

City of Veneta

Economic Development Strategy

2021 - 2025



Photos courtesy of City of Veneta

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Final Report



O UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON | Institute for Policy
Research and Engagement

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City of Veneta
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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.

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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.

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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	Equity and Inclusion
<i>The City aspires to be a close-knit community that is prepared to respond to natural, economic, and manmade disasters</i>	<i>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.</i>

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)



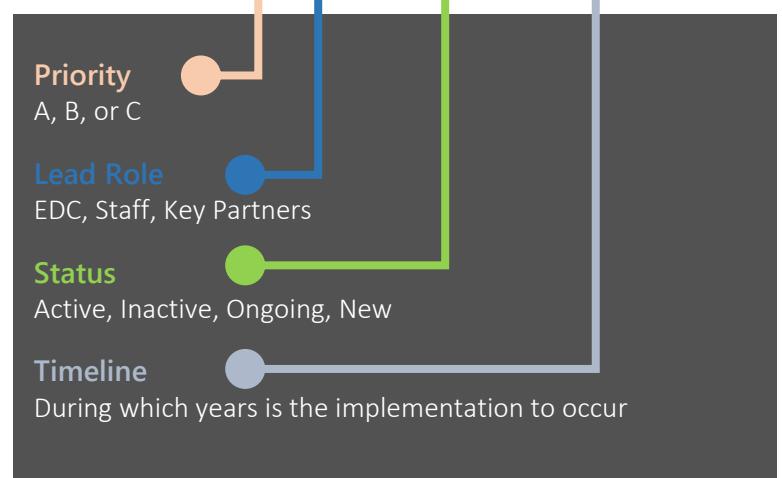
Key:

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

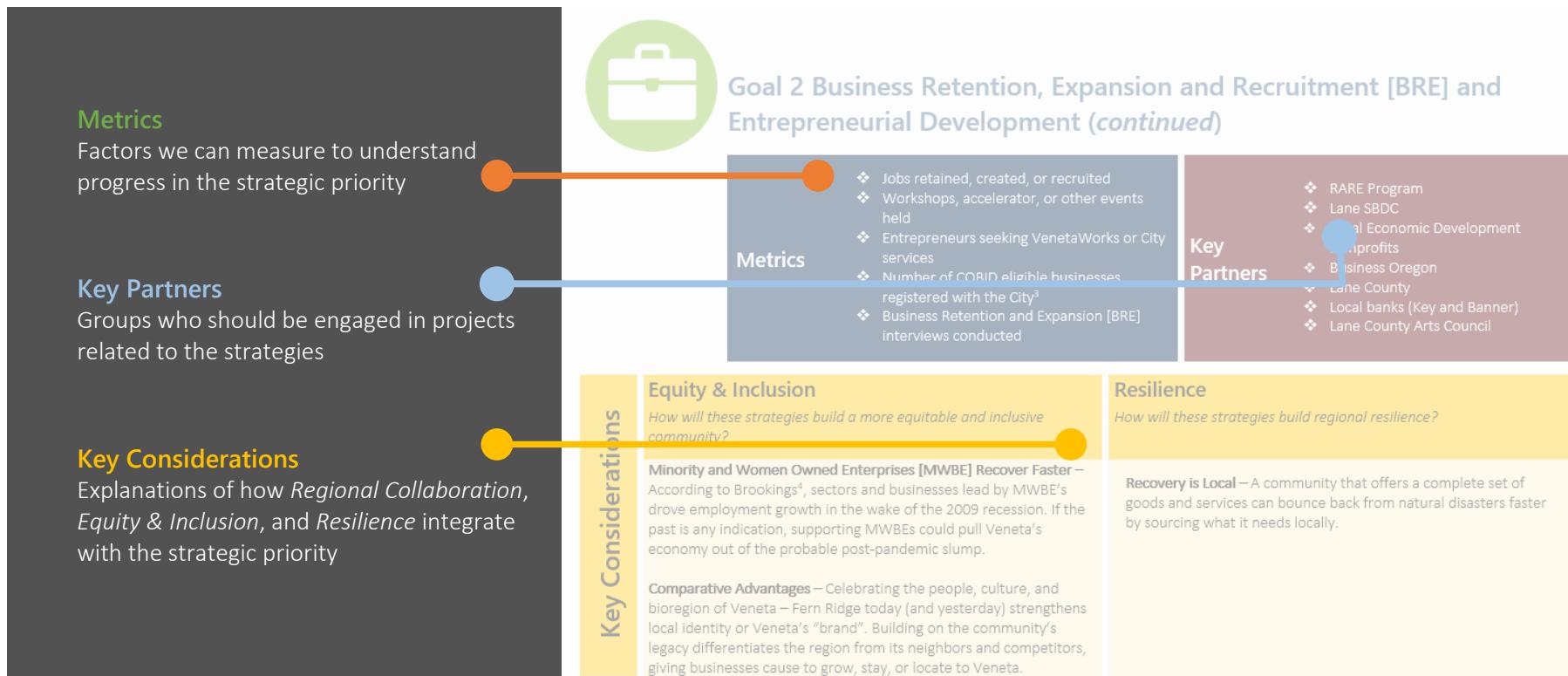
Lead Role – Who will lead the implementation of the action? Veneta Economic Development Committee, Veneta Staff, or Key Partners?

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



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 Maintain transparency and open communication with the community on economic development topics to promote public participation and engagement.	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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1.3.2 Centralize economic and community development communications in a way that reaches most residents.	B	Staff	Active	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action Notes: (if blank table can be filled in during the plan period 2021-2025)





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)

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.

Key Considerations



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>	Timeline							
		Priority	Lead Role	Status	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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action Notes: (if blank table can be filled in during the plan period 2021-2025)



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

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.

Key Considerations

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>	Actions <i>How can the strategies be implemented?</i>	Priority	Lead Role	Status	Timeline				
					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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action Notes: (if blank table can be filled in during the plan period 2021-2025)



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)

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.

Key Considerations

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>	Timeline							
		Priority	Lead Role	Status	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)

Action Notes: (if blank table can be filled in during the plan period 2021-2025)



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)

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.

Key Considerations

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.

