

MINUTES

Lane Economic Committee

Lane Council of Governments – 4th Floor Large Conference Room
99 E. Broadway, Suite 400 – Eugene

October 17, 2005 – 11:30 A.M.

PRESENT: John Tamulonis, Chair; Tim Black, Mike Blommé, Denny Braud (for Mike Sullivan), DeAnn Cherbas, Chuck Forster, Rob Scoggin, Bob Warren (for Glenda Poling), Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Jay Bozievich, Philip Hudspeth, Deb Schmidt, *ex officio* members; Dave D’Avanzo (for Jim Ramseyer), alternate members.

Steve Dignam, Milo Mecham (LCOG); Peter Thurston (Lane County); Bob Warren (Oregon Economic & Community Development Department).

ABSENT: Anna Morrison, Glenda Poling, Jim Ramseyer, Hal Reed, John Sullivan, Ellen Teninty, Mitch Wilkinson, members; Kari Westlund, *ex officio* member.

GUESTS: Anne Berblinger, Noa O’Hare, Pam Silvernagel, Diane Wiley.

Mr. Tamulonis called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:35 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves.

1. Public Comment

Noa O’Hare, 251 West Broadway, Eugene, stated that he represented the Lane Food Policy Council. He said he wanted to observe the LEC to become better informed about the influence of economic policy decisions on the availability of food.

Mr. Thurston stated that the efforts of the Council to enhance distribution of food to the needy and to develop policy recommendations were supported by the Board of County Commissioners.

2. Comments from the Chair / Staff Comments

None.

3. Review of Minutes

Mr. Scoggin moved, seconded by Ms. Wikstrom, to accept the minutes of the September 19, 2005, meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 13:0.

4. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Mr. Mecham referred to a draft document entitled “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)” dated September 22, 2005. He said it provided the framework for long-term planning efforts in Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties (BL3), Oregon. He noted that a previous version of the document had been reviewed by the LEC and LCOG Board of Directors.

Mr. Mecham referred to a document entitled “Lane Council of Governments – Lane Economic Committee – Economic Development Strategies” distributed as agenda support material. He suggested that it be considered in relation to the CEDS.

Pam Silvernagel stated that she represented the Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD), a partnership between Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments and LCOG, and that she had responsibility for compiling the CEDS. She explained that it combined a strategy required by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Regional Investment Plan (RIP), a strategy required of the BL3 Regional Investment Board (RIB) by the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department.

Ms. Silvernagel reviewed the development and contents of the CEDS. She noted that changes in the current version included elimination of “growth management” as a development district purpose and emphasizing the importance of respecting local values. She said “helping existing businesses” and “helping existing entrepreneurial efforts” had also been added to its vision statement. She said implementing the economic strategies of funding sources continued to be central to its function.

Ms. Silvernagel said one- and two-year work plans for the CWEDD would be developed, based on the CEDS.

Anne Berblinger stated that she represented the EDA, which she described as a small federal program with 200 workers nationwide and an annual budget of approximately \$200 million. She said activities of the Administration included encouraging and helping pay for economic development and planning through 300 Regional Economic Development Organizations and Indian tribes nationwide. She said it provided grants, not loans and that a local example was its recent contribution to the LCOG Revolving Loan Fund.

Mr. Tamulonis invited members to comment on the CEDS.

Mr. Bozievich identified concerns, as follows:

- a. No recognition is given of health care as an existing or future economic development opportunity, even though it is among the most important business activities in Lane County.
- b. Higher education should be separated from other governmental economic activities, as its processes and products are essentially different.
- c. Public Safety is not identified as an appropriate beneficiary of infrastructure or technical assistance, even though it is a prime contributor to quality of life.
- d. Recognition is given to the need to support existing business and entrepreneurial activities, but no mention is made of the need to remove barriers to their activities.

Mr. Braud expressed concern that recognition was not given to the value of revitalizing downtown district areas as an element of the enhancement of regional centers. Mr. Tamulonis added that redevelopment of former industrial and commercial sites was also overlooked in the CEDS.

Mr. Dignam asked how the Economic Development Strategies developed by LCOG through the LEC would be included in the CEDS. Ms. Silvernagel replied that the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments was developing a similar set of strategies and suggested that each be included as CEDS appendices that could be periodically revised. Mr. Tamulonis noted that other appendices were also included in the CEDS.

Mr. Thurston suggested that Lane Micro Business should be added to the CEDS as an example of a successful local economic development activity. Mr. Mecham added that Lane County St. Vincent de Paul had recently received national recognition for its achievements and should also be added.

Mr. Mecham noted that the EDA appeared to favor regionalization of economic development efforts and suggested that area examples of such activities should be identified in the CEDS. He suggested that recent federal recognition of the influence of higher education in rural area economic development would warrant its inclusion in future strategies to be developed.

Mr. Dignam noted that the work of Lane County St. Vincent de Paul was mentioned in the CEDS as an example of a way multiple needs could be addressed with a single solution, but that its monumental efforts in recycling and environmental cleanup were also worthy of mention.

Mr. Dignam asked how the State of Oregon used the CEDS. Mr. Warren replied that the document was not created for state use, but that it would be helpful in the formation of priorities for local and regional economic development efforts.

Ms. Silvernagel said the CEDS would be presented to the BL3 RIB for endorsement at a meeting to be held later in the day. She said CWEDD was scheduled to approve it in December and that it would be presented to Boards of County Commissioners in January.

Members discussed the value of seeking an increased influence for the CEDS and of locally identifying economic development strategies.

Mr. Dignam suggested benefits of the CEDS – enabling LCOG participation in establishing economic development priorities, making participation in EDA grants possible, giving a framework for the LEC needs and issues prioritization process, and encouraging the LEC to identify how to influence funding sources.

Mr. Black moved, seconded by Mr. Scoggin, to request that the document entitled “Lane Council of Governments – Lane Economic Committee – Economic Development Strategies” and suggestions made for its expansion be included as an appendix in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Members reviewed suggestions made for expansion of the document.

The motion was adopted unanimously, 13:0.

Mr. Scoggins moved, seconded by Mr. Warren, that the Lane Economic Committee endorse the suggestions made for expansion of its Economic Development Strategies and encourage staff to seek their incorporation into the CEDS. The motion was adopted unanimously, 13:0.

5. Local Economic Development Administration Activities

Ms. Berblinger said public safety and health care were likely not included in the CEDS because such plans traditionally only dealt with “traded sectors” of the economy, those that increased economic activity from outside an area. She agreed that they were economically influential.

Ms. Berblinger said economic development projects could be proposed to the EDA by anyone, but that they needed to be supported by the CEDS to be granted funding.

Ms. Berblinger said she believed the State of Oregon should continue to utilize the “Needs and Issues” prioritization of local economic development proposals, despite its burdensome nature. She said it was helpful in forming EDA evaluation of project proposals.

Ms. Berblinger said her first impression of the LEC/LCOG Economic Strategies was positive because of its emphasis on the importance of industry clusters.

Mr. Tamulonis announced that the next LEC meeting was scheduled for November 21.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)