



CITY OF

West Linn

2022 Advisory Group Annual Report

Advisory Group: *Economic Development Committee*

Group Leadership:

Chair: Shannon Ilas
Vice Chair: Shannen Knight
Council Liaison: Todd Jones
Staff Liaison: Alena Schnarr, Business Support & Economic Development Coordinator

Meeting Times, Dates & Location:

- EDC meets the 2nd Thursday of each month, 6:00-7:30 pm.
- In 2022, the EDC met 8 times. (February, March, May, June, September, October, December).
- Four meetings were canceled due to lack of quorum, staff sickness and family emergency. (January, April, July, August and November).

2022 Accomplishments

1. Advised on criteria for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants for Business community – Business Recovery Grant and Façade Grant.
2. Created preliminary strategy for creating West Linn Tourism videos – plan to complete in Spring 2023 in collaboration with Mt. Hood Territories, West Linn Chamber of Commerce and Historic Willamette Main Street.
3. Strategized ideas on how to support West Linn’s business community including reducing barriers to doing business, creating a more diverse business community, improving business licensing process, supporting minority-owned and women-owned businesses. Will continue this work in 2023.
4. Supported work for proposed Tax-Increment Finance (TIF) Plan by nominating committee member Michael Bernert to advise on TIF Advisory Committee. EDC discussed and offered feedback for proposed TIF.
5. Reviewed existing West Linn Economic Development plans (2019 Strategy Action Plan; 2015 Comprehensive Plan; 2016 Economic Opportunities Analysis; 2011 West Linn Economic Development Plan) and agreed a new Work Plan should be crafted to focus and the drive work for FY24-FY25.
6. Shannon Ilas and Shannen Knight represented EDC on the 2022 Code Amendment Working Group.
7. Built relationship with Alena Schnarr, new Business Support & Economic Development Coordinator, a new position for the City of West Linn. Alena started staffing the EDC in May 2022. West Linn has not had anyone working in this role for 7 years. EDC feels positive about the strategies and work plan development, poising them to make some good progress in 2023.

2022 Challenges

1. Lack of clear Economic Development goals and direction from City Council.
2. Lack of quorum and staff emergencies created challenge of meeting regularly.
3. EDC noted that hiring new staff person was an accomplishment and also a challenge, in the sense that it takes time to build synergy with a new staff liaison.

2023 Council Goalsetting

West Linn's Economic Development Committee is currently working on developing and adopting a new Working Plan for FY24-FY25 Biennium and would like to focus our work in the following areas:

1. **Business Support + Entrepreneurism:**
 - a. Continuing to work on creating a welcoming and diverse business community
 - b. Finding grants & resources to help retain, support and expand businesses.
 - c. Developing a way to support home-based businesses.
 - d. Create a Hwy 43 business coalition and develop events/do outreach to support the growth and economic development of the business community on Hwy 43 corridor.

2. **Tourism Development:**
 - a. Focus on continuing to promote West Linn as a tourism destination in collaboration with local and regional partners.
 - b. Advise on Wayfaring & Branding Signage project, funded by ARPA dollars.
 - c. Develop hotel tax ordinance and zoning recommendations.

3. **Highway 43 Economic Development & Planning Projects:**
 - a. Support the Planning departments as needed on projects related to Economic Development including: Visioning for Hwy 43 Land Use & Neighboring Connectivity Plan, the proposed TIF and West Linn Waterfront Master Plan.

Any additional feedback to share with the City Council?

- o The EDC has a desire to create more synergy between other Community Advisory Group's (CAG's). Suggestion to gather all of West Linn's CAG's together annually or find a way to communicate/update each other the projects each CAG is working on.