

2004 Needs & Issues Ranking Process
Recommended Changes to Process
July 19, 2004

The Needs & Issues subcommittee of the Lane Economic Committee felt that the process operated reasonably well this year but has the following suggestions for improvement to the process:

1. The limitation on projects imposed this year helped to streamline the process. We allowed local communities to submit an unlimited number of projects but stipulated that only the top five projects would be reviewed by the LEC. We should continue this limitation of five projects per applicant.
2. LEC members sometimes were not able to make a fully informed decision about some of the projects. We should continue to invite project applicants to the LEC during the several months before the start of the Needs & Issues process. Applicants will be asked to briefly discuss upcoming projects which are likely to be on their local Needs & Issues priority lists.
3. LEC members sometimes were not able to make a fully informed decision about some of the projects. After receipt of project application forms next year, each LEC member could be asked to contact approximately 5 project applicants to ask additional questions and obtain additional information regarding the project. These projects would be grouped by geographic region or by other common characteristics. A brief comment sheet based on this interview could be added to the application for review by the LEC ranking subcommittee.
4. Project applications often include a list of other funding sources which will be leveraged by the project. Additional effort should be expended to verify the validity of these other funding sources.
5. A rating scale of 1 to 3 was used for several of our ranking criteria this past year. A scale of 1 to 5 or more would help to better differentiate quality projects.
6. There is currently no easy way to determine the outcome of projects which were ranked in prior years. It would be helpful if the new State database incorporated a field for the ultimate outcome of the project.
7. Local incorporated communities do a local review of their projects and submit a Local Priority worksheet which is used by the LEC. Unincorporated communities and non-profit organizations do not perform a detailed local review prior to receipt by the LEC. We could review and rank each of these two types of applications separately. Then we could attempt to consolidate the two lists. This may provide a more objective method to evaluate the two different types.
8. The Local Priority lists of some but not all local incorporated communities are approved by the elected officials of that relevant community. We could require that all local priority lists be reviewed by the relevant elected officials. Unincorporated communities and some nonprofit organizations may not be able to obtain approval from elected officials. We should attempt to identify some other means of ensuring local review prior to LEC analysis.
9. Many projects are of critical importance to a community but have only a tenuous or long term link to economic development. Nonetheless, these projects are essential to the long term economic development of the particular community. This includes projects such as water, sewer and other infrastructure. We should add a local ranking criterion for "Community Impact" in order to make sure that we appropriately capture the importance of these projects.

LANE COUNTY 2003 NEEDS AND ISSUES INVENTORY PROCESS: EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE, and COMMUNITY READINESS PROJECTS

The Lane Economic Committee (LEC) is responsible for evaluating and prioritizing each of the projects that are submitted for inclusion on the Needs & Issues Inventory for Lane County. The LEC has developed the following set of criteria to help evaluate and prioritize the projects. The criteria are divided into two tiers, Tier A and Tier B, with Tier A criteria receiving more weight than Tier B criteria.

Overall Project Value: The Overall Project Value is determined by the average of the values determined by each individual criterion, as well as consideration of project strengths and special features not covered in the Tier A and Tier B criteria.

TIER A CRITERIA

- **Project Readiness (FY03):** (Yes or No) Project will be ready to proceed by June 30, 2003. The applicant has the ability and authority to manage the project through completion.
- **Leverage/Match:** Level of matching funding sources secured, or in the process of being secured. The project budget is complete and the method of purchasing materials and services is comprehensive.
- **Job and Economic Impact:** Project creates or leads to direct and indirect job creation or retention and economic stability and industrial diversification. (NOTE: construction jobs do not count as job creation).

TIER B CRITERIA

- **Rural and Distressed Community Status:** (Yes or No for Rural Community Status) (Yes or No for Distressed Community Status) All rural Lane County communities except for Coburg and Dunes City are considered to be economically "Distressed" communities by the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department.
- **Supports Strategic Plan:** Project supports or enhances existing local or regional strategic plans, as referenced in the application.
- **Community Foundation Building:** Project builds or strengthens the community. This criterion is of particular significance in areas with high unemployment rates and low income levels.
- **Oregon Benchmarks:** Project will have a positive impact on at least one Oregon Benchmark. The Oregon Progress Board maintains a set of 90 benchmarks to help measure the state's overall economic, social, and environmental health. (These benchmarks can be reviewed at the following web site: www.econ.state.or.us/opb/0305obms/Master.pdf)
- **Local Priority:** The ranking that a sponsor gives a project relative to other projects on its local priority list.

