

**AGENDA**  
**VENETA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – 2:00 P.M.**

Veneta Administrative Center, 88184 8th Street, Veneta, Oregon (this is a virtual meeting).

**ALL CITY OF VENETA PUBLIC MEETINGS WILL BE LIMITED TO NO MORE THAN 16 PEOPLE ATTENDING, INCLUDING STAFF AND ELECTED/APPOINTED OFFICIALS BASED ON SIX FEET OF SOCIAL DISTANCING SEPARATION**  
**MASKS ARE REQUIRED TO ENTER CITY HALL**

**PURSUANT TO GOVERNOR BROWN'S EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 20-16, CITY OF VENETA PUBLIC MEETINGS CAN BE ACCESSED VIA TELECONFERENCE. TO LISTEN TO THIS MEETING, CALL 1- 862-799-9663.**

2:00 **I. CALL TO ORDER**

2:03 **II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. Speakers will be limited to 3 minutes each.

2:09 **III. ADMINISTRATIVE**

- a. Approval of Minutes for September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

2:10 **IV. CITY UPDATES**

- a. Bradleigh Jenkins joining us from the AmeriCorps RARE program
- b. The Emporium opening soon
- c. Downtown Veneta Pop-Up District recap
- d. shopfernridge.com update
- e. Sale negotiation of City property on Jeans Road
- f. \$50k small business COVID-19 impact grant with Community LendingWorks
- g. Arable Brewing update

2:30 **V. STRATEGIC PLANNING**

- a. Presentation: Revised Goals and Mission
- b. Discussion: Veneta SWOT Analysis
- c. Work Session: Strategies and Actions
- d. Next steps

3:25 **VI. NEXT MEETING**

- a. Discussion- November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. (November 11<sup>th</sup> is Veteran's Day)

3:30 **VII. ADJOURN**

Times are approximate. This meeting will be digitally recorded. Location is wheelchair accessible (WCA). Individuals needing special accommodations, such as sign language or foreign language interpreters, should make such requests by contacting the City Recorder at 541-935-2191(voice) or by e-mail at: dhenneman@ci.veneta.or.us. Requests made after 10:00 a.m. two working days prior to a meeting may not be accommodated.

Los tiempos son aproximados. Esta reunión se grabará digitalmente. La ubicación es accesible para sillas de ruedas (WCA). Las personas que necesiten un alojamiento especial, tales como lenguaje de señas o intérpretes de idiomas extranjeros, deben hacer tales peticiones poniéndose en contacto con el registrador de la ciudad en 541-935-2191 (voz) o por correo electrónico a: dhenneman@ci.veneta.or.us. Las solicitudes hechas después de las 10:00 a.m. dos días hábiles antes de una reunión no pueden ser acomodadas.

To access Veneta Economic Development Committee meeting materials please go to  
<http://www.venetaoregon.gov/meetings>

**AGENDA**  
**VENETA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER, 9<sup>TH</sup> 2020 – 2:00 P.M.**

**Committee Members Present:**

Herb Vloedman (Chair, Fern Ridge Self-Storage), Jason Alansky (Veneta – Fern Ridge Chamber President), John Tribolet (Grateful Graffix), Tulsie Elizabeth Strickland (In Your Heart Song Coaching & Training), Ryan Frome (Veneta Vet. Hosp.)

Matt Michel, City Administrator and non-voting member

**Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (IPRE) at the University of Oregon:** Olenka Wrobel, Corum Ketchum, and Assistant Program Director Michael Howard.

**Absent:** Thomas Cotter (Council Appointee, Council President), Len Goodwin (Vice Chair), Gina Haley-Morrell (Veneta – Fern Ridge Chamber), Dalen Corbett (KEZI)

**Staff:** Jana Weaver, Management Analyst

**Visitors:** Jenna Cusimano (Lane County Economic & Community Development Management Analyst) by phone

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2:00 I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Herb Vloedman called the Economic Development Committee (EDC) meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2:05 II. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

2:10 III. **ADMINISTRATIVE**

I. Approval of Minutes for Aug 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020

- Jason Alansky made a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by John Tribolet; passed unanimously.

2:15 IV. **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

A. Introductions for University of Oregon Institute for Policy Research & Engagement (IPRE) members.

- Michael Howard- introduced himself and also reminded the committee that he worked with the last 5-Year Strategic Plan Action Priorities.

- Introduction from Olenka Wrobel.

- Introduction from Corum Ketchum.

B. 5-Year Strategic Plan Action Priorities Process Overview

- Corum Ketchum shared an overview presentation of the program, and recalled the history from the previous Strategic Plan.

- The main themes consisted of public involvement, goals for the Strategic Plan, actionable ways to grow the local economy, goals moving forward, and key document overview from previous years.

- Ketchum asked for feedback of the EDC about goal prioritization and listing goals

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in A, B, and C order based on the document.

- Chair Vloedman asked if there were questions from the EDC. There were none.
- Ketchum facilitated a discussion on the EDC priorities and goals.
- John Tribolet suggested that perhaps we put less effort into beautification and shift in another capacity.
- Tulsi Strickland was an advocate for public art, but merge with beautification. Perhaps offering Parks Board to join us on this.
- Discussion occurred about bringing completed items down to bottom of the spreadsheet.
- Discussion occurred about how do we tell the story about ourselves? Marketing strategies how could we boost our signal? Discussion occurred about recruitment for job providers.
- Chair Vloedman discussed being supportive of making sure that activities occur for downtown, but should not focus only on downtown and that we should keep other opportunities open. Discussion occurred about not discounting areas outside of downtown core.
- City Administrator (CA) Matt Michel - URA project list does not have a lot for downtown. Pivoting elsewhere (e.g., Bolton Hills Sports Fields); the downtown goal may be more about how to catalyze existing property owners, how to get them "into the game"? Is it through zoning amendments, comprehensive plan amendments to make commercial locations more attractive now for ROI. What else could city do to help property owners and/or lease from owners.
- Tribolet asked if it is possible for the city to cosign without spending the money on the spaces? There was also discussion about the need for lodging within the community.
- CA Michel brought up the City working on update of Parks Master Plan, will be to city council at time this process is complete. The prominent feedback is more trails and walkability connection. If wanting businesses into town should be considering attractiveness for employers. Tie connection to Parks Master Plan, greenway development, potential land acquisition. Ketchum fold parks plan into CEDS and vice versa. CA Michel beautification is difficult to justify, however, economic justification helps. Flesh out what this means beyond fiber, etc.
- Strickland brought up a discussion about culture development. This is where we are going to create vibrancy. Would like to see more that captures the local agriculture and the expanded culture of what is around Veneta. Is it under infrastructure improvement? What does it mean to be a Venetian? What do we value about our identity?

## 2:40 V. **VENETAWORKS UPDATES**

- A. Shopfernridge.com Online Regional Marketplace (verbal)
  - Management Analyst (MA) Jana Weaver gave an update on shopfernridge.com having a soft launch in the next week. There are 4 artists on the website now, and 16 interested to join soon.
- B. Downtown Veneta Retail Pop-Up Market (verbal)
  - MA Weaver gave an overall update about the attendance numbers and revenue

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numbers in the last few weeks. A more detailed document will be able to be created at the end of the season.

#### **VI. QUESTIONS FOR STAFF & OTHER**

- Jenna Cusimano (Lane County): Still have about \$50K in the fund for Lane County for applicable businesses from the relief fund. There is a quick pre-application on the committee lending page. Within round 4, Business Oregon is doubling the tiered amounts. This is through the Oregon Cultural Trust.
- ODOT will be gathering feedback from the community about an upcoming project on OR 126. Please visit <https://odotopenhouse.org/or-126-veneta-to-eugene-nepa-study-1> for the virtual open house and leave your feedback. The survey will be open until September 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### 2:55 **VII. NEXT MEETING**

- a. October 14, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.
- b. Topics: Strategic Planning

#### 3:30 **VIII. ADJOURN**

Chair Vloedman adjourned the meeting at 3:30pm

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# *Downtown Veneta Pop-Up Retail District*

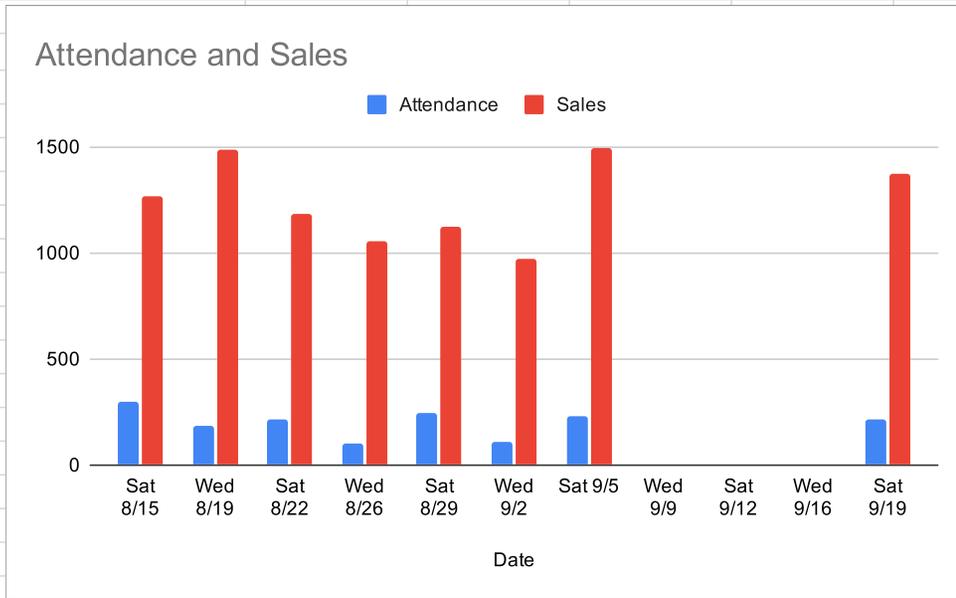
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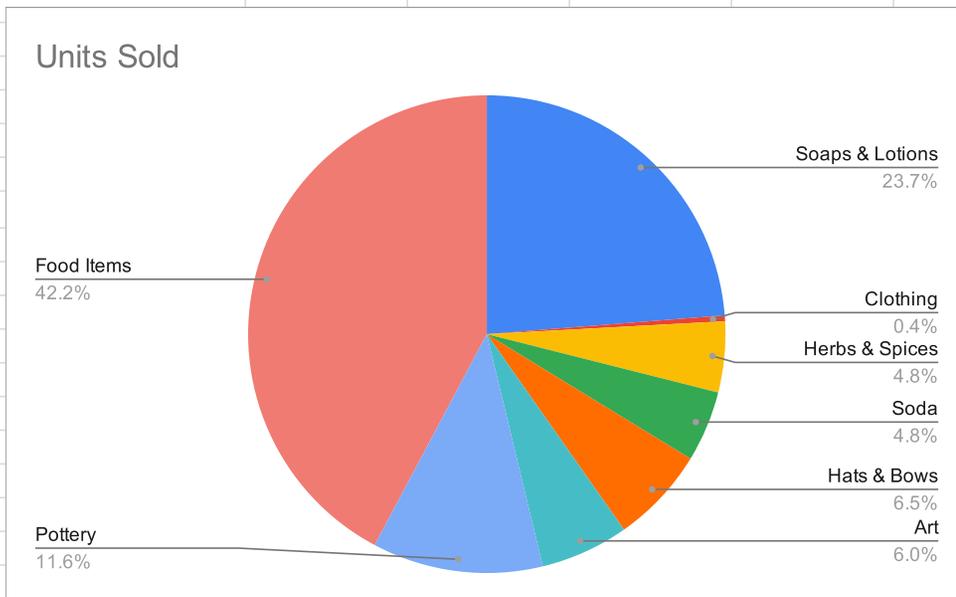


# Downtown Veneta Pop-Up Retail District Attendance and Sales

Date	Attendance	Sales
Sat 8/15	302	\$1,269.00
Wed 8/19	185	\$1,488.00
Sat 8/22	218	\$1,187.00
Wed 8/26	104	\$1,059.00
Sat 8/29	244	\$1,122.00
Wed 9/2	111	\$969.00
Sat 9/5	231	\$1,495.00
Wed 9/9		
Sat 9/12		
Wed 9/16		
Sat 9/19	215	\$1,371.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1610</b>	<b>\$9,960.00</b>



Type of Items	Units sold
Soaps & Lotions	302
Clothing	5
Herbs & Spices	61
Soda	61
Hats & Bows	83
Art	76
Pottery	147
Food Items	537





October 9, 2020

To | Jana Weaver, Management Analyst, Veneta City Staff, Economic Development Committee  
From | Michael Howard, Corum Ketchum, and Olenka Wrobel  
SUBJECT | 2015 CEDS GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

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## Goal I: Economic Development Commitment

The first goal in the strategy is commitment to economic development. Commitment is important because without leadership, resources, and staff time, the action plan will not get implemented.

### Strategy I.1: Demonstrate consistent commitment and support for long-term economic development in Veneta

#### *Action Items:*

- **Allocate economic development funds to support the hiring of a RARE placement or Economic Development Intern in Year 1.** The RARE placement or intern will be tasked with initiating the actions outlined in this economic development strategic plan. Currently the City of Veneta allocates an amount of money in their budget for economic development projects. City staff should use these funds to support the hiring of a University of Oregon Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) placement or a skilled intern dedicated to economic development initiatives. The City of Veneta has had successful experience with the use of RARE placements in the past. This position should be hired for the first year of the strategic plan implementation.
- **Amend Veneta Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Code.** Findings and policies in the Comprehensive Plan are outdated and should be updated for consistency with the 2015 Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) and this Economic Development Action Plan. The Veneta Planning Commission and City Council should consider recommendations presented in CPW's a review of the Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan and the Veneta Development Code (see February 26, 2015 memorandum from Bob Parker to Kay Bork titled "Review of Veneta's Comprehensive Plan Economic Element and Land Development Ordinance").
- **City leadership and staff support and assistance with implementation of the strategic plan.**
- This consists of city leadership (e.g., Mayor and Council) and staff supporting the RARE/Intern outlined above, as well as ensuring there are resources committed to continuing the implementation of the plan in the longer term.
- **Develop criteria used to determine how the City of Veneta prioritizes projects and allocates funding and other support for incentivizing economic development.** Currently, the city's strategy to allocate development incentive funds is to assess projects on a case-by-case basis. This action item aims to provide more structure and accountability with respect to how funds are allocated and used to support economic development. A key consideration is maintaining flexibility while articulating city values in the criteria. This action does not suggest that the City create a "formalized" process (e.g., formal Council votes) for choosing projects, but rather document how the city chooses to incentivize certain types of development projects in Veneta. If developed correctly, the criteria should be able to prioritize projects that may serve as a catalyst for additional development in Veneta.

- **Collaborate with Lane Workforce Partnership to demonstrate the City’s commitment to supporting workforce development in the community.** Lane Workforce Partnership is currently working to identify cities to become certified Workforce Ready Communities. City staff should work with the agency to determine what the City can do to demonstrate support, and how to connect local businesses and industries with Lane Workforce Partnership resources. Lane Workforce Partnership also works with job applicants to obtain their National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) which verifies each individual has three foundational and critical job-related skills. To further demonstrate their support for workforce development, the City of Veneta can submit a Letter of Support to Lane County Workforce Partnership indicating the City’s commitment to giving value to the NCRC during the hiring process.
- **Establish an Economic Development Committee** Economic development requires sustained commitment and input. Given the City Council’s workload, establishing a council-appointed committee to provide direction to staff as they implement this plan and review other economic opportunities as they arise.

**Strategy 1.2: Establish and maintain relationships with business development partners and with local, state, and federal economic development organizations.**

*Action Items:*

- **Collaborate with regional economic development agencies and other local municipalities to recruit industry to the area.** Dedicating staff time to recruiting new industry to the area is likely to be an inefficient approach to facilitating economic development in Veneta. City staff should focus their efforts on collaborating with agencies that focus on recruiting new industries around the region. City staff should actively participate in conversations with potential industries and determining if there are any steps the City could take to improve its competitive position in attracting industries to Veneta. Agencies to collaborate with include Lane County Economic Development, South Willamette Economic Development Corporation, Business Oregon, City of Eugene, Lane Business Link, Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation, Economic Development Administration, Lane Council of Governments, and Lane Economic Committee.
- **Provide regular updates to real estate agencies on availability of developable sites.** The City should help to connect real estate agencies that are experienced in recruiting developers to areas with landowners. The RARE/Intern should work in their first year to identify which agencies are most appropriate to collaborate with. The City should continue these relationships by communicating economic development updates in Veneta through the quarterly newsletter and sharing information about available “shovel-ready” properties, both discussed in Strategy 2.2.

## **Goal 2: Business Retention, Expansion, Recruitment, and Entrepreneurial Development**

Economic development typically has four cornerstone strategies: (1) retention (strategies to retain existing businesses), (2) expansion (strategies such as Economic Gardening or other approaches focusing on helping existing businesses grow); (3) recruitment (attracting new businesses to the community), and (4) entrepreneurial development (assisting individuals with ideas turn those into businesses). The City of Veneta embraces all of these strategies and does not prioritize one over another.

### **Strategy 2.1: Facilitate economic development in Veneta through the retention and expansion of existing businesses.**

#### *Action Items:*

- **Create a business registry database that inventories all current businesses located in Veneta.** The development of a business registry would help to build relationships with local businesses in the Veneta area. The RARE/Intern discussed in Strategy 1.1 should develop a robust methodology for updating this database. This action should be implemented in conjunction with the outreach program. The long-term vision would be for the Fern Ridge Area Chamber to maintain the registry.
- **Develop an outreach program to better understand and meet the needs of local businesses.** This action item is based on building strong relationships with local businesses in the Veneta area. This action should be implemented in conjunction with the creation of the business registry. These discussions will help the City to understand business needs and whether there are any obstacles to development and expansion that the City could address. Outreach should be ongoing throughout the implementation of this plan.
- **Work with regional tourism associations and wine industry to increase tourism activity in the area.** The Southern Willamette Valley is currently home to a number of wineries that generate a significant amount of economic activity for the region. Given that Veneta serves as a gateway for many of these wineries, there is potential to take advantage of the traffic that travels to the area and through Veneta and to the area to access these wineries. The City should work with existing groups such as Travel Lane County and the South Willamette Wineries Association, who are already working to support, grow, and market the existing wine industry. The discussion should determine what type of support the City can provide to encourage the expansion of the tourism industry in the area and how the groups can collaborate to increase economic activity within the City of Veneta.

### **Strategy 2.2: Make the community attractive to businesses and residents through marketing efforts.**

#### *Action Items:*

- **Develop a quarterly newsletter highlighting City of Veneta's economic development initiatives.** This action item is based on marketing the community to potential industries and businesses. These newsletters will be distributed to parties that work with facilitating potential development, such as real estate brokers, land or building owners, and regional economic development agencies. It will highlight projects that would be of interest to potential industries such as new development and infrastructure updates. This action is key to providing current

examples of how City staff is working to facilitate economic development in the Veneta and improving the perception of Veneta to becoming a business-friendly community.

- **Develop a program to identify and document sites that are “shovel-ready” and can accommodate development.** Due to the small size of available land in Veneta, there are currently no sites that meet the criteria established by Business Oregon’s Industrial Land Certification program. The City will work in partnership with landowners to develop dossiers on key sites in the Veneta urban growth boundary (UGB). Ideally, landowners would provide the information and in return the City would help market the properties. The city will develop a list of desired information to be included on the dossier. The Business Oregon application is a good place to start, but requires far more detail than is necessary. The City will use the information to create marketing packages of available properties that document the type of infrastructure already in place to accommodate potential development. The packages will make it easy for developers to quickly determine if there is land available to meet their needs. This action item will require working with property owners to determine the infrastructure already in place and what other steps could be taken to make property more marketable. This should happen in conjunction with other action items involving outreach with landowners.

### **Strategy 2.3: Increase capacity to recruit commercial, industrial, and traded sector businesses.**

#### *Action Items:*

- **Collaborate with regional economic development groups and communities to recruit industries and businesses to Veneta.** As the City does not currently have the resources to hire a long-term full-time staff member dedicated to economic development, the City should focus on developing collaborative relationships with regional entities that already focus on recruiting new development the area. The RARE/Intern proposed in Strategy 1.1 will work to develop the initial relationship which will be maintained by City staff upon completion of their term.

## **Goal 3: Retail and Commercial Development**

A key concern is the amount of sales “leakage” that Veneta is losing to other communities. To reduce the amount of sales leakage, the City will work to offer a broader range of retail and commercial services, with emphasis on attracting businesses to the downtown area.

### **Strategy 3.1: Create a vibrant downtown core area that encourages residents and visitors to shop and spend time.**

- **Collaborate with Oregon Department of Transportation to increase wayfinding signage and direct traffic off of Highway 126 into downtown Veneta** Given the significant amount of traffic that utilizes Highway 126, there is potential to direct more visitors into the downtown Veneta area. However, the downtown area is not visible from Highway 126 and there is a limited amount of signage dedicated to encouraging visits to Veneta-area businesses. The City will work with ODOT to increase the amount of signage located on Highway 126, directing potential visitors to key business areas and educating the public about the businesses located in the area.
- **Continue to upgrade existing downtown infrastructure.** Developing a safe and walkable downtown will be key to encouraging visitors to spend time in the downtown area. Visitors will be more likely to spend time downtown if there is parking that is easy to access and they feel safe walking around the downtown area. Additionally, investing resources into infrastructure

upgrades will demonstrate to existing and potential businesses the City's commitment to encouraging development in the downtown area.

### **Strategy 3.2: Focus on quality retail and commercial development that will offer a full spectrum of products/services for the community.**

#### *Action Items:*

- **Conduct a market analysis to better understand the types of products and services desired by Veneta residents.** The most recent analysis of Veneta's market was conducted in 2006. The City should work to replicate that methodology. The analysis results should be used in marketing the community to potential and communicate results to regional partners listed in Strategy 2.1.

## **Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvement**

Infrastructure is a pre-requisite for economic development. While the City has made tremendous progress on infrastructure with the downtown street improvements and the water intertie, more work remains to be done.

### **Strategy 4.1: Continue infrastructure improvements to support the needs of current and future Veneta businesses.**

#### *Actions:*

- **Focus improvements on pedestrian and streetscape infrastructure as needed.** To meet evolving business needs, Infrastructure improvements should be focused on continuing pedestrian and streetscape upgrades as sewer connections and parking supply are adequate to meet anticipated needs over the next 3-5 years. Improvements should be based upon need determined by City staff as well as input collected through business outreach.
- **Pursue the expansion and installation of a fiber optics line to, and throughout, Veneta to bring the city more fully into the communication age.** The buildout of a fiber optics network will help make Veneta more competitive in attracting development that rely heavily on telecommunication for their operations such as e-commerce, telework, and telehealth industries.
- **Continue to advocate for the Oregon Department of Transportation to fund and construct the preferred alternative consistent with the adopted HWY 126 Fern Ridge Corridor Plan.** The four-lane preferred alternative and ODOT spot improvements will provide corridor improvements to safely and efficiently accommodate the needs of all roadway users, as well as support the economic viability of the region including industrial, commercial, recreational, and tourist activities.

## **Strategy 4.2: Make aesthetic enhancements to make Veneta attractive to residents, visitors, and potential industries.**

### *Actions:*

- **Continue to make improvements along Highway 126.** The portion of Highway 126 that runs through Veneta provides the first impression for most potential visitors, therefore it is important that there is a positive appearance that does not discourage visitors from continuing to drive through the City. The City should work with ODOT to continue making aesthetic improvements to this portion of Highway 126.
- **Collaborate with ODOT to install consistent and attractive wayfinding signage directing drivers to Veneta businesses.** A significant obstacle to drawing visitors to the area is the lack of visibility of Veneta businesses from the Highway 126 corridor. Many visitors are unaware of the businesses located a short distance off of the highway. Installing wayfinding signage will inform potential visitors about downtown businesses as well as signal to potential industries the City's commitment to increasing economic activity in the area
- **Continue to monitor "problem properties" through code enforcement and nuisance ordinances.** Properties that are not well-maintained can have a detrimental effect on recruiting new businesses to the area and impact the public perception of Veneta. The city should continue to implement it's successful enforcement of established codes and issuance of nuisance citations to address these properties
- **Incorporate local art into downtown streetscape improvements.** An additional way to aesthetically enhance the downtown area is to incorporate pieces from local artists into the streetscape. This will help to build relations with local artists in the community and can also serve as a draw for visitors to the area. The City can initiate this endeavor through connecting with the Oregon Country Fair and artists who are regularly associated with the event.



October 9, 2020

**To** Jana Weaver, Management Analyst, Veneta City Staff, Economic Development Committee  
**From** Michael Howard, Corum Ketchum, and Olenka Wrobel  
**SUBJECT** 2020 CEDS VISION, GOALS, STRATEGIES & ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN/SWOT

The City of Veneta is in the process of updating their Economic Development Implementation Strategy (last completed in 2015). This memo includes a refined vision and goals and Environmental Scan/SWOT analysis for review by the Veneta Economic Development Committee. *See companion memo for the unedited 2015 CEDS Goals, Strategies, and Actions.*

## Vision:

The City of Veneta will be a community that appropriately balances livability with economic resiliency. The City recognizes that a strong commercial sector is critical for pursuing community livability enhancements. The City will seek out partnerships to leverage economic and community development activities.

Key: Blue: from 2015 CEDS, Black: Suggested language for 2020 update

## Goal 1: Economic Development Commitment

- Strategy 1.2: Establish and maintain relationships with business development partners and with local, state, and federal economic development organizations.
- Strategy 1.3: Maintain transparency and open communication with the community on economic development topics to promote public participation and engagement.

## Goal 2: Business Retention, Expansion, Recruitment, and Entrepreneurial Development

- Strategy 2.1: Facilitate economic development in Veneta through the retention and expansion of existing businesses.
- Strategy 2.2: Make the community attractive to businesses and residents through branding efforts.
- Strategy 2.3: Catalyze current business owners in and outside the downtown area to encourage retail and commercial development (i.e. zoning amendments, public-private partnerships).

## Goal 3: Retail and Commercial Development

- Strategy 3.1: Encourage W. Broadway commercial property owners to envision a vibrant downtown core area that encourages residents and visitors to shop and spend time.
- Strategy 3.2: Develop market research on quality retail and commercial development that will offer a full spectrum of products/services for the community.
- Strategy 3.3: Establish and maintain relationships with local landowners and business development partners.

## Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvement

- Strategy 4.1: Continue infrastructure improvements to support the needs of current and future Veneta businesses.
- Strategy 4.2: Make aesthetic enhancements to make Veneta attractive to residents, visitors, and potential industries.
- Strategy 4.3: Implement a community beautification program. *[Note: Perhaps make this an action item under Strategy 4.2]*
- Strategy 4.4: Continue infrastructure improvements to make Veneta more livable and vibrant for residents and potential future businesses.
- Strategy 4.5: Create additional building ownership opportunities for industrial activities.
- Strategy 4.6: Improve access and connectivity from neighboring cities to enhance employment activity.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN [SWOT ANALYSIS]

A SWOT [Strengths vs Weaknesses, Opportunities vs Threats] analysis is a tool used by organizations to identify internal and external factors relevant to that organization's future. An organization's strengths and weaknesses are internal factors that the organization has at least some control over. External to the organization are opportunities and threats, which are factors in the environment that are outside of the organization's control. Strengths and weaknesses can be fortified and addressed by internal changes, whereas opportunities and threats must be adapted to take advantage of a dynamic ecosystem.

To create a baseline assessment of the current state of Veneta's economic development programming, the IPRE team has conducted a SWOT analysis by:

- Analyzing economic development publications and plans related to Veneta
- Collaborating with City staff and stakeholders from the Veneta Economic Development Committee
- Reviewing current economic development programming

*Note: the 2015 Environmental Scan/SWOT Analysis is found on pp. 4-5 of the [Veneta Economic Development Strategy: Five-Year Action Plan](#).*

### Strengths

Veneta's strengths arise from its unique blend of rural and urban lifestyles, with an emphasis on its citizens' progress (pro-change and pro-growth) mindset. These factors combine to create a community that is appealing to a range of people and businesses, lending itself to a diverse economy.

### Geography

- Proximity to wineries, agriculture and the Eugene/Springfield area
- Attractive, bucolic lifestyle opportunities
- Proximity to recreational opportunities in the Fern Ridge Area
- Last "urban" center between Eugene/Springfield and the Oregon Coast

### Identity/Perception/Culture

- Small town feel with progressive attitude
- Placemaking and landscape architecture improvements to the downtown area
- Availability of "shovel-ready" industrial and commercial land

### Infrastructure, Connectivity and the Built Environment

- Adequate infrastructure to accommodate years of development at the Northeast Employment Center and within Downtown Veneta
- Strong local identity related to the bioregion, agriculture, timber and the Oregon Country Fair
- Direct access to the Eugene Airport
- Public transportation connections between Eugene/Springfield and Veneta

### Policy and Politics

- Political support of economic development from elected officials, engaged and supportive residents and City staff focused on economic development
- Willingness to adapt or change existing local government regulations to meet common

- development goals
- Growing culture of entrepreneurship ecosystem and economic development
- Robust partnerships with local economic development partners

## **WEAKNESSES**

The community's weaknesses arise from its proximity to Eugene/Springfield, lack of accessible transportation infrastructure (except for the airport) and the chicken-and-egg problem of a lack of available retail/commercial space leading to a lack of diverse activities for consumers. Addressing weaknesses in the built environment and changing consumer habits will be crucial to growing Veneta's economy.

### **Economic Activity**

- Limited local employers and employment opportunities
- Lack of diverse activities in the downtown
- Significant retail and service leakage to Eugene/Springfield

### **Geography**

- Distance from Interstate – 5 is too far to be economically advantageous

### **Identity/Perception/Culture**

- Branding efforts have not been established yet
- Weak regional notoriety, especially for the downtown

### **Infrastructure, Connectivity and the Built Environment**

- No rail access
- Fragmented utility service due to multiple utility companies serving the same small geography
- Limited stock of readily available commercial, retail and industrial buildings
- Limited downtown visibility from Highway 126
- Limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure Vulnerability to power and internet service disruptions due to winter storms, earthquakes and wildfire

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Veneta can continue to capitalize on its blend of urban and rural lifestyles. Aside from being surrounded by world class outdoor recreation and agritourism destinations, the community is well positioned to capture much of the growth in the Eugene/Springfield metro, due to lower costs of housing. Leaders should look to capitalize in the growing number of teleworkers and any resources that come as a result of COVID-19 relief stimulus policies.

### **Economic Activity**

- Growth potential in Veneta small scale agriculture, wineries, breweries, and businesses where face-to-face interaction (e.g., retail outlets) not required
- Population growth increases the demand for local service
- Local labor force that currently commute out of the City could meet the needs of new or expanding businesses
- Higher disposable household income compared to the Eugene/Springfield area.

## Geography

- Recreational activities draw visitors to the area

## Identity/Perception/Culture

- Accelerated interest in livable rural communities from remote workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Ability to capitalize on local culture and events, like the Oregon Country Fair

## Infrastructure, Connectivity, and the Built Environment

- Low cost industrial land compared to nearby communities
- Proximity to the Eugene Airport (~10 minute drive) can be leveraged to attract potential industries based on proximity to airport
- Availability of lower-cost and moderately priced family housing in comparison to nearby communities, especially Eugene/Springfield area
- Expanding access to telecommunications infrastructure
- Compact downtown has the potential to be more bike or pedestrian friendly

## Politics and Policy

- Building on the success of redevelopment efforts in downtown Veneta
- Opportunity to leverage state and federal resources from COVID-19 response programs to invest in durable change

## Threats

Veneta's long term economic health is threatened by a lacking built environment (housing, lodging, retail, manufacturing and disaster resilient infrastructure) as well as the uncertain impact COVID-19 will have on state and local revenues. Veneta's leaders will need to find ways to draw positive attention and fiscal resources in order to sustain a growing economy.

## Economic Activity

- Residents are habituated to go to Eugene/Springfield for goods and services
- Limited ownership in the Northeast Employment Center reduces market choice for potential businesses that want to locate industrial activities in Veneta

## Identity/Perception/Culture

- External perceptions of Veneta hinder the ability to recruit new industry to the area

## Infrastructure, Connectivity and the Built Environment

- Lack of resilient infrastructure
- Lack of hotels, temporary housing, and rental housing.
- Limited City staffing and resources to pursue economic development
- Expected decline in taxable income and state support, due to the changing economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

## Politics and Policy

- Limited amount of private and public investment to support continued growth