



Central Oregon Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated - April, 2011

COIC is in the process of revising and expanding the **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** for the Central Oregon region. The strategy will focus primarily on the development of two elements:

- a priority list of local economic development needs (projects) for which state or federal funding are needed, submitted by cities, counties, tribes, businesses and organizations; and
- an inventory of regional-scale economic development issues and challenges for which multi-jurisdictional collaborative action is necessary.

These elements will be developed through a regional “Needs and Issues” process. This is NOT a grant funding application; this is a process to identify high priority economic development projects and issues. Every submitted project will be compiled into a list for the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council Board for inclusion within the Central Oregon Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Strategy will then be used as a basis to promote priority projects to state and federal funders.

The notification forms can also be downloaded from the COIC website:

<http://www.coic.org/cd/ceds.htm>

We are targeting projects that are able to begin within the next 12 months if funding was obtained. Large projects might be separated into smaller segments that could be completed within a year (i.e. project engineering and design separated from project construction).

Needs and Issues Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the regional “Needs and Issues” inventory process?

The Needs and Issues purpose is to:

- Inventory and prioritize economic development project needs and regional issues;
- Develop regional consensus on high priorities;
- Develop a tool to promote high priority projects or issues to state and federal funders.

This process is modeled on the state’s Needs and Issues process, which during the decade of the 1990’s was the method to identify high priority infrastructure, community facility, and community readiness projects. Our process will be specific only to the Central Oregon region.

What is the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy?

COIC has had a CEDS in place for nearly 20 years. The CEDS has served two primary functions in our region:

- The CEDS is a required pre-requisite for funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Regions that have a CEDS in place are eligible to receive public works funding, planning funding, and other EDA funding sources.
- The CEDS served as the planning document for the Central Oregon Community Investment Board, which over a 16 year period received and allocated state lottery dollars to economic development projects.

Through this update, the Central Oregon CEDS will serve as a coordinating strategy that integrates community, industry, and organizational economic development plans, strategies and priorities. The CEDS will not duplicate efforts or supersede local, on-the-ground economic development efforts; rather, the CEDS will be an over-arching roadmap for regional economic development that results in identification of needed actions and broadly-supported priorities.

The strategy will be built around several core elements:

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- What needs to be in place for an economy to be healthy? - Identification of “critical components” for local and regional economies.
- A list of economic development entities within the region, including a summary of services, resources, and roles.
- A list of local economic development project needs submitted and prioritized by cities, counties, Tribes, businesses and organizations, within the categories of employment lands, infrastructure, community facilities, business assistance/industry sector support, workforce and education, and community readiness.
- An inventory of regional-scale economic development issues and challenges.
- A strategy to identify funding resources and to implement high priority projects and initiatives.

Why is the Needs and Issues process under way right now?

COIC recognizes that regional action is necessary because:

- The impacts of the national economic recession are particularly acute in Central Oregon, where levels of unemployment, job loss, and diminished business activity are higher than most regions;
- Economic development conditions, capacity, community readiness, and levels of infrastructure vary across the region;
- Regional-scale problems and challenges increasingly require multi-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination;
- Additional grant and loan resources are needed to support communities and economic development efforts; and
- Broad regional support for economic development priorities is necessary to focus local resources and efforts and to maximize leveraging of state and federal funding.

Ultimately, the goal is to better position Central Oregon projects for funding.

What is the process and timeline?

The estimated timeline for this process is as follows:

- *September to November, 2010* - Project Solicitation Process.
- *September 29, 2010* – Needs and Issues Orientation Meeting, COIC.
- *November 15, 2010* – Project solicitation form/long term issue submission due date.
- *December - March, 2011* - COIC review of project concepts, meetings with jurisdictions to review list submissions, preliminary draft development.
- *April, 2011* – Draft Needs and Issues inventory developed, made available for comment.
- *June, 2011* – COIC Board of Directors approves Needs and Issues inventory.
- *June-September, 2011* – Needs and Issues inventory presented to state and federal funders; CEDS implementation begins.

What types of projects will be prioritized?

COIC’s approach to the Needs and Issues process is to be as flexible and inclusive as possible to ensure that the highest priority needs and issues are identified and included. Therefore, “projects” can be defined broadly to include not only “bricks and mortar” infrastructure projects, but also planning efforts, capacity development, education programs, leadership development, and/or any other action that will lead to an improved economic climate, and for which state or federal funding is necessary to complete. Projects should have start and end dates and estimated budget, including need for state or federal funding.

Projects will mostly be public/non-profit projects that support economic development. The reason for this public sector focus is that most state and federal grant programs limit eligibility to public organizations. However, we do understand that there are some state and federal funders that provide funding to private sector projects and/or individual businesses. Inclusion of private projects within this Needs and Issues process would be appropriate if a potential funding source can be identified.

Project Inventories will be developed for each of following categories:

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- **Employment land.** Project examples: development of large lot industrial parcels; planning functions resulting in enhanced employment lands; publicly developed business parks or industrial centers, etc.
- **Infrastructure (including community facilities).** Project examples: sewer and water infrastructure, telecommunications projects, community centers, college facilities, etc.
- **Redevelopment, brownfield, and downtown revitalization.** Project examples: streetscapes, facades, brownfield mitigation, etc.
- **Business assistance/cluster support.** Project example: creation of incentive funds to support business expansion, technical assistance for businesses, industry cluster assistance projects, etc.
- **Workforce & education.** Project examples: training programs, education centers, skills assessments and certification, workforce research, etc.
- **Community readiness & capacity building.** This is a catch-all category that can include projects that do not fit within the above categories. Project examples: planning projects, leadership development, feasibility studies, etc.

The November submission deadline has passed. Is it too late to submit additional project concepts?

Project concepts can be submitted at any time. We will add projects to the inventory throughout the draft review period, all the way up to the point of approval by the COIC Board of Directors (targeted for June, 2011). After the approval, the COIC Board may also choose to amend or modify the Needs and Issues inventory as needed.

Our organization has a lot of project needs. How many and what type should we submit?

There is no limit on the number of project forms submitted. However, we do ask that you submit only project forms for which state or federal funding is necessary, and that are high priorities for your organization or community. If multiple project forms are submitted, we ask that you identify the project's relative ranking compared to other submitted projects (i.e. identify which project is the #1 priority, which is #2, etc.).

Should transportation projects be included on this list?

The Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (COACT) maintains a very comprehensive list of priority transportation project needs for the Central Oregon region. The COACT list includes project needs within all transportation modes, as well as planning categories. Given that the region's transportation needs are well-documented by COACT, COIC would prefer that all transportation project needs be inventoried and prioritized through the COACT process.

However, if a transportation project has a clearly demonstrated economic development impact, and if the project could be funded by an economic development funding source, then it would be appropriate to include the project within this Needs and Issues process. Development of a regional rail freight hub facility or a downtown revitalization project with streetscape elements are examples of transportation projects that could be funded through economic development funding sources.

Should projects that are focused on natural resource issues (fuels reduction, for instance) be included within this process?

Natural Resource projects should be included if they have an economic development component or benefit. For instance, a fuels reduction project that is aimed at lowering wildfire risk would not likely be considered a high priority project through this process. However, if the fuels reduction project outcome was focused on acquiring small diameter biomass material for the forest products or biomass heating industries, then the project could be considered an economic development project.

Are you looking for projects that are regional in scope, or can a local project (i.e. a project that benefits or is located within a single community) be included?

Both local (single community) and regional (multi-community) projects or issues should be submitted. Regional projects will not have an advantage over local projects when designating high priority projects.

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That said, regional-level projects or issues tend to be more attractive to funders because they are generally more impactful, have a broader scope, and have greater regional support than local community projects.

How do unincorporated areas such as Crooked River Ranch participate in this process?

The project needs or long range issues of unincorporated areas can be included in this process in a number of ways:

- Organizations representing unincorporated communities (e.g. chamber of commerce, homeowner association) can submit project notification or long range issues forms.
- The County government can submit the notification or long range issues form.

How much funding is available through this process?

This is NOT a funding application process. This process will identify high priority economic development projects and issues. Projects will then be promoted to state and federal funders. The expectation is that this process will result in a larger share of state and federal funding invested in Central Oregon. However, there is no guarantee that specific projects will be funded.

Who will be prioritizing the projects, and what will the criteria be?

COIC staff and Board will conduct an initial prioritization utilizing the following criteria:

1. Readiness to proceed. A project will be determined to be “ready to proceed” if it can start within 12 months, and has no significant barrier to moving forward. Readiness also entails having a project sufficiently developed so that a grant funding application can be prepared and submitted.
2. Benefit to the community and/or regional economy as measured by job creation, retention, and/or other indicator of economic value.
3. Demonstrated local/regional support (e.g. consistency with goals or priorities of community or regional strategies, match secured, support letters, etc.).
4. Potential funding source(s) can be identified.

One of three “priority” designations will be provided to each of the projects:

High Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project is ready to proceed within the next 12 months, with clear scope and outcomes• Economic development benefit demonstrated• Regional support demonstrated• Funding source identified
Developmental Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project does not yet meet the all of the criteria• Some level of scoping and/or development necessary
Long Range Issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional-scale problem, gap or barrier identified• Significant scoping, development or capacity-building necessary• Not yet in form of a project

The solicitation form asks if the project is “ready to proceed”. What does this mean?

There is no “one size fits all” definition for project readiness. Generally, “ready to proceed” means that a project has been scoped, planned, engineered and budgeted, and that the project could begin immediately. Specific readiness factors could include:

- Land use issues resolved; permits secured
- Match/local contributions identified or secured
- Environmental clearance (if applicable)
- Included within comprehensive plan or other relevant adopted plan (if applicable)
- Local jurisdiction support
- Project meets urgent need and will move forward upon securing funding
- Project is sufficiently scoped so that a competitive grant application can be prepared

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Should projects that are not ready to proceed be submitted?

The primary purpose of this process is to identify project needs and issues of regional significance for the purpose of connecting these priority projects to funding sources. Projects that are not ready to proceed would not compete well for funding, and therefore will not achieve a “high priority” designation through this process.

However, if a project is a high priority for a city, county or other organization, then it should be included within this process under the “Developmental Project” designation. There may be resources to help a project become ready to proceed, so inclusion in this inventory process may provide access to technical assistance or project development services. If specific assistance is needed to help move a project to a “ready to proceed” condition, please be sure to include detail of what is needed within your notification form narrative. Benefits of the Developmental designation include:

- The project will be included in this process, and therefore funders will receive information on the project.
- Inclusion on the Developmental list could result in project development assistance being provided by COIC or other organizations.
- Inclusion on the list helps identify needs shared by multiple organizations or communities, which could lead to a greater degree of collaboration or assistance.

What are examples of “long term issues” that you expect to inventory, and what is the purpose of identifying long term issues?

This aspect of the Needs and Issues inventory is an effort to identify and get ahead of large-scale issues that could negatively affect the region’s economy, and for which there is not a framework or lead agency in place to address the issue. The goal is to identify high priority issues, and to identify resources needed to address the issues.

“Issues” are broader in scope than a distinct “project” and tend to be significant regionally. Issues also tend to require some degree of ongoing collaboration among stakeholders and communities. Possible long-term issues might include items such as availability of drinking water, balancing land use allocations, “emerging economy” identification and preparation, leadership development, renewable energy development and distribution infrastructure, etc.

Besides assisting with access to funding for projects, what other benefits can we expect through this process?

This process will provide a wealth of information on Central Oregon project needs. These needs could help the region to better understand and quantify:

- The degree of unmet funding needs;
- The need for state or federal legislative action necessary to address high priority needs and issues; and
- Needs shared by multiple organizations or communities, which could lead to a greater degree of collaboration.

This process will also provide a mechanism to have “ready-to-proceed” projects identified, so that when funding opportunities come along the region is in an optimal position to advance projects.

How can I review and comment on list drafts?

The first draft of the Needs and Issues list will be posted to the COIC web site, and an email message will be sent to the stakeholder list. You may submit comments on the draft list at any time. Additionally, public meetings will be held in Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties to provide an opportunity for interested parties to review the lists, ask questions, and submit comments.

The COIC Board may elect to modify the list based on comments received during the review period. If the list is revised, the second draft will also be posted to the COIC web site and an email message will be sent to the stakeholder list announcing this further opportunity for comment.

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How can I ensure that I am on the stakeholder email list?

If you received the initial email message announcing this process has begun, then you are already on the email list. If you would like to be added to the list, contact Andrew Spreadborough, COIC Community and Economic Development Manager, at (541) 504-3306 or aspreadborough@coic.org

How will the list be finalized?

The COIC Board of Directors will approve the Needs and Issues list as a component of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. That approval will likely occur in June, 2011.

This action will provide a 'snapshot in time' approval. What this means is that the list demonstrates project needs and regional issues at a specific moment in time, but we recognize that a list of this nature must be flexible, fluid, and updated regularly. Therefore, there will be opportunities to amend the list after approval, and a new process will begin within 1-2 years of completion. COIC's intent is to have a continuous planning process in place to address economic development needs and issues as they arise.

Who is on the COIC Board?

The COIC Board is composed of representatives from each Central Oregon City Council, County Board of Commissioners, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, as well as several appointed members. The current COIC Board roster is posted to the COIC web site: <http://www.coic.org/aac/board.htm>

What will COIC do with this list once it is finalized? How will the CEDS be implemented?

The primary purpose of this inventory will be to promote high priority projects to leverage state and federal funding. Project proponents will have the opportunity to more persuasively demonstrate the value of their project to the region, and state and federal funders will be able to focus their resources on projects that are broadly supported within the region and ready to proceed.

COIC will use the inventory to direct the organization's project development activities. COIC will engage state and federal funding agencies to review the inventory results, and will help facilitate connections between funders and project proponents. In some cases, COIC may provide direct grant writing and/or project development support to further a project.

Who are some of the state or federal funders that will have access to this list?

COIC has communicated with a number of funding agencies as this process has been developed to ensure that this is an exercise that will be beneficial to them. The consensus has been that a coordinated regional effort to identify high priority project needs will help them to better connect funding opportunities to appropriate projects. Funding organizations involved to date include:

- US Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration
- USDA Rural Development
- Oregon Business Development Department and Infrastructure Finance Authority
- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

This process is not limited to the above agencies; it is our understanding that funding entities prefer to fund projects that are regional priorities, and that are ready to proceed. This process can be beneficial in promoting projects to nearly any funding source.

What are your goals for this process, and how will success be evaluated?

COIC has no stated goal for this process beyond better coordinating the identification of project needs and issues of regional significance for the purpose of connecting these priority projects to funding sources. However, we will track the outcome and disposition of projects that are prioritized through the Needs and Issues process, and generate an outcome report. The report will likely inform the structure and goals of future Needs and Issues rounds.

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