

January 31, 2006

To: LCOG Executive Committee
From: Steve Dignam, Program Manager
Subject: Needs & Issues Inventory Process

LCOG functioned as the Regional Coordinating Agency in Lane County under the statewide Needs & Issues Inventory Process for many years. This is a process under which communities submit information on various high priority economic development projects which are on their local funding wish lists. These projects would include things such as water and sewer infrastructure, community centers and downtown redevelopment. All of these various projects were reviewed by the Lane Economic Committee (LEC). The LEC would compile a list and ranking of the top twenty projects and recommend that list to the LCOG Board for final approval. These top priority projects were then made available to various State and Federal funding sources for possible sponsorship and funding. A high ranking would not necessarily guaranty any final funding approval. However, a high ranking would constitute strong evidence that a project was a high regional priority and therefore worthy of strong consideration by those funding sources.

LCOG provided the staff support to the Lane Economic Committee to accomplish this objective. The State would provide approximately \$10,000 annually to fund this process.

The State appears to be curtailing its involvement in this process. It paid LCOG \$2,000 in 2004 for a slimmed down process. Nothing happened in 2005. There is no discussion of a process for 2006.

We conducted an informal straw poll of several city managers and city administrators and determined that some form of this process is still necessary and desirable. In addition, the Lane Economic Committee met on January 23, 2006 and suggested that the LCOG Board be informed regarding “the value identified in the economic development Needs & Issues process...”

Recommendation

Staff recommends that LCOG continue its role as the Regional Coordinating Agency for the Needs & Issues Inventory process. Staff will work in partnership with the Lane Economic Committee to take the following actions:

- Stress the importance of this process to the State of Oregon and advocate for continued State leadership and coordination.
- Develop a low cost and streamlined local model for this process which will focus only on the highest priority economic development projects.
- Investigate the costs to develop a database and an internet based data input mechanism for local implementation.
- Investigate potential funding agents for this process.