

# Lane County Rural Prosperity Initiative (Draft)

Successful economic development emphasizes **community development, capacity building & collaboration.**

- ✓ **Community capacity building is economic development.**  
Focusing on workforce training, building leadership skills from a young age, supporting entrepreneurship, ensuring community participation and buy-in, and maintaining adequate infrastructure create a strong foundation for growing the economy.
- ✓ **Partnerships and innovative governance are critical to successful economic development.**  
Rural communities need to break from the traditional economic development model that emphasizes *competition* between areas and instead focus on *collaboration* between areas.
- ✓ **Think regionally and collaboratively.**  
Rural communities don't exist in a vacuum; their economic development strategies must be woven into the regional framework and should support regional clusters.
- ✓ **Widely supported community visions lead to coordinated economic development efforts.**  
Without buy-in from residents and the organizations they participate in, economic development strategies will be fragmented and short-lived.
- ✓ **Without risk, there will be little reward.**  
Although it may seem scary, rural communities that take risks on non-traditional economic development activities often experience the greatest successes.

## RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES



### Communication & Coordination

Rural communities felt they were **not well connected** with County and other rural communities. This lack of coordination means **missed opportunities.**



### Capacity & Expertise

Lane County's rural communities have **limited staff time** to dedicate to economic development and some communities have **limited expertise** in economic development best practices.



### Infrastructure

Without reliable infrastructure, rural communities have trouble cultivating growth. Communities specifically mentioned the need to improve **roads, downtown streetscapes, and broadband speeds/availability.**



### Quality of Life Factors

Quality of life is the heart of rural vitality. Many communities lack **consumer services** (like grocery stores), **basic human services** (like mental health care), and **affordable housing.**



### Vision

Lane County (and the broader region) **lacks a clearly articulated strategic direction** for economic growth, making it difficult for rural communities to align local efforts with regional efforts.



### Perception of Invisibility

Rural communities feel their needs are **consistently overlooked and overshadowed** by the Eugene/Springfield Metro Area.

# Rural Prosperity Initiative Core Service Areas (Draft)

## ✓ **Regional Gatherings**

Convene quarterly, bi-annual, or annual gathering of rural community & economic development practitioners to facilitate information exchange, strategic visioning, and partnerships.

## ✓ **Monthly Newsletter**

Provide regular updates on the County's work and pass along funding opportunities.

## ✓ **Resource Fairs**

Organize community-hosted fairs where representatives of key County departments & County Commissioners answer questions about services and gather feedback.

## ✓ **Rural Working Group(s)**

Participate in the 4-county economic development district's rural working group.

## ✓ **Community Presence**

Participate in community meetings and planning as requested by communities.

## ✓ **Rural Advocacy**

To ensure Lane County policies work for rural communities, help communities navigate County processes, and lend legitimacy to funding requests.

## ✓ **Strategic Planning**

To support community & economic visioning processes.

## ✓ **Marketing & Outreach**

To help communities get their message out to the right audience.

## ✓ **Business Relationships**

To improve relationships with businesses & entrepreneurs and connect them with resources.

## ✓ **Training Opportunities**

To help communities build economic development skills.

## ✓ **Data Collection**

To improve the quality of information communities use to make decisions.

## ✓ **Community Marketing**

Gather and maintain an up-to-date library of communities' marketing materials and use in conjunction with County-developed materials at trade shows, conferences, and recruitment-related meetings.

## ✓ **County Marketing**

Develop promotional flyers for every rural Lane community and use as collateral at trade shows, conferences, and recruitment-related meetings.

## ✓ **Represent Communities**

Represent rural Lane communities' assets at annual trade shows and conferences. Connect rural Lane communities with any promising business recruitment leads.

## ✓ **Regular Updates**

Schedule regular check-ins with communities to learn about available land and other conditions relevant to business recruitment.

## ✓ **RTMP Funding**

Continue to allocate annual Rural Tourism Marketing Program funds (~\$195k) to communities for packaging, selling, and advertising rural Lane County to promote overnight stays.

## ✓ **Infrastructure and/or Staff Capacity**

The County is considering a mechanism to assist rural communities with infrastructure projects and/or staff capacity to promote community revitalization. A stable funding source has not currently been identified, but the County is working to do so. Funding support would likely require a community match.

## ✓ **Case-by-Case Needs**

Continue to work with communities to identify pressing needs and connect communities to funding, either through the County or external sources.

**Collaboration  
& Connectivity**

**Technical Assistance**

**Promotion**

**Funding**