The City of Grants Pass and Josephine County are currently conducting a strategic planning process to drive economic development in the area.

On February 2, 2016, the City of Grants Pass and Josephine County hosted a stakeholder workshop and community meeting to:

- Present findings from the Phase I Situational Assessment and solicit feedback;
- Generate ideas for potential actions steps to promote economic development.

This memorandum details the community input received during the exercises at each of the meetings.

1. Stakeholder Workshop

Key stakeholders, community leaders, and industry experts were invited to attend the joint City/County workshop.

Participants: The workshop was held by the City of Grants Pass and Josephine County. Dave Reeves and Susan Seereiter took the lead for the City and Commissioner Cherryl Walker took the lead for the County. Over 30 community members attended. Attendees represented the following:

- City employees
- County employees
- State representatives
Consulting team members included:
- Terry Moore, Principal, ECONorthwest
- Alexandra Reese, Project Manager, ECONorthwest
- Ioanna Morfessis, National Economic Development Expert, IO.Inc
- Brian Douglas Scott, Facilitator, BDS Planning & Urban Design
- Jacqueline Gruber, Facilitator, BDS Planning & Urban Design

Agenda
- Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)
- Background Presentation on Situational Analysis (20 minutes)
- Observations from a National Perspective (10 minutes)
- Facilitated Small Group Discussions: Reactions to Situational Analysis & Potential City/County Actions (75 minutes)
- Break (10 minutes)
- Consultant Assessment: Consultant Feedback for Potential Strategies and Approaches (25 minutes)
- Group Reactions, Question and Answer (30 minutes)

Description of Workshop Program

The consultant team presented background information on the project; scope of work; intended outcomes, and an economic development strategic plan for the City of Grants Pass and Josephine County. In addition, the consultant team presented initial findings from the situational analysis, and an assessment of economic development conditions in the City and County. The situational analysis showed the County’s performance on
direct indications of economic activity compared to neighboring jurisdictions, the State, and the nation. The situational analysis described conditions for the four factors of production that impact economic development outcomes:

- Land Use
- Infrastructure
- Workforce Development
- Services

Members of the consultant team and City facilitated small group discussions to brainstorm actions that the City and County could take to improve conditions for production and business sectors. Four small group stations were assigned one of the topics below as an area of focus. Participants were given the opportunity to select two topics over two rounds of discussion.

- Land & Infrastructure (combined group)
- Workforce Development
- Services
- Business Sectors

In the first round, participants discussed potential strategies related to that topic. In the second round, participants identified gaps in potential strategies and set priorities. Ioanna Morfessis then reacted to the key themes and strategies that emerged from the exercise. The results of this discussion are depicted on a wall graphic shown in Figure 1.

**Summary of Workshop Comments**

Below are verbatim comments from the small group discussions and report out.

**Land & Infrastructure**

- Urban renewal agency (Grants Pass)
- Funding mechanism for rural industrial development (North Valley, Merlin, County)
- Housing supply/cost
  - Relax rules for County development
  - More effective housing authority
- More incentives for development with requirements for living wage jobs
  - RCC training in these areas
- Address disrepair of infrastructure
- Traffic south of river
- Housing availability
  - Different designs of accessory dwelling unit
  - Broadband exists in Grants Pass, not in County
Impact on MJ rules
North County Industrial Parks need water/sewer
North Valley in Grants Pass: unwilling owners
In general, some people don’t feel they should have to pay; need some funding plan
Transportation in south “Y”
Parks: Sports complex is inadequate in some places
Waste water in Grants Pass at capacity
Water: old, needs improvement
Services: Jails, parks, public safety
Grants Pass: Water and wastewater plant upgrades ~$70 million, each needs to go to voters
Grants Pass: Housing supply is increasing, new subdivision, very low vacancy
Grants Pass: Housing permitting and timing issues; City needs to be more flexible
Grants Pass/Josephine County: How to blend infrastructure at the edges?
Public transportation

Workforce
Clarify needs (e.g. medical)
County libraries
Recreation and quality of life
Facilities - better co-op of fees
Internships- provide directly, facilitate via marketing benefits to businesses and telling stories about positive aspects of current cohorts
Jobs for recent graduates
Expose students to what is available- industries, jobs, and make connections
Grants Pass High School is a success story and work in progress
Facilitate connections - schools, businesses, and students
Facilitate discussion about diversity of needs - High School graduates, jobs that do not require higher education, skill-based jobs
Identify needs, lower or assist with barriers to entry
Develop/administer vocation test and assist with matching
Get again population involved
Facilitate and engage education and private sector
  o Create a forum - a place where people can go
Identify needs of businesses and students
  o Help match needs
    o Get a plan in place to build the right programs and facilities—RCC could be key here.
Focus on range of stages - K-12 through retirement
Partner with SOREDI, proper talks
Legislation/business policy regarding recreational marijuana use on the job
  - Better testing
Better substance abuse education and related programming (Boys & Girls Club)
Support services
  - City and County should partner with Department of Human Services
Partner with Chamber
Broadband access for everyone - need infrastructure
Facilitate and/or fund development of soft skills
  - Library has a lot of requests
Funding or subsidizing internships
Programs may be available - access is the issue; focus on that
Grant process for workforce development
City and County leadership attendance at related community events/meetings
Create a program or delegate responsibility to facilitate discussion and partnership between education, private sector, and individuals
  - Identify needs
  - Match resources
Access to broadband infrastructure!
Better testing and policy related to marijuana use
Strategy to explore potential funds for housing (including Federal Housing Administration, 232 for single and 221(d)(4) for multi-family)

Services
Definition of urban versus rural
Information sharing, like the regular surveying done by Chamber
Services that support quality of life for families of the employed
Cultural and enrichment for all
Distinct strategies for business sectors and sub-sectors at various levels/sizes
Distributing information about existing services
Need for more cross-agency collaboration
Focus on services for all stages of business: launch, prosper, and relocate.
Partnerships with WorkSource Oregon
Funding existing policies/programs
Grant writing
Business advocates at County level
Support for mental illness and safety
Marketing to tourists
Public safety impacting business and workforce and funding challenges
Appreciate and trust for government
• Develop public buy-in
• Geographic challenges
• Access to capital and resources (ventures + startups)
• Transparency and education
• Youth engagement and civic engagement through partnership with schools
• Public service
• Fixing breakdowns in communication
• Engaging spectrum of seniors and voters
• Concluding Themes:
  • Enhance and fund existing programs
  • Information distribution
  • Market data (chamber survey)
  • Quality of life
  • Public safety impacts on business!
  • Civic engagement to build public trust
    • Education and engagement with youth and seniors
    • Promote successes
    • Long-term consistent outreach program (various forums and feedback loops)
    • Peer-to-peer education
    • Fostering neighborhoods and community

Business Sectors
• Resort (tourism)
• Providence (healthcare)
• Long-term medical services (quality of life)
• Tech jobs
• Agriculture, including forestry
• Competition
• Housing developers (mid-level multi-family)
• Call centers
• Hotels/motels
• Support and services
• Cannabis and hemp industries
• Places like Verandra Park
• Senior living (Medford)
• Small manufacturing/retail spaces
• Upper-scale “boutique”
• Experience shopping
• Concluding themes:
  • Higher wage jobs (tech companies)
Tourism jobs (McMenamins)
- Small manufacturing
- Courting businesses like Providence
  - Workforce focus: medical, internet commerce
  - Allied Health/Advanced manufacturing
  - Small units of larger corporation
  - E-Commerce companies
  - Medical oncology
  - Professional services in medical field
  - Top focus: tech companies
  - Small scale craft manufacturing/retail (incubators)
  - Medical specialists
  - Senior care services and facilities (upscale, community living experience for elders)

Facilitators synthesized key themes and conclusions that resulted from the small group discussions. Ioanna Morfessis responded to the comments in real time, making ties to national best practices and successes. The following is a wall graphic produced during her presentation that summarizes proposed key strategies.

![Wall graphic](image-url)
2. Community Meeting
The community meeting was open and advertised to the general public.

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)
- Background Presentation: Local and Regional Conditions; Observations from a National Perspective (20 minutes)
- Summary of Potential Strategies from Stakeholder Meeting (10 minutes)
- Open Forum Discussion: Feedback from Participants on Situational Analysis; Group Brainstorm on Potential Strategies and Priorities (50 minutes)
- Consultant Assessment: Feedback on Potential Strategies & Approaches from a National Perspective (20 minutes)
- Wrap Up and Next Steps (10 minutes)

Description of Meeting Program
The community meeting consisted of a background presentation on the situational analysis, followed by a summary of what emerged from the stakeholder workshop. The majority of the time was dedicated to an open forum during which attendees responded to the situations analysis and stakeholder comments. In conclusion, Ioanna Morfessis reacted to comments that emerged from this group discussion.

Summary of Open Forum Discussion
Below are comments from the community meeting.

Arts and Tourism
- The arts are an important part of the community; important for tourism and important for retaining people
  - Discussion about foundry that debated relocating to Grants Pass, but inevitably decided not to for family reasons
- Collaboration between groups is key to making deals happen
- Cultural and heritage tourism, as well as artisanal economies are important for attracting young people to the community

Retirement Communities
- Retirement community is growing
- Many seniors are moving to the area; some have never lived in the area, but have children that live in or are connected to the area
- Seniors are looking for amenities of big cities with charms of a small town
They want to know that we have the arts, etcetera

Natural Resources
- Natural resources are one of the area’s greatest strengths
- There are agricultural, mineral, and forestry opportunities in the County; an economic plan must address these opportunities
- Natural resources are one of they key directions for the future plan and must be mentioned upfront
- Wineries and eco-tourism agricultural should be enhanced
- Local feelings are mixed when it comes to the timber industry; many feel that the timber industry is the future, others feel that timber is declining and in the past
- County should look into opportunities related to the farm to fork movement
- Marijuana-related businesses, as well as hemp, should be considered as part of an economic development strategy
- Organic farming industry is strong
- Hops was historically grown in the area; seems to have disappeared
- County has an opportunity with the forestry and mineral lands owned by the County
- Much of the forestry land in the County is held by the federal government, but there is also land owned by the County that is not connected to the federal government

Infrastructure
- Local governments need to partner with the business community to get infrastructure built
- Broadband is a huge issue; critical to recruiting jobs
- Broadband helps with capturing income tax from individuals working outside of the community, but that telecommute from Grants Pass/Josephine County

Implementation
- Civic engagement will be a key factor of success
- Diversification of economy is a critical building a more resilient economy
- Tailor actions and incentives to desirable business sectors

3. Key Emerging Themes
The stakeholder workshop and public meeting yielded a breadth of ideas, opportunities, comments, and concerns. As a result of the focused small group discussions and community conversations, the following key themes emerged for future economic development efforts:
- **Collaboration**: Building strategic partnerships and momentum through civic engagement
- **Information**: Sharing of information between agencies, but also access to broadband internet countywide
- **Quality of Life**: Investment in services and amenities that attract families and spouses of those relocating for work
- **Public Safety**: Connected to quality of life, concerns about public safety and impacts on business and residents
- **Land Permitting & Development**: Facilitating the provision of shovel ready industrial sites, and streamlining the permitting process for all uses

*Figure 2. Results of Community Workshop & Community Meeting*