

# Corvallis Benton County Economic Development Strategic Work Plan

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2019-2021



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February 10, 2019

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**CORVALLIS**  
**BENTON COUNTY**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

# Executive Summary

*Building on successes,  
preparing for the future.*

As the FY2020-2021 biennium begins, Benton County, Oregon, together with its largest city and county seat Corvallis, again finds itself in fortunate and enviable circumstances. Unemployment is low, our educational institutions continue to attract students, and the inherent qualities of our area support many of our sectors including food, beverage, and agritourism—all of this leading to traded sector activity! Manufacturing continues to climb back from its long-term decline, and private sector diversity is advancing nicely as new high-growth firms have attracted significant investment and grown local employment.

At the same time, this progress and prosperity comes with a corresponding concern regarding affordability for businesses and housing opportunities.

This is the first on-the-biennium update to the Corvallis Benton County Economic Development Office's Strategic Work Plan. Drafted by the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) and reviewed by the Corvallis City Council and the Benton County Commissioners, and guides the work of Economic Development Office (EDO) and advises the Benton County Board of Commissioners and the Corvallis City Council in their focus and work on Economic Development in the area.

## WORK PLAN SUMMARY

### Goals

- 1) Support and Grow our Existing Businesses
- 2) Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- 3) Cultivate Businesses in Target & Emerging Sectors
- 4) Leadership & Collaboration in the Regional Economic Development Ecosystem
- 5) Branding and Marketing

### Support Structures

- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Community Vitality & Equity
- Sustainability
- Arts & Culture
- Tourism
- Education

### In this document

Guiding Principles	2
Furthering the Community's Vision	3
Successes to Build On	5
Challenges: Opportunities for Change	7
Economic Indicators	9
New Opportunities	15
Strategic Goals	17
Summary of Implementation	26

Attachment 1: Implementation Plan

Attachment 2: Corvallis Code Changes

# Guiding Principles

What Economic Development means to us:  
*"Economic Development is the set of intentional policies and programs undertaken by national, state, regional, or local interests to increase economic activity with the goal of creating a more prosperous, diverse, and resilient economy"*<sup>1</sup>

The goals, strategies, and work plan included in this report outline our economic development efforts. These efforts directly support our community values.

Below, we have outlined guiding principles to express the overarching priorities and context of our how Corvallis and Benton County defines economic development.

## Guiding Principles



**INNOVATE.** Corvallis Benton County is a hub for innovation, research, and entrepreneurs with a vibrant mix of companies, a coordinated network of support organizations, and nationally recognized educational institutions.



**GROW.** We support the growth of family and living wage jobs, nurture our businesses, foster socially and environmentally responsible policies, create economic diversity, and balance economic growth with livability.



**THRIVE.** We benefit from the inherent qualities of our area: rich soils and agricultural roots; an educated workforce; a culture of inclusiveness and innovation; and work to create vibrancy in all of our businesses and our downtowns, with a lens toward equality and sustainability.

# Corvallis & Benton County

"The Heart of the Valley"



**93,590**  
Estimated Population  
(Countywide)

Latitude  
44°33"

Longitude  
123°15"



Home to  
**Oregon State University**



One of only two land, sea, space, and sun grant institutions in the U.S.

**6,000+ graduates per year**

**Top 10 Small Cities**  
for Entrepreneurs



**#1**  
Nationwide

Patents  
per capita



**JOBS.**

**44,000** in  
Corvallis alone.  
(And counting.)

**Educated Workforce**

**60.1%** of workers age 25 and older  
have a **bachelor's degree**  
or higher

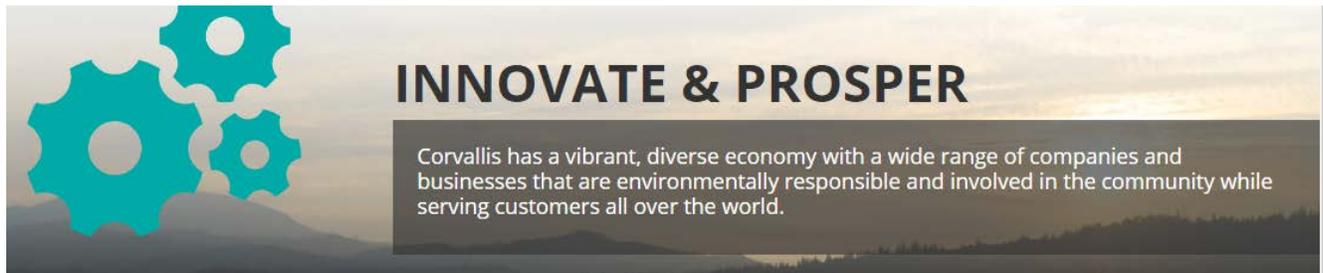
<sup>1</sup> Macke, Donald; Markely, Deborah, and John Fulwinder. *Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities. A Pathway to Prosperity*. Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, 2014.

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# Furthering the Community's Vision

The Guiding Principles, outlined above, tie to and directly support components of the Imagine Corvallis 2040 Vision and the Benton County 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative. We wrote the goals for the EDO, and the work outlined in this report, with an eye toward furthering the objectives of our community's vision.

The majority of our work falls into the Innovate and Prosper section of the Imagine Corvallis 2040 Vision. Below is a list of the objectives and descriptions from that section.



## Family & Living Wage Jobs

Corvallis has sufficient availability and variety of family and living wage jobs that provide meaningful work and earning opportunities that make housing, health care, and education attainable.

## Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Business

Corvallis fosters and supports a growing number of small-to-medium sized, locally owned companies and businesses as its key strength. These organizations are important to the community's economy and its future economic growth.

## Recruitment of New Companies & Job Creation

Corvallis targets and supports responsible new companies, including green manufacturing and value-added businesses, diversifying the community's economic base and creating new employment opportunities.

## Innovative Tech Businesses & Start-Ups

Corvallis and Oregon State University work closely together to incubate innovative technology and other start-up companies and the local services that support them.

## Vibrant Downtown with Employment, Retail & Housing

Corvallis supports its economy and local businesses with a vibrant downtown that combines employment, professional services, retail, housing, and entertainment to form an attractive, business-friendly district.

## Balanced Economic Growth with Livability

Corvallis carefully balances economic growth and opportunity with continued community livability, sustainability, and protection of the natural environment.

## Global Economic Impacts & Local Benefits

Corvallis has significant connections with and positive impacts on the global economy, attracting industry, talent, and services and connecting them with the scholarship, research, and cultural diversity that OSU brings to the community.



Our office also works and contributes to fulfilling goals in the other sections of the Vision. This happens through our sector strategy work in the areas of Food, Craft Beverage, Agritourism, and Value-Added Agriculture, as well as our efforts with the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (C-PACE), and the South Corvallis Urban Renewal District. The work of our office also supports the following focus areas and meets these objectives of the Vision:



### Steward & Sustain

Agricultural Lands & Food Security; Sustainable City, Community Resiliency, and Renewable Energy Community Resiliency, Open Spaces, Natural Areas & Wetlands Protection, Renewable Energy



**Create & Celebrate** Tourism & Visitor Attractions; Create & Celebrate Natural Surroundings



**Engage & Support** Community Affordability; Strong, Vital Neighborhoods



**Plan & Change** Mixed Use Development, and Diverse & Affordable Housing; Integrated Parks, Green Spaces & Public

Places; Diverse & Affordable Housing; Stable, Healthy Neighborhoods; Alternative Transportation & Public Transit, well-Planned & Maintained Infrastructure



**Learn & Thrive** Education & Diversity; Culture of Learning, Engagement & Achievement

Our work also supports goals related to the City's Climate Action plan including:

- Food and Agriculture
- Buildings and Energy
- Health, Social Services and Community Well-Being



### Supporting Benton County's 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative

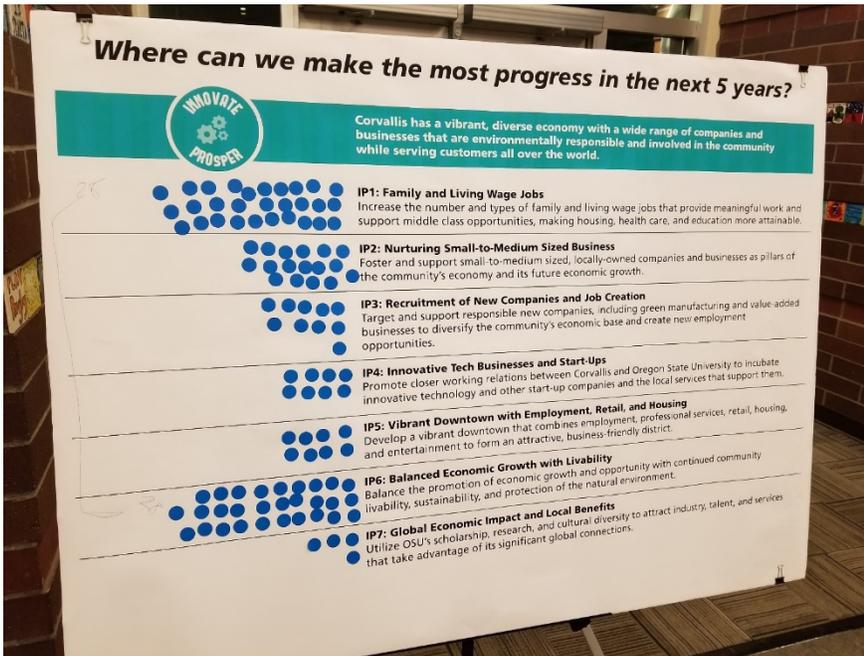
The work of the EDO also supports Benton County's 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative. Like the Imagine Corvallis 2040 tie-ins, our work primarily fits into the Prosperous Economy focus area, but also serves to benefit other focus areas including Environment & Natural Resources and Food & Agriculture.

#### **"Diverse Economy that Fits"**

***A Diverse, Robust Economy that Inspires & Stimulates Local Business, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, & Opportunities***

From the Benton County 2040 Thriving Communities Initiative: Core Values

Included below is a photo from the Imagine Corvallis Action Network Kickoff event, where community members voted on priorities related to each goal.



Top scoring areas within the Innovate and Prosper focus area:

- Family and Living Wage Jobs
- Balanced Economic Growth and Livability
- Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Businesses

## Successes to Build On

### We've Made it Past the "Art of the Start".

This year, we acknowledge and celebrate a successful planned transition in the Economic Development Office leadership, with Kate Porsche replacing Tom Nelson as EDO Manager upon his retirement and Jerry Sorte replacing Amy Jauron (now a senior leader at Greater Portland, Inc.) as Economic Development Supervisor. Kate and Jerry are seasoned economic development professionals with the full range of expertise and contacts required for effectiveness. Kate also serves as the President of the Oregon Economic Development Association. What Corvallis and EDO may lack in size, they more than make up for in quality and peer recognition.

A distinctive feature of the EDO program since the earliest days has been an organized and purposeful Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) visitation program. This program serves all types and sizes of traded-sector businesses throughout Benton County, with the goals to:

- 1) Develop and maintain a positive business climate and open communication between the business community and local government,
- 2) Assist businesses and connect them with the resources or partners they need.
- 3) Learn about hiring, expansion and investment opportunities
- 4) Understand concerns or problems and work to address them.

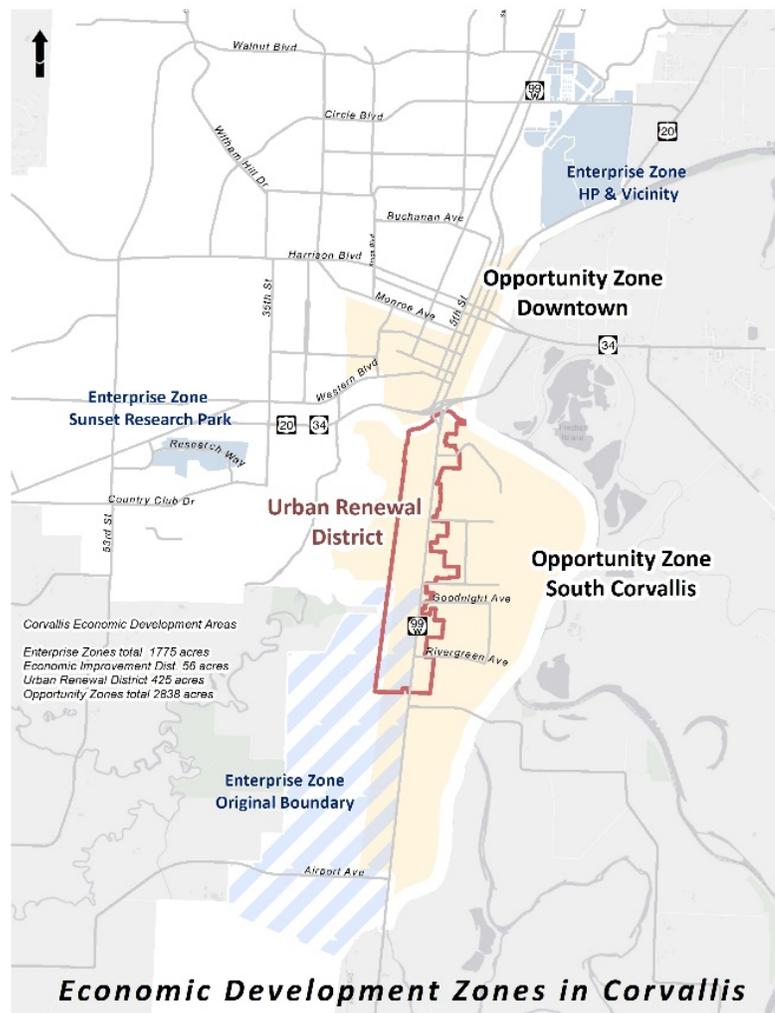
To date the BR&E program has yielded 1,520 initial and follow-up visits and many success stories prove the value of this ombudsman (and often translation) role, particularly for smaller businesses which lack dedicated staff to interface with the Development Departments in the city and county.

Our signature economic asset is Oregon State University and its vast research enterprise. EDAB recognized from the beginning that another HP-scale recruitment was unlikely, and our best chances to replace and diversify high-wage job opportunities were to support existing businesses through the BR&E program and to commercialize OSU innovations. Today Corvallis is home to the state's best resources for doing just that: ATAMI, ONAMI (which put first funds into many successful local companies), the OSU Advantage Accelerator, the Foundry, Oregon RAIN, Willamette Valley Capital and the Willamette Innovators Network.

Examples of Corvallis-OSU spinout companies that have recently raised over \$50M in venture capital (or are so successful they did not need to) are Inpria, Agility Robotics, VallisCor, Pellucere and eChemion. The growing national and international footprint of highly innovative NuScale Power and 2 Towns Ciderhouse are examples of more mature companies that have become major industrial assets and contributors to local economic diversity.

The EDO is now looking at sector focus strategies where local entrepreneurs and OSU assets can combine for competitive advantage. These sectors (see Goal 3, below) include Local Food, Craft Beverage, Agritourism, Value-Added Agriculture, and Science, Research, & Technology. Additionally, the office actively works to support a diverse economy, not just through diversification of business types, but through support of a diversity of business owners, such as women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses.

Benton County supports the work of the office through a pass-through of funds. Each year, the county's funds make up about 25% of the office's funding and support our work throughout the county. This partnership structure has proven valuable through the economies of scale with our office working throughout the county, but also through the partnerships and collaboration between the city and county.



Finally, in March 2019, Corvallis passed an important milestone with 85% voter approval of the South Corvallis Urban Renewal District. This district will benefit both South Corvallis residents and the emerging craft beverage, local foods, and agriculture sectors whose assets concentrate there and near the Corvallis Airport. Other regional cities (Albany, Independence, Lebanon) have made extensive use of UR, which promises to be an important strategy as we address the revitalization needs of downtown Corvallis and other Benton County cities.

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# Challenges: Opportunities for Change

In the Middle of Every Difficulty Lies Opportunity. -Albert Einstein

## Wetlands

**Issue:** Wetlands are another top issue for development anywhere in the Willamette Valley. Mitigation is often expensive and time-consuming. Current processes through the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) creates uncertainty for developers and effectively removes lands throughout the county from practicable development opportunity, which could mean that the inventory of buildable land is actually smaller than it appears. This is both a state and federal issue, with agencies at both levels involved in the process and policy-making. Wetland banks and the credits they create are both sparse (at the writing of this report there were zero acres of wetland credits available) and expensive—current pricing is \$80,000 per acre, with regulations that, in some cases, only allow a 1:10 ratio of credits to site work needing to be done.

**Opportunity for Change:** The EDO participates in the Cascade West Council of Government's Regional Wetland Consortium, which is working to support an Oregon legislative fix that would see the State of Oregon DSL fulfilling the permitting to satisfy both State and Federal Requirements. While not a complete solution, this would go a long way to eliminating the most protracted and uncertain part of the wetland permitting process. The group is actively working on this legislative fix and there is hope that implementation could occur in the next couple of years. There are additional opportunities in looking at the way Oregon handles wetland banking, policies related to the use of wetland banks, and the desperate need for more wetland banks and credits.

## Codes and Regulations

**Issue:** City and county codes can be a frustration for businesses. Corvallis has a Land Development Code that is lengthy and more complex than some cities. This can create confusion, and, in some cases in the past, reputational damage. There is also inherent complexity created in the Corvallis Airport Industrial Park due to the overlapping regulations from the City and County. This issue is not caused by development staff, but requires Council and County Board action.

**Opportunity for Change:** The development process has three main areas where challenges can occur: The public land use process, the building permit process, and the public improvements process. In Corvallis, the Community Development Department (CD) manages the first two processes, and the Public Works Department (PW) manages the third. The EDO works with both departments to help businesses navigate the process and provides feedback to the appropriate department regarding specific issues if they arise.

There are a number of recent, notable changes, led by the CD group. Attachment 2 of this document is a comprehensive list. There have been numerous positive steps already taken by the CD Department, and many scheduled for implementation in the near future. Additionally, Benton County's Planning Department has a project underway to update industrial zones in the urban fringe, which will provide more certainty for residents and developers and will reduce conflicts over off-site impacts. All of these efforts look to make Corvallis and Benton County a great place to do business.

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## Industrial Space

**Issue:** Corvallis businesses (and ones that would like to be Corvallis businesses) report difficulty finding both office and industrial space in small-medium size ranges.

**Opportunity for Change:** Making Corvallis more attractive to new multi-tenant spec development such as is happening in Bend would help. The EDO is working with partners, such as the Corvallis Foundry, to create manufacturing incubator or flex manufacturing space. Additionally, with the use of ED tools, such the urban renewal district coming online in South Corvallis, and the new Opportunity Zones, may create opportunities for the creation of small-scale industrial space.

Additionally, the City's market consultant identified a shortage of commercial/office vacant land in the community that could be contributing to this issue. CD staff will be looking for opportunities to expand these zones in the upcoming Specific Area Planning process.

## Downtown Vibrancy

**Issue:** There is growing concern about the vibrancy and health of downtown Corvallis. Downtowns are facing rapid changes in retail practices, parking challenges, and upper floor vacancies in 2-3 story buildings.

**Opportunity:** While downtown Corvallis remains pleasant and attractive, with a new hotel, museum and many excellent restaurants and public spaces, it is time to think and plan more boldly as several other Oregon cities (notably Lake Oswego, Bend, and Independence) have done. The downtown zoning regulations review is already underway and will be included in the previously mentioned Mixed Use regulation updates next year. Staff is also currently examining public realm issues and will be adding bus service within the downtown itself to provide some increased circulator capability. There is an active research project (grant funded) underway to look at the best ways to use OSU wood products technologies to cost effectively retrofit historic buildings for seismic resiliency. The EDO works closely with the Downtown Corvallis Association, Visit Corvallis and the City's Downtown Advisory Board to help affect change in the downtown area.

## Support for Women, Minority, and Veteran-owned Businesses

**Issue:** The EDO has a role to play in supporting our women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses. A [2016 Kauffman Foundation Article](#) indicated, "The need to dramatically increase investment in minority entrepreneurs is vital to the survival of the U.S. economy." It went on to say, "These business owners have the potential to create more jobs and revitalize distressed communities. The predicted demographic shifts of "minority to majority" will create a need for the 'new majority' to be economic drivers to the economy in order to preserve the U.S. standing as a market leader and producer."

**Opportunity:** Increasing the support to women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses creates equity, strengthens our community, and fosters businesses and services for the full spectrum of diverse populations in Corvallis and Benton County. There is an opportunity to create better pathways to funding, access to social and business networks and professional education programs.

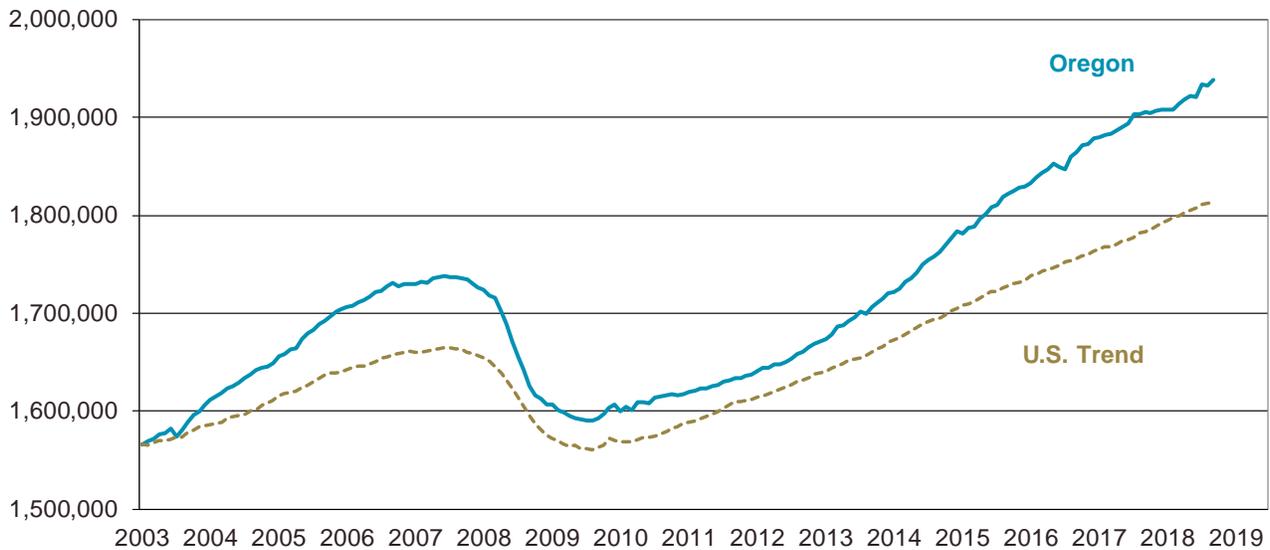
# Economic Indicators

## Relevant Data Informing this Strategy

This section reviews the economic indicators that inform this strategy. Statistics and information are courtesy of Patrick O'Connor, regional Economist with the Oregon Employment Department and illustrate that Corvallis Benton County is an interesting and special place.

Taking the long-term view, Oregon has a strong record of accomplishment of creating jobs. We've tended to grow faster than the U.S. in the good times, but lose more jobs (relative to our size) in the tough times.

**Oregon and U.S. Employment Trends\***  
**2003 to Current: U.S. Trend Indexed to July 2003**



\* Seasonally Adjusted

## Employment growth in Oregon is projected to outpace the nation in 2019.

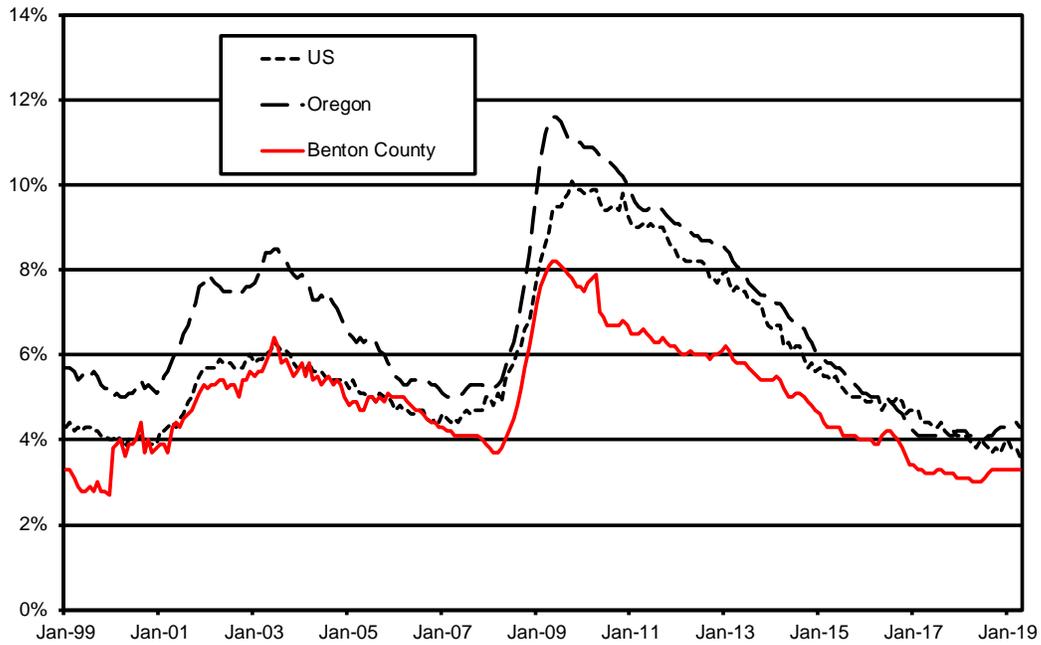
- The Office of Economic Analysis (OEA) anticipates Oregon's total nonfarm employment to grow 2.1 percent in 2019, similar to the state's growth of 2.0 percent in 2018. Oregon's employment growth is forecast to slow to 1.6 percent in 2020.
- U.S. employment is forecast to expand 1.6 percent in 2019, similar to its 2018 growth of 1.7 percent. U.S. employment is forecast to slow to 1.0 percent in 2020.
- Benton County's unemployment rate has crept up slightly over the past year, but is still quite low. It was 3.3 percent in April 2019. Oregon's unemployment rate was 4.3 percent in April.

"Without data, you're just another person with an opinion"

-W. Edwards Deming

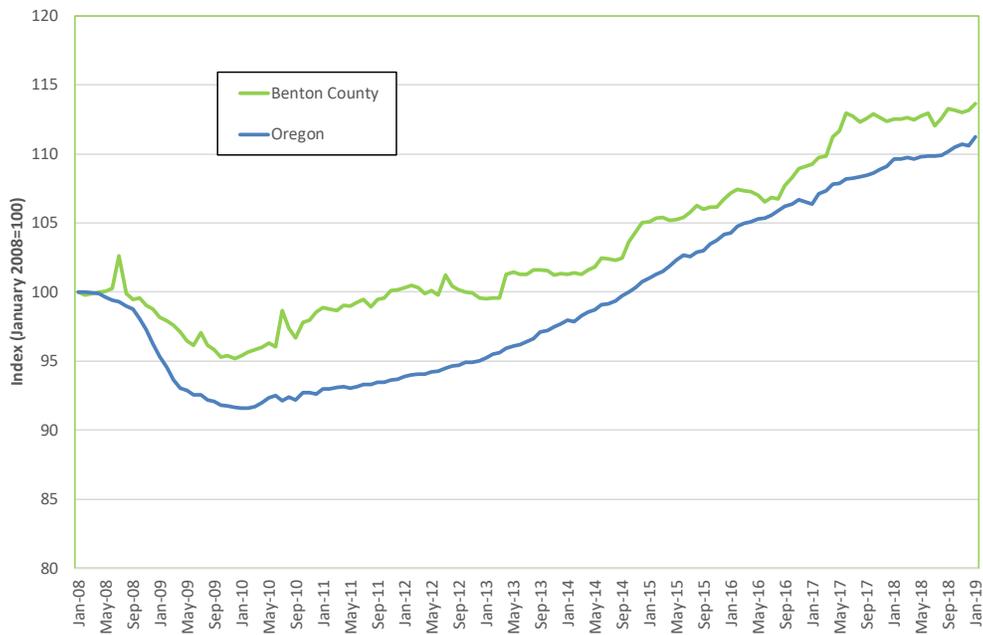
Benton County's unemployment rate is nearly always lower than Oregon or the U.S.:

### Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates



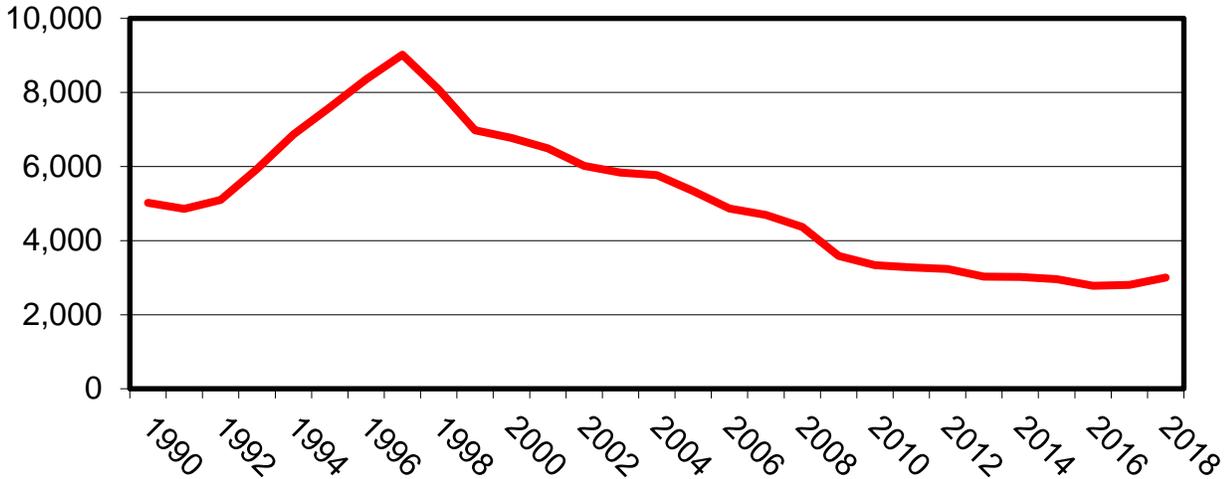
During the Great Recession, growth at OSU helped offset jobs lost in manufacturing. They help insulate our economy, in particular during recessions. The unemployment rate remains low--the high level of education explains a lot of this statistic.

Total Nonfarm Employment: 2008-Present, (indexed January 2008=100)



However, Benton County's manufacturing jobs have been on an overall decline since 1998. Rebuilding manufacturing sector has many benefits: high wages and economic resilience to name a couple.

### Benton County Manufacturing: 1990-2018



The rise and decline of Benton County's manufacturing sector played a big part in the county having an average wage above Oregon's average. College students working in part-time jobs certainly contribute to pulling down the average, but we surmise that impact has been fairly steady over time.

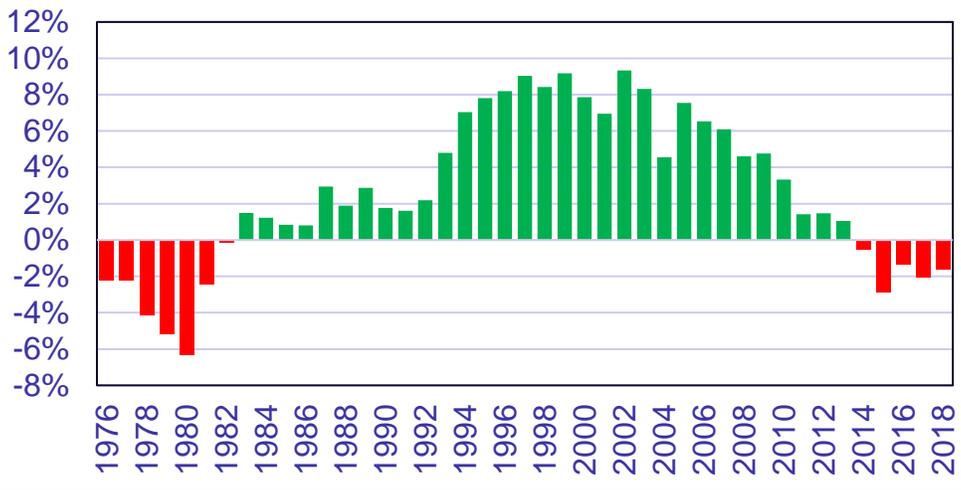
### Benton County and Oregon's average wages have struggled to keep up with the U.S.

Economists indicate that in Benton County this is partially due to the drop in manufacturing employment. The industry mix in an area plays the biggest part in determining a county's average wage. Benton County used to have a significant number of high wage jobs in manufacturing to pull the average higher than the statewide average. The jobs that remain in the county's manufacturing are still high wage jobs, but they comprise a much smaller piece of the total pie compared with 20 years ago.

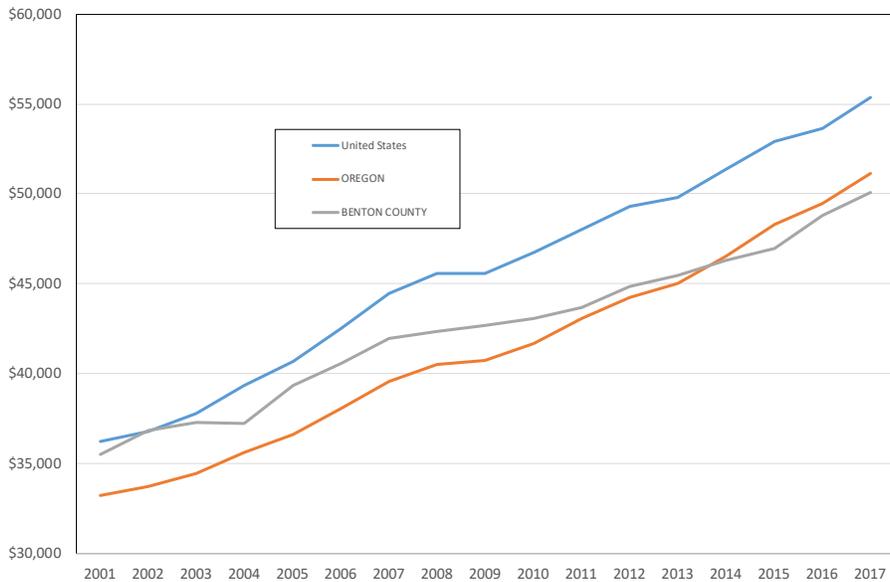
Looking forward, State of Oregon regional economists indicate that more than ninety percent of the job openings in our area will be replacement openings.

2017 Annual Average Wage	
U.S.	\$55,390
Oregon	\$51,132
<b>Benton County</b>	<b>\$50,078</b>

## Percent Difference of Benton County's Average Wage compared to Oregon



Average Annual Wage: 2001-2017



### Other Quick Facts

#### Benton County's City Populations (2018)

Adair Village	860
Albany*	7,945
Corvallis	59,280
Monroe	625
Philomath	4,715
Unincorporated	20,165

\*Benton County portion

#### Quick Facts

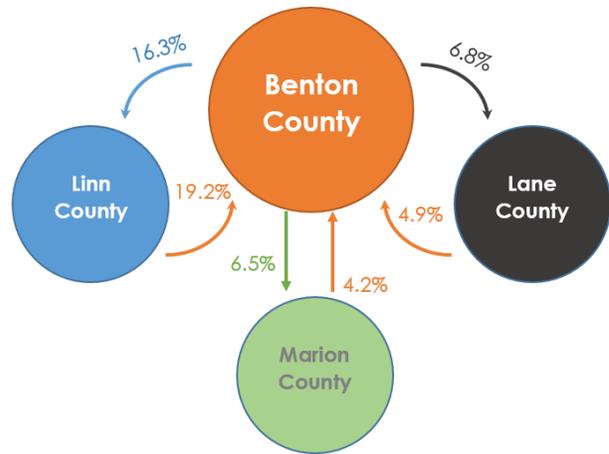
Geographical Area:	679 sq. mi.
Population (2018):	93,590
Civilian Labor Force (2018):	48,345
Average Employment (2018):	46,810
Average Wage (2018):	\$52,187
Per Capita Personal Income (2017):	\$45,273
Gross domestic product (2015):	\$4,508,062,000

## Commuting patterns:

As of 2015, Benton County has 32,775 residents who are workers. About 29.6% of those people commute to Linn, Lane, or Marion County for their jobs.

Meanwhile, when you look at where the people employed in Benton County live, 28.3% are driving into Benton County from Linn, Lane, and Marion County.

54.6% of those who work in Benton County also live in Benton County.

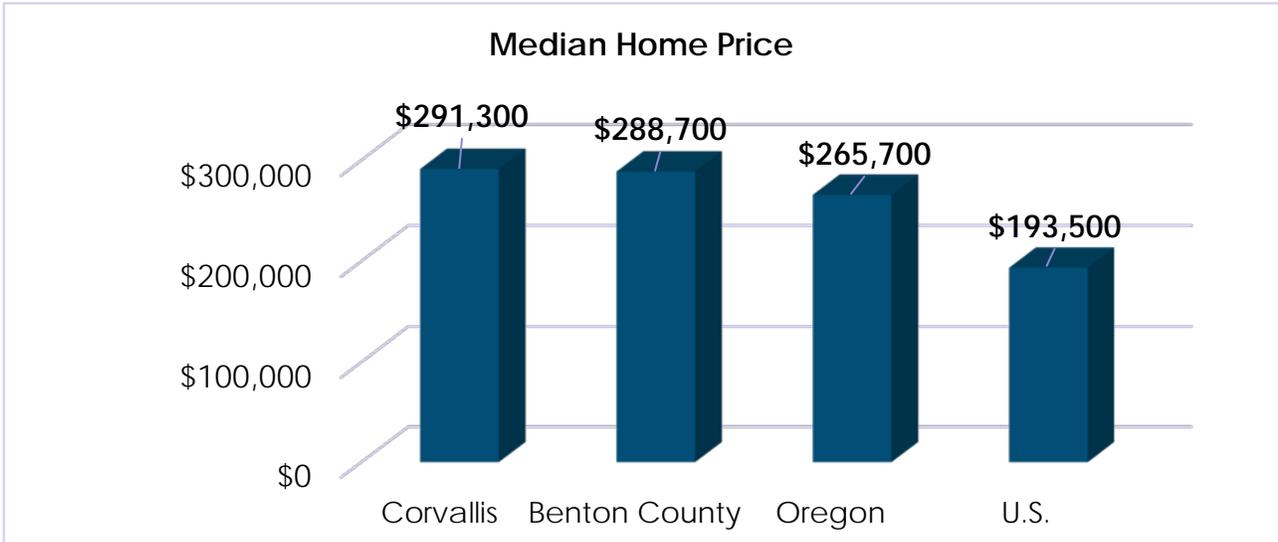


Commutate patterns of workers living in Benton County commuting out and those working in Benton County who commute in.

Where Workers are Employed Who Live in Benton County		
	2015	
	Count	Share
Total Primary Jobs	32,775	100.0%
Jobs Counts by Counties <b>Where Workers are Employed</b> - Primary Jobs		
	2015	
	Count	Share
Benton County, OR	16,952	51.7%
Linn County, OR	5,345	16.3%
Lane County, OR	2,222	6.8%
Marion County, OR	2,132	6.5%
Multnomah County, OR	1,367	4.2%
Washington County, OR	969	3.0%
Polk County, OR	667	2.0%
Clackamas County, OR	642	2.0%
Lincoln County, OR	431	1.3%
Yamhill County, OR	315	1.0%
All Other Locations	1,733	5.3%

Where Workers Live Who are Employed in Benton County		
	2015	
	Count	Share
Total Primary Jobs	31,053	100.0%
Jobs Counts by Counties <b>Where Workers Live</b> - Primary Jobs		
	2015	
	Count	Share
Benton County, OR	16,952	54.6%
Linn County, OR	5,964	19.2%
Lane County, OR	1,529	4.9%
Marion County, OR	1,318	4.2%
Polk County, OR	1,039	3.3%
Multnomah County, OR	688	2.2%
Washington County, OR	660	2.1%
Lincoln County, OR	439	1.4%
Clackamas County, OR	422	1.4%
Yamhill County, OR	384	1.2%
All Other Locations	1,658	5.3%

Housing costs continue to be a challenge for our area:



Based on the American Community Survey five-year average, median home prices in Corvallis and Benton County are above the Oregon average and substantially above (50.5% and 49.2%, respectively) the national average.

High-priced housing leads to a higher percentage of cost-burdened residents. Corvallis has 46% of cost-burdened households (those who spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing). This number equals 40% for Benton County and the State of Oregon overall.

These high-prices obviously affect affordability, but may also negatively affect local businesses in their ability to find local skilled labor or may affect a business' decision to land or stay in Benton County.

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# New Opportunities

## Looking forward.

Our EDO is the coordinator of economic development work for Benton County. In this biennium, we plan to work with the county commissioners to develop new policy and programs related to their surplus economic development funds, and our office will oversee the contracts related to Economic Development work in the county. We continue to work with our state and regional partners to improve communication and processes for our clients—the businesses of Benton County.

2 Towns Ciderhouse, Nectar Creek, Block 15 Brewing, Mazama Brewing, 4 Spirits Distillery, Spiritopia and numerous excellent wineries illustrate Benton County's important position in the world-renowned Willamette Valley (which is said to have greater name recognition than Oregon). These growing companies address mature (beer, wine), resurgent (spirits) and emerging (cider, mead, seltzer) categories, and also have unique local opportunities to leverage (ideas, students, expertise) the OSU College of Agriculture Food and Fermentation Science programs, as well as build capacity for outstanding customer experiences such as the phenomenally successful 2 Towns Ciderhouse Annual Harvest Party.

Similarly, emerging opportunities for very high value agriculture and agritourism exist in hazelnuts, hemp products, wine grapes, hops and multi-crop destination farms. Agritourism is another emerging sector linked to our existing focus on food, beverage, and agriculture that we seek to support in the next biennium.

As climate change abatement and mitigation actions, as well as closely related natural disaster preparedness measures, are taken at all public levels, the Benton County Economic Development office is helping to establish programs that both benefit businesses and underscore our community's support of climate goals. The EDO is actively working to establish programs such as Commercial Property-Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE), and brings a lens of environmental values to the work we do.

All of these opportunities feed into the goals and strategies outlined for the 19-21 biennium. To achieve these goals, the EDO is collaborating with regional partners to develop sector-wide networks and strategies to advance these opportunities, which may be less subject to commodity price volatility and other business cycle risks, as well as very consistent with local values and our 'brand' as leaders and experimenters in high quality products.

In the following pages you will find an outline of the five goals for our office: 1) Grow our Existing Businesses, 2) Entrepreneurship & Innovation, 3) Cultivate Businesses in Target & Emerging Sectors 4) Leadership & Collaboration in the Regional Economic Development Ecosystem, and 5) Branding and Marketing.

While the majority of work for our office focuses on traded sector businesses and job creation, we acknowledge and work to further initiatives in the following foundational support areas to our office: Infrastructure, Housing, Community Vitality/Equity, Sustainability, Arts & Culture, Tourism, and Education. (See graphic on the following page).

Examples of this work include leading efforts related to the new urban renewal district in south Corvallis, sitting on the Sustainability Coalition's Economic Vitality Action Team, and working with Visits Corvallis on tourism initiatives.

The graphic below shows a list of influences, or items not traditionally associated with Economic Development work. These items, along with our guiding principles, are the foundation of community and economic success. Our office may engage and work on initiatives in these areas, but it is not the primary focus of this work plan.



A new area of great interest to our office is the idea of a "Continuity of Care" paradigm for businesses in our area. While traditionally associated with healthcare, the notion of continuity of care related to Economic Development means the quality of assistance over time that a business receives, the coordinated work, and cooperative involvement of practitioners assisting a business. This Continuity of Care relates to the ongoing assistance of businesses, understanding their needs, anticipating what comes next and having a cooperative ecosystem that can deliver those services seamlessly. The end-goal is to create a high-quality experience for businesses in Benton County as they move through the continuum of the business life cycle.

The work of our office and our business retention and expansion program generally focuses on traded-sector businesses. In addition, while we do not generally focus EDO resources on non-traded sector business, we are happy to answer questions and connect business owners to the right resources (such as Chambers of Commerce or the SBDC).

In the next section, you will find an outline of the five strategic goals for 2019-2021.

# Strategic Goals



## Goal 1: Support and Grow Existing Businesses

*We believe in strengthening and growing our existing businesses. Corvallis Benton County has a strong base of small, medium, and large businesses. Keeping these businesses local, healthy, and growing is a top priority of this office.*

Supports Imagine Corvallis 2040Goals:



### Innovate & Prosper

- Family & Living Wage Jobs
- Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Business
- Recruitment of New Companies & Job Creation



### Sustain & Steward

- Agricultural Lands & Food Security
- Sustainable City

## Strategies and Actions

### 1.1 BR&E

- Outreach to Benton County Businesses, primarily in the traded sector realm, to provide support to new, expanding, or at-risk businesses.
- Refer and handoff customers to appropriate partners.
- Work to match incentives and ED tools to businesses.
- Explore ways to better serve and support women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses.
- Champion and focus on a "continuity of care" paradigm for existing businesses in our area—see page 16.

### 1.2 Regulatory Environment

- Act as an ombudsman to traded sector businesses who need help through the regulatory processes of the city, county, state or federal agencies.
- Collect feedback and pass information to staff or policy makers as appropriate. Work with city and county Community Development Directors to identify and, where possible, streamline code or policies.



### Key Results

- 150 business outreach contacts per year
- 150 Assists and Referrals per year
- Complete Biennial Survey (2019 & 2021)
- Map a continuity of Care program with partners.

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### 1.3 Survey

- a) Conduct a biennial survey of Benton County businesses regarding potential incentives and barriers. This data will help us assess the business climate and identify business needs, barriers, and opportunities and will be shared with EDAB and Benton County.

### 1.4 Space – Buildings, Land, AIP

- a) Act as the designated point of contact for leases at the Airport Industrial Park including responding to development inquiries, act as point-of-contact for State development agencies, and provide monthly updates to the Airport Advisory Board and EDAB about development activities. (Also see Goal 5 related to Marketing Plan)
- b) Increase the availability and readiness of business and industrial land and buildings throughout Corvallis and Benton County. Includes the possibility of a manufacturing incubator space, flex manufacturing space, which we understand is great need in our area.
- c) Work with CD, PW, and Benton County to explore the possible expediting of the annexation of the AIP into the city limits.
- d) Update Oregon Prospector website with information on available industrial properties in Benton County

### 1.5 Oversee ED Tools

- a) Enterprise Zone
- b) Opportunity Zones
- c) Urban renewal district in South Corvallis – Act as staff liaison to the Agency; participate on UR Team, work to create policies and oversee budget.
- d) Complete the implementation of C-PACE.
- e) Coordinate, or support seminars and outreach opportunities related to ED tools and business support in Benton County.

### 1.6 Small Business Development

- a) Support small businesses in Benton County by passing through funds from the County to support the SBDC.
- b) Support and promote women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses through programs such as the creation of new grants for women, minority, and veteran owned businesses to take SBDC classes.



#### Key External Partners

- Benton County businesses
- City and County staff
- Commercial brokers
- Business Oregon
- Public Works & Airport Staff
- Corvallis UR Agency
- SBDC
- Prosper Portland and Multnomah County



## Goal 2: Entrepreneurship and Innovation

*We seek to support an environment where new ideas form and develop into successful businesses. Corvallis and Benton County is a hub of innovation and entrepreneurs. Oregon State University is a Driver of Innovation in our community, and in Oregon.*

Supports Imagine Corvallis 2040 Goals:



### Innovate & Prosper

- Family & Living Wage Jobs
- Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Business
- Innovative Tech Businesses & Start-Ups

## Strategies and Actions

### 2.1 Support of Innovation Partners

- Sit on OSU Advantage Accelerator Board
- Support Willamette Innovators Network through board liaison position, staff support of events including PubTalks, Shark Tank, and Expo events.
- Continue to support connections with partner organizations associated with the University, including OSU Colleges, ATAMI, OregonInC, ONAMI
- Continue to create connections amongst other partner organizations including BEC, Chamber, DCA and other downtown organizations.
- Pass-through funds to RAIN Oregon, Corvallis Foundry, and Linn-Benton SBDC from Benton County; Draft, monitor, and manage contracts and review metrics and goals.



### Key Results

- Support WiN events: PubTalks, Shark Tank, and Expo Events
- Draft contracts & monitor metrics related to innovation supported by Benton County's pass through funding

### 2.2 Monitor and Communicate Investing Opportunities

- Keep up-to-date on the local investing groups such as Willamette Valley Capital and Cascade Seed Fund



### Key External Partners

- Foundry
- RAIN
- SBDC
- WIN
- OSU Advantage Accelerator
- OSU Colleges
- ATAMI
- ONAMI



## Goal 3: Cultivate Businesses in Target & Emerging Sectors (Food, Beverage, Agritourism, Value-Added Agriculture, and Science, Research, & Technology)

*We have identified these five sectors as focus areas because they are top contributors to our economy, capitalize on the inherent qualities of our area, and connect to the core values of our residents. Food and agritourism are generally in an earlier stage of growth than the other sectors and we anticipate the most opportunity and work on these sectors. Craft Beverage and Science, Research & Technology sectors are established in our area and have more mature businesses operating. We see the focus on those sectors being an enhanced Business Retention and Expansion program with strong coordination with regional partners. Agriculture is a new area of focus for our office and will be in the early stages of support.*

Supports Imagine Corvallis 2040 Goals:



### Innovate & Prosper

- Family & Living Wage Jobs
- Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Business
- Recruitment of New Companies & Job Creation
- Innovative Tech Businesses & Start-Ups
- Global Economic Impacts & Local Benefits



### Sustain & Steward

- Agricultural Lands & Food Security



### Create & Celebrate

- Tourism & Visitor Attractions



### Key Results

- Convene at least two small group listening sessions in each of the Food, Beverage, and Agritourism sectors.
- Identify and support leaders in these sectors.

## Strategies and Actions

### 3.1 Food Sector

- Identify, convene and support leaders who want to act as a cluster sponsors
- Help this local 'cluster' develop its vision and strategy; assist with valuable connections regionally and beyond.
- Start with small group listening sessions to understand what's working for people and where the challenges are. Work to understand barriers, opportunities. From this information assist in the creation of work plans, or a road map forward, for sector sponsors.
- Support the Foundry's Pitchfork effort through marketing and coordination of efforts.
- Assist with valuable connections regionally and beyond, including creating enhanced collaboration with OSU (such as the Food Innovation Center and Fermentation Sciences Program).

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### 3.2 Craft Beverage Sector

- a) Identify, convene and support leaders who want to act as a cluster sponsors
- b) Assist with valuable connections regionally and beyond, including creating enhanced collaboration with OSU (such as Food Innovation Center & Fermentation Sciences Program).

### 3.3 Agritourism Sector

- a) Identify, convene and support leaders who want to act as a cluster sponsors; partner with Visit Corvallis in their work to create an informal steering group to help connect the agritourism community to one another.
- b) Work closely with beverage and agriculture sectors and partners, such as Visit Corvallis to implement projects; examples include the Mid-Willamette Food Trail, potential projects related to events that highlight agriculture businesses in Benton County.
- c) Work with City, County, and state planning departments and policymakers on zoning and land-use rules related to agritourism; act as an advocate for agritourism businesses and work to find ways to allow companies in this sector to thrive.

### 3.4 Agriculture: Local Food, Value-added and Regenerative Agriculture

(Regenerative Agriculture is "a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services."<sup>2</sup>)

- a) Research, identify, convene and support leaders who want to act as a cluster sponsors. Possible collaboration with Sustainability Coalition and City's Climate Action Advisory Board.
- b) Explore ways to support the emerging Hemp industry; work with OSU hemp team.

### 3.5 Science, research, and technology Industry Sector

- a) Identify, convene and support leaders who want to act as a cluster sponsors.
- b) Continue to find ways to support science, research, and technology businesses in Benton County by focusing on a "continuity of care" paradigm for businesses in our area—see page 15, and helping, where possible, to create connections with technology firms and team/executive talent.



## Key External Partners

- Sector businesses
- Visit Corvallis
- Willamette Valley Visitors Association
- Travel Oregon
- Corvallis Foundry and Pitchfork
- OSU Agriculture and Fermentation Sciences
- Business Oregon
- SBDC
- City and County planning staff
- Climate Action Advisory Board
- Corvallis Sustainability Coalition
- WiN
- ATAMI/ONAMI
- OSU's office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact, including the OSU Advantage Accelerator

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<sup>2</sup> From <http://www.regenerativeagriculturedefinition.com/>



## Goal 4: Leadership & Collaboration in the Regional Economic Development Ecosystem

*The EDO is a leader and key partner in the Economic Development Ecosystem. Our role is to act as the hub of the wheel in Benton County, convening, connecting, and working with partners to move initiatives forward. We work with an eye toward creating regional synergy and finding new and better ways to collaborate across the region.*

(The EDO's work primarily focuses on Corvallis and Benton County, but when we refer to the region, we mean Linn and Benton Counties, which is the majority of our labor shed. Regional partners are working better together than ever before. We are collaborating across county lines and our office has a very strong relationship with our partners in Albany as well as other communities throughout the region.)

### Supports Imagine Corvallis 2040 Goals:



#### Innovate & Prosper

- Family & Living Wage Jobs
- Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Business
- Recruitment of New Companies & Job Creation
- Innovative Tech Businesses & Start-Ups
- Vibrant Downtown with Employment, Retail & Housing
- Balanced Economic Growth with Livability
- Global Economic Impacts & Local Benefits



#### Sustain & Steward

- Agricultural Lands & Food Security

## Strategies and Actions

### 4.1 Communication to Partners

- Consult with the staff and/or city councils from Benton County Cities quarterly, to check-in and share information about opportunities.
- Quarterly report and presentation to Benton County on the activities of the EDO office.
- Convene the Economic Vitality Partnership group three times per year.
- EDO to provide annual report to Corvallis City Council and Benton County Commissioners.
- Provide quarterly updates to the Airport Commission and EDAB about development activities.
- Participate in monthly regional ED lunches and attend quarterly Economic Development practitioners' meetings and summits.



#### Key Results

- Quarterly report and update to Benton County
- Annual report to Benton County and Corvallis City Council
- Convene quarterly EVP meetings

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## 4.2 Placemaking

- a) EDO to support the resurgence of the Main Street Model in Benton County Communities through:
  - i) Attend DCA board meetings, and Economic Vitality Committee.
  - ii) Convene and attend monthly internal City of Corvallis meetings related to downtown coordination and quarterly meetings with the broader group including DCA, fire marshal, and DAB representatives.
- b) Assist rural downtowns, as needed and document visits/work completed.
- c) Coordinate and/or market training programs related to downtown businesses, such as e-commerce, online reputation training, succession planning.

## 4.3 Regional Cooperation

- a) Complete transition of the EVP meetings to be coordinated and hosted by our office
- b) Support regional Economic Development Partners and support organizations through financial, time, and contributions from the EDO. EDO to act in a liaison role to the following boards:
  - a. WiN
  - b. Foundry
  - c. SBDC
  - d. OSUAA
  - e. OEDA
  - f. COG Regional Wetland Consortium
- c) Act as the coordinator for ED work in Benton County and, where applicable, help to coordinate grant and funding requests.
  - a. Coordinate any asks of funding to City or Benton County related to Economic Development Work
  - b. Manage contracts related to Economic Development work for City or County.
  - c. Help with new policy for County Operating Contingency ED funds
  - d. Share type, quantity, status of any grant applications.
- d) Champion work in various strategies related to a "continuity of care" paradigm for businesses in our area—see page 15.
- e) Coordinate business resiliency related to economic and natural disasters through work in emergency planning efforts and community outreach.



## Key External Partners

- Sustainability Coalition
- DCA
- Oregon Main Street
- Regional ED partners
- Visit Corvallis



## Goal 5: Branding and Marketing

A recent [Forbes article](#)<sup>3</sup> highlighted the idea that it is critically important for communities, especially those in states that don't have significant tax breaks to use branding and a focus on what, "makes an area unique and attracts a community that shares that vision and set of beliefs." Branding and marketing highlights and raises the visibility of economic development work, and more importantly, of the businesses in our area.

Supports Imagine Corvallis 2040 Goals:



### Innovate & Prosper

- Nurturing Small-to-Medium Sized Business
- Recruitment of New Companies & Job Creation
- Vibrant Downtown with Employment, Retail & Housing



### Create & Celebrate

- Tourism & Visitor Attractions

## Strategies and Actions

### 5.1 Marketing, Data & Materials

- Provide accurate and up-to-date information to existing and prospective business owners through the following platforms:
  - Website
  - Oregon Prospector
- Maintain and report out on pertinent data related to:
  - Enterprise Zone data
  - CRM Database
- Pilot the new Made in Benton County event, a tour highlighting traded-sector businesses in the area.
- Review existing materials and collateral and refine or create new materials, as needed. For example, a visual version of the development process in Corvallis and Benton County.
- Use email, web, and social media platforms to share updates to Benton County businesses and to cross-promote events and information from partner organizations.
- Understand and quantify metrics related to website, social media, and earned media opportunities, work to approve visibility.
- EDO to give annual presentation to Chamber of Commerce with information on annual economic trends and work of the office.



### Key Results

- Data sources including Oregon Prospector and EDO website kept updated with up-to-date information
- Completion of marketing plan for and development guide for AIP
- Complete annual presentation to Chamber
- Pilot the Made in Benton County tour

<sup>3</sup> Short, Ryan, "Branding is the New Economic Development," <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2018/08/31/branding-is-the-new-economic-development/#1f7398e477dc>, (August 31, 2018)

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## 5.2 AIP Marketing

- a) EDO to be the designated point of contact for AIP Marketing, which includes responding to development inquiries, state development agencies. (Also see Goal 1)
- b) Create handy development guide
- c) Update marketing plan
- d) Implement strategies outlined in the marketing plan



### Key External Partners

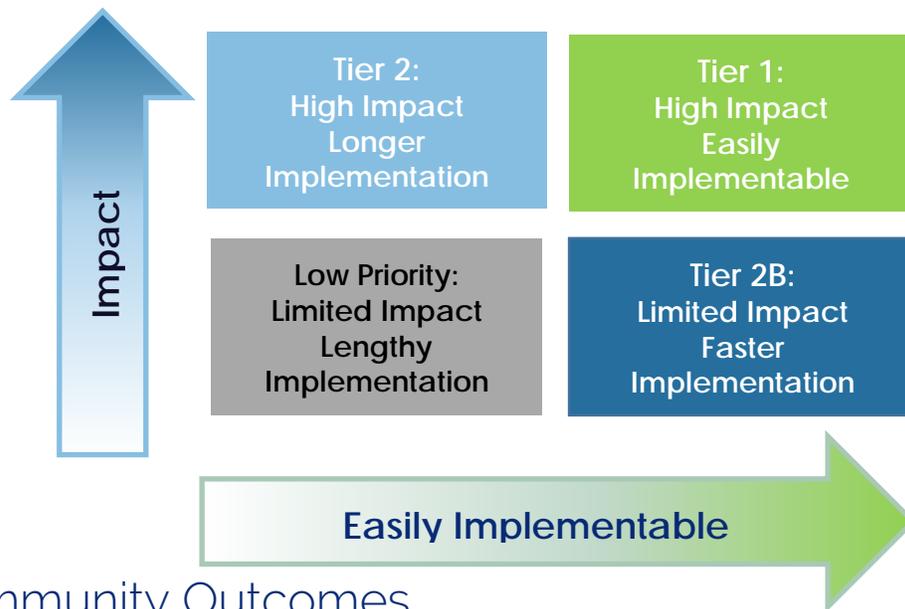
- CD and PW staff from Corvallis, Benton County
- City managers from Adair Village, Corvallis, Monroe, and Philomath.
- Marketing and outreach coordinators, such as PIO's from Corvallis, Benton County, and partner organizations such as SBDC.
- Airport Advisory Board, Public Works Staff
- Visit Corvallis

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# Summary of Implementation

Prioritization considerations:

- Impact – level and type of impact – long-term vs short-term, number of people affected, urgency, timeliness (current opportunity may not last), opportunity for synergy with other initiatives; from low to high
- Timing/effort of implementation– Length and quantity of effort needed to implement; from longer-term to easily implementable



## Community Outcomes

These broader outcomes are areas the EDO will work to track, but not be measured against.

- Annual employment growth
- Annual unemployment rate
- Housing affordability index
- Distribution of employment by sector
- Angel capital and venture capital investments
- Median household income levels
- Levels of educational attainment (e.g., percentage of adults with a Bachelor's degree or higher)
- Real estate trends such as vacancy, rental, and absorption rates, as well as average home prices

The Implementation Plan follows as Attachment 1. It outlines the key actions and an estimated timeline for implementation.