggs in one basket.”

Internal Coordination – facilitating connections between incubators, accelerators, and traditional business development support providers will lead to a better alignment of resources.

Access for Entrepreneurs – start-ups require significant upfront resources and are more likely to gain traction if the entrepreneurs can leverage relevant social and investor networks. Some demographic groups and entrepreneurs in rural areas may have more limited access to resources and networks. When economic developers work specifically to assist underrepresented groups, they create a more representative pipeline of new business owners.

⁵ In 2018, 11% of Oregon’s small businesses (businesses with fewer than 500 employees, which make up 99.4% of all Oregon businesses) were minority-owned, according to the [2018 Small Business Profile](#) from the US Small Business Administration. In 2019, 25% of Oregon’s population was not white alone and not Hispanic or Latino (American Community Survey, 2019: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data, Table DP05).



Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvements

Description: Cities provide pivotal and crucial infrastructure and services to residents and businesses. The built environment and available utilities create the conditions necessary for a productive economy and an attractive community. 21st century developments, like high-speed internet and interwoven communal greenspace will create a place where future industry can thrive.

Veneta's Role: Is to maintain a useful and attractive built environment, and to bridge the gap between private and public sector utilities.

Over the next five years the City will continue with momentum it has gained through consistent infrastructure upgrades and new community amenities by connecting residents with high-speed internet through public and private partnerships and by implementing the community spaces that represent the bioregion.

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
4.1: Prioritize making high-speed telecommunications accessible and affordable for every resident in the community.	4.1.1 Pursue the expansion and installation of a fiber optics line to, and throughout, Veneta to bring the City more fully into the communication age.	A	EDC	Active	✓	✓			
	4.1.2 Evaluate if it is cost effective for the City to own and construct Fiber to the home [FTTH] connections - otherwise critically engage with internet service providers to create FTTH connections.	A	Staff	Active	✓				
	4.1.3 Update building regulations to require that broadband cable, capable of at least "CAT 5" speeds of 100 mbps and faster to be installed in new developments.	B	Staff	New		✓	✓		
	4.1.4 Provide public high-speed internet access at publicly run community places.	C	EDC	New	✓				



Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvements (*continued*)

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
4.2: Continue infrastructure improvements to support the needs of current and future Veneta businesses.	4.2.1 Advocate for the City to implement projects outlined in the Parks Master Plan.	A	Staff	Inactive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.2.2 Continue to upgrade existing downtown infrastructure including; streetscape improvements, stormwater, installing conduit, resilient infrastructure (undergrounding).	B	Staff	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.2.3 Continue to advocate for ODOT to fund and construct the preferred alternative consistent with the adopted Highway 126 Fern Ridge Corridor Plan. Continue to make improvements along Highway 126.	B	EDC	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.2.4 Focus improvements on pedestrian and streetscape infrastructure as needed.	C	Staff	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.2.5 Continue enhancing bicycle and pedestrian connections between Veneta, Elmira, and the Fern Ridge Reservoir.	C	Staff	Ongoing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvements (*continued*)

Strategies <i>What will guide regional economic development?</i>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Strategy 4.3: Make aesthetic enhancements to make Veneta attractive to residents, visitors, and potential industries.	4.3.1 Make beautification improvements along Highway 126 and Territorial Highway on properties that are within the City of Veneta's jurisdiction to signal to visitors that they have entered a community that values its aesthetics.	B	Staff	Inactive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4.3.2 Continue to monitor commercial “problem properties” through code enforcement and nuisance ordinances.	C	Staff	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategy 4.4: Create additional building ownership opportunities for industrial activities.	4.4.1 Work with Lane County, the EPA, and other federal agencies to conduct necessary site analyses on City-owned Lot 600 before sale to private industry.	B	Staff	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategy 4.5: Improve access and connectivity from neighboring cities and unincorporated communities to enhance employment activity.	4.5.1 Continue working with ODOT, Lane County, the Lane Council of Governments and Lane Transit District to provide multi-modal transportation options between the Fern Ridge community, Veneta and the Eugene/Springfield metro region.	C	EDC	New	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvements (*continued*)

Metrics

- ❖ Social media and email impressions
- ❖ Number of groups worked with
- ❖ Workshops and events hosted
- ❖ Event attendance
- ❖ COVID-19 resources distributed

Key Partners

- ❖ Economic Development Committee
- ❖ Lane Workforce Partnership
- ❖ Business and property owners
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Local banks (Key and Banner)

Key Considerations

Equity & Inclusion

How will these strategies build a more equitable and inclusive community?

Equitable Access to Opportunity – developing broadband and other critical infrastructure in underserved communities will uplift areas that have suffered economically because they lacked access to high-quality essential services.

Resilience

How will these strategies build regional resilience?

Infrastructure Redundancy and Resiliency – focusing on projects that create redundant infrastructure (back-up systems that will take over if the primary system fails) and resilient infrastructure (systems that can withstand disruption for either natural or human-created incidents) will put Veneta in a strong position to bounce back quickly from disruption.

Greater Mobility – Veneta businesses and residents will have multiple points of high-speed internet access privately and publicly.

More Robust Infrastructure – Enhanced public infrastructure will provide greater options for use should another facility be unavailable.

Appendix A: Review of Relevant Economic Development Documents

This appendix provides an overview of Veneta’s current economic development plans, projects, and programs. In understanding the status of Veneta’s plans, projects, and programs, we are better able to provide recommendations for updates to the City’s economic development strategies. This document includes a summary of key economic development plans, a review of active and ongoing projects, and recommendations for how this document will inform the remainder of this Economic Development Strategy update project.

Economic Development Plan Review

The main documents reviewed in this document are as follows:

- City of Veneta Economic Opportunities Analysis
- Veneta Economic Development Strategy
- Retail Market Analysis
- Downtown Action Plan and Redevelopment Toolkit
- EDC Workplan
- Veneta Comprehensive Plan
- Broadband Strategic Plan and Open Access Report

We assessed these documents along with associated projects and programs to understand specific strategies and goals Veneta is trying to achieve, the status of the projects, plans, and programs, and how the current economic climate has impacted them. While reviewing these plans, programs, and project, it is also important for us to understand Veneta’s broader economic development goals and visions that help shape the strategies and plans.

Veneta Economic Development Goals and Vision

Veneta’s economic development goals and vision are shaped by factors that influence the future of the City and available resources and opportunities including projected population growth, target industries, presence of entrepreneurship, and proximity to the Eugene/Springfield area. Veneta has significantly increased its economic development efforts in the last two decades and its active plans, programs, and projects support continued growth and development as the City flourishes.

The City’s economic development vision, according to the Economic Development Strategy plan, is to be a “complete community” that provides a variety of job opportunities, local services, and residential opportunities while focusing on collaboration and partnerships to implement community and economic development activities. With this vision in mind, Veneta has goals such as embracing a sustainable economic development approach and providing a vibrant, safe place for community members and tourists alike. Providing for basic needs and creating a unique, healthy community is also at the forefront of Veneta’s economic development goals. A summary of relevant documents and of the active and ongoing activities from the Economic Development strategy plan are included below to give us a better understanding of how Veneta can strengthen its economic development plans.

Economic Development Key Documents

The following section provides a brief description and impact of Veneta’s important economic development documents.

Veneta Comprehensive Plan

The Veneta Comprehensive plan (2000, last updated 2019), instructs the City to invest in downtown infrastructure and manufacturing sites. Much of this work has been completed. The plan calls for a re-evaluation of economic trends every five to ten years, in line with the Economic Development Strategy process.

Veneta Economic Development Strategy 2015-2019

The current Economic Development Strategy, completed by CPW/IPRE in 2015, articulates broad action steps Veneta can take to grow its economy by leveraging community strengths and mitigating weaknesses. Included in the document are several broad action areas (including downtown development, industrial/sectoral development, and tourism) and initial steps economic developers can take to advance each. This document provides the basis for the Veneta EDC workplan and has contributed to several RARE workplans.

City of Veneta Economic Opportunities Analysis

This analysis, completed by CPW/IPRE in 2015, quantifies the economic resources available within Veneta. Many of the findings of the CPW team are supported by more recent investigations, including the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program, and the 2016 Retail Market Analysis conducted by Rural Development Initiatives (RDI).

Included in the report is an inventory of available buildable land, projected employment numbers, and an estimation of how much land needs to be developed to meet employment needs within the Veneta UGB. Additionally, the report recommends that economic developers focus on the following target sectors:

- Food Processing – with a focus on specialty items
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services – focus on high-tech
- Secondary Wood Products – focus on niche markets
- Small-scale or Specialty Agriculture including Greenhouse, and Floriculture Products
- Tourism and Wine industry

The report finds that Veneta’s proximity to Eugene/Springfield makes it difficult to encourage local consumption of goods and services. Likewise, the distance from I-5 makes Veneta unattractive to industrial employers who require more efficient and direct access to interstate travel routes.

However, Veneta’s bucolic lifestyle and unique natural amenities make it an attractive place for workers to live. Veneta’s easy access to Highway 126, the Oregon Coast and the Eugene Airport are potential economic development advantages depending on the employer or industry.

Economic Development Committee Workplan

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) workplan lists the accomplishments and current action items of the Veneta Economic Development Committee. The workplan serves as a strategic framing device but needs updating and project reprioritization through the 2020 Economic Development Strategy process.

Retail Market Analysis

The Retail Market Analysis (RMA), completed by Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) in 2016, confirms the findings of the 2015 CPW team’s Economic Opportunities Analysis and Economic Development Strategy plan and quantifies the amount of “retail leakage” in lost economic activity to Eugene/Springfield (see below for a summary). The report provides consumer profiles of residents and likely shoppers, and what industries such people support.

The analysis estimated the consumer habits of residents and how much consumer spending (dollars) Veneta captured. “Retail leakage” is the amount of consumer spending that leaves the trade area. Retail leakage can be translated to square footage, which provides the amount of retail space that could be absorbed in Veneta. RDI found that the total retail leakage in 2016 was **\$89,425,868 with 397,260 square feet of retail potential – the approximate retail square footage and economic activity of two big box stores (Target, Walmart, etc.) or the economic activity of businesses within a four-block stretch of a downtown main street.**

Downtown Action Plan and Redevelopment Toolkit

These 2017-2018 reports lay out a series of action steps to guide the creation of catalytic downtown developments, with the intent of spurring more growth. To do so, the report recommends the City lower the barriers to development by providing infrastructure, technical services and

financial support to downtown developers. The Redevelopment Toolkit lays out projects that are eligible for urban renewal dollars, and guides City staff and businesses through the process.

Broadband Strategic Plan and Open Access Report

These documents articulate the benefits of high-speed broadband internet, the costs of deploying such infrastructure, and strategies for doing so.

Active Economic Development Projects

The EDC's most recent meeting minutes from the August 12, 2020 meeting show an update on economic development projects. As of this meeting, there are four active projects and five ongoing projects. Some of these action items and projects are referenced in the above section. The status updates below provide the most up-to-date information on the projects.

Active projects:

4.1.2 Fiber-to-the-Home: This project is particularly important now as people have switched to remote work due to the pandemic. Having a stronger, more reliable internet connection will cause less disruptions in the workday, allowing for remote work to be a sustainable alternative to in-person work with the physical distancing practices implemented due to the pandemic.

1.2.1 and 2.3.1 Bringing new business to Veneta: Part of the City's BRE and development strategy is providing incentives for different industries, such as the Fermentation Incentive that provides access to loans, grants, and incentives for fermenters starting a new business in Veneta.

2.2.1 Economic Development Newsletter – The goal of this action item is to strengthen communication on economic development news and updates for the community. In addition to the quarterly newsletter, this communication action item includes regular updates to the EDC and VenetaWorks websites.

2.2.2 Buildable lands inventory map: The EOA summarized above mentions an inventory of buildable lands that can be referenced. This action item focuses on having a Developable Lands Map for industrial and commercial zones intended to be used as a guide for "shovel ready" lands available for new developments in the City.

Ongoing projects:

4.1.3 and 4.2.1 Highway 126 Fern Ridge Corridor funding: This includes communication with ODOT to advocate for funding for the project. This project is in its Proof of Concept phase and is working towards refining the conceptual design and finalizing an environment study to meet NEPA standards.

4.2.3 Code enforcement on “problem properties” in the City: These properties are being regularly monitored and updated via the Vacant Property Registration program.

3.1.2 Upgrade downtown infrastructure: These updates that currently include a 15-space parking lot and 4th Street curb improvements are part of the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) infrastructure revitalization being done in the downtown area.

4.1.1 Streetscape and pedestrian infrastructure improvements: These improvements are also part of the URA in collaboration with the Public Works department.

1.1.5 Support workforce development: Collaboration between VenetaWorks and Lane Workforce Partnership provides a strong support system for Veneta’s growing workforce.

The ongoing projects generally include activities such as monitoring and updating infrastructure. This is likely to continue as Veneta develops and strengthens its local economy. In addition to the projects above, there are six action items whose status is No Action. Of note is the Sister City program to enhance cultural activities that is intended to be included in the 2021-2025 EDC plan. This element will be of value to add to this Economic Development Strategy update project as well.

The active and ongoing projects show what Veneta is focusing on in terms of creating a vibrant, sustainable community and economy. With elements such as building and transportation infrastructure improvements as well as incentive programs for BRE and new business development, Veneta is setting itself up to have a diverse, strong economy as it continues to grow.

Conclusion

After reviewing Veneta’s key economic development documents, it is evident where the EDC has placed their focus. As we begin this project, it will be beneficial to understand which actions and projects the EDC wants to prioritize. With the current economic climate, IPRE recommends including updates to the Economic Development Strategy plan that include economic resilience measures to make it easier for the community to adapt to shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic we are experiencing. Integrating these measures into the downtown revitalization projects is a way to prepare for current and future social and economic shocks.