

A wide-angle, aerial photograph of a city at night. The city is densely built with numerous lights from houses and streets. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under a dark sky. The overall atmosphere is calm and urban.

**The City of Bend's
Economic Development Strategic Plan
2025 Framework**

FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

The following is the 2025 Framework to development the Economic Development Strategy for the City of Bend. This framework takes into account the ongoing emphasis by Bend City Council on *economic prosperity*, direction from the City Manager's Office, aligning City of Bend and Bend Urban Renewal efforts, and prioritizing the need to be cost-effective in the development process.

The framework is an aggressive one-year campaign based on the successful approach to the development and implementation of the *site-specific program*. The current feeling and ownership by members of City Council, Bend Economic Development Advisory Board, Affordable Housing Advisory Committee, Core Area Advisory Body, Chamber of Commerce, and EDCO illustrates how projects can be quick, responsive, and innovative in policy development and delivering wins for the community. The framework intends to utilize the same approach – quick and effective with delivered wins.



PURPOSE

The City of Bend will develop its *first* Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) to guide the City's economic development programs, policies, partnerships, and investments for the next ten (10) years. The EDSP will be data driven, reflect current realities, informed by robust community engagement, and aligns with other City of Bend, community partners, and regional economic development efforts.

The Economic Development Plan:

- Set a vision for sustainable and equitable economic development in Bend through 2035.
- Will provide key focus areas, strategies, and actions to achieve that vision.
- Facilitates implementation by recommending priority strategies and actions for the next five years.
- Assists with the Bend Urban Renewal Agency's Investment Strategy.
- Recommend roles and structures for the City and external partner organizations to implement proposed strategies and actions.



FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE

The creation of the Bend EDSP will rely on detailed collection and analysis of relevant data and robust outreach to key stakeholders. Key components of this process will include:

Community Foundation Assessment and Data Analysis

The first step in the strategic development of the EDSP will be to assess the City's current and historical market and economic conditions. The project will exam both quantitative data and qualitative data to understand where Bend is today, how we got here, and where are we currently headed. Additionally, a review of existing and ongoing studies, plans, and prior engagement will be conducted to provide more background on the challenges and opportunities in Bend.

Stakeholder Outreach

The development of the EDSP will rely on robust community engagement opportunities. The plan will include an online business and worker questionnaire, interviews with key stakeholders and major employers, and up to three focus group meetings of priority organizations and businesses in Bend.

Economic Development Core Team and City Council

The project team will include Champions from City Council and BURA, the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board, three (3) Community Champions, two primary project managers (Cyrus Mooney and Jonathan Taylor), and an Internal City Staff Project Working Group. This core team will provide continual review of interim findings, discuss proposed strategic priorities, impacts on other existing efforts by the City, and solicit continual feedback and direction.



STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

The EDSP will focus on three core areas: business, people, and place. These areas are the crux of a successful economic development plan. *Business* is the primary method of achieving economic growth and prosperity. Recruiting, retaining, and fostering business growth will provide access to upward economic mobility for area workers, assists with stabilizing and diversifying the local tax base, and reduces tax burdens on residential residents. *People* are the primary reason why a community wants to enhance its economic development efforts. Access to housing, better paying jobs, and healthy community resources encourage existing residents to stay while also attracting new residents. *Place* is the historic character and soul of a community. Preserving and enhancing what makes a community unique must be central in ongoing development and growth. Access to quality parks and cultural amenities, restaurants, retail, and reliable and sustainable infrastructure systems increases community happiness, reduces neighborhood and business stressors, and fosters community safety. The following foundation will assist building a robust economic development strategy.



Business

GROWING OUR BUSINESSES

- Example: Promote Entrepreneurial Development
- Example: Encourage Retail and Commercial Growth
- Example: Cultivate Targeted Industry Clusters

People

SUPPORTING OUR NEIGHBORS

- Example: Ensure Housing Development and Affordability
- Example: Build A Strong Workforce
- Example: Enhance recreational and cultural amenities

Place

SECURING OUR FUTURE

- Example: Infrastructure Development
- Example: Neighborhood Beautification and Enhancement
- Example: Economic and Environmental Resiliency



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AND ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

Before Bend can dive into the complex development of strategies for economic development, the community must have a foundational understanding of demographic and economic trends that are affecting the local economy. By assembly these conventional data sets, the project management team can effectively communicate *the realities* and assist local leaders, key stakeholders, and community partners understand how to shape and develop actions for the future. All data gleaned will be transmitted to Community Development for Growth Management Plan Update.

Data Analysis Needed:

- Demographic (population and employment)
- Local Economic Indicators
- Peer City Identification
- Industry Cluster Analysis (supply chain of target sector analysis already completed)
- Local (Regional) Labor Market Study
- Real Estate Market Analysis
- Housing Market Analysis

In addition, the development of the Economic Development Strategic Plan should incorporate existing plans and strategies. This proposal recognizes that hard work has already occurred by our community partners. To honor those past commitments of time and resources, the EDSP will incorporate the follow documents:

- The City of Bend City Council 2025-2027 Goals
- The City of Bend Capital Improvement Program
- The City of Bend Transportation System Plan
- The City of Bend's Impediments to Fair Housing Analysis
- Visit Bend Strategic Plan
- Envision Bend Strategic Plan
- The Chamber of Commerce Goals and Objectives
- OSU Cascades Innovation District Planning
- Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- The Bend Urban Renewal Agency's Site-Specific Program
- The Bend Urban Renewal Agency's Adopted TIF Plans and Reports



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

To create a strong foundation for future community engagement and focus group discussions, interviews with key stakeholders are crucial to gather diverse perspectives and inform the overall framework direction. These interviews will provide valuable insight to specific needs, priorities, and challenges within various business and organizations within the community, ensuring the plan will address “real world issues”. These interviews are intended to build local consensus, highlight areas of economic potential, facilitate implementation, and promoting collaboration.

Example Questions:

1. What is the common definition for the term “economic development.”
2. What do you think is the most important and impactful role the City of Bend can play in the next 10-years for business development.
3. What are the three top issues facing economic prosperity in Bend, apart from housing?
4. Who do you think are the current primary players in Bend’s economic development ecosystem?
5. How might we need to organize and/or structure to maximize our impacts?

Example Employer Focused Questions:

1. What is the business climate in Bend?
2. Is Bend a good place for your business to grow and expand?
3. What does your business need to be successful in our community?
4. What is your industry’s forecast over the next 10 years?



FOCUS GROUPS

The Bend EDSP will rely on key partners in identify areas to provide surgical focus to reveal community priorities for economic growth. Focus groups will have carefully planned discussions regarding specific areas of expertise about the identified *Goals*. The focus group will include no more than 20 individuals who have common characteristics that relate to the topic being discussed. These discussions will be facilitated by an independent contractor. Facilitation will also be led by Community Champions (See Strategy Development Team)



FOCUS GROUP FRAMEWORK

Example Community Partner Members

1. Bend Chamber of Commerce
2. Economic Development of Central Oregon
3. Oregon State University - Cascades
4. Central Oregon Community College
5. East Cascade Works
6. Central Oregon Building Association
7. Cascade East Transit
8. Visit Bend
9. Bend Economic Development Advisory Board Member
10. Core Area Advisory Board Member
11. Redmond Regional Airport
12. Central Oregon Innovation Hub
13. Industry Representative
14. Industry Representative
15. Industry Representative
16. Small Business Owner
17. Small Business Owner
18. Area Worker
19. Area Worker
20. Area Worker



FOCUS GROUP BREAKDOWN

FOCUS GROUP SESSION 1:

Who We Are and What Do We Bring?

To cultivate a strong base and foundation for the Bend EDSP, the first round of focus groups will identify Bend's (and Central Oregon's) *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints*. This analysis will be held prior to the presentation and discussion of current demographic and economic data in order to understand current perceptions of focus group members and how those views affect current economic development efforts.

The session will allow the opportunity “to dream big” for what they want Bend to be within the next decade. This round will allow for the draft development of a plan vision, mission, and values.

DATE: JUNE 10, 2025 at 5:00 PM

FOCUS GROUP SESSION 2:

Where Are We Going and What Do We Want To Be?

To build off the foundational work of round 1, the second round will center on developing core principles, values, mission, and vision for the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Unlike Round 1 of “dreaming big,” this session will focus on integrating realities with those aspirations. Foundational data will be presented during conversations about identified plan elements.

DATE: JULY 10, 2025 at 5:00 PM

FOCUS GROUP SESSION 3

How Do We Get There?

With the core principles, values and vision drafted, the third round will propose key areas of focus, strategies, and objectives for consideration. These action items will take into account staff capacity, funding availability, implementation structure, and roles and responsibilities of community partners.

DATE: AUGUST 28, 2025 at 5:00 PM



BROAD PUBLIC ENAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The development of the Bend Economic Development Strategy Plan will also incorporate broader community collaboration and input. While key stakeholders can provide valuable information in specific areas of expertise or profession, often key feedback may be missed. Providing opportunities for all residents and workers in Bend will be pivotal in the development of this Plan. Utilizing the 2023-2025 Goal “Accessible and Effective Government” following are examples that could be included in the development of this strategy.

- Local Bank Consortium Lunch
- Cultivate Bend
- Bend Outdoor Worx
- Local Business CEO Roundtable
- Online Open House
- Business Owner Survey
- Worker Survey

PROPOSED DATE: July-August



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

To cultivate an uplifting narrative around the development of an economic development strategy, it is suggested that a campaign for this process be created. The campaign will consist of a *purpose, goal, slogan, and unique logo* consistent with existing City of Bend Branding Guidelines and Standards.

LOGO



Campaign

Invest Bend

SLOGAN

A City of Bend Project for Community Prosperity

PURPOSE

The *Invest Bend* campaign will be a one-year effort to strategically plan the economic development and urban renewal policies and investments for the City of Bend for the next 10 years.

GOAL

To identify objectives that cultivate stable, long-lasting, and equitable opportunities for upward economic mobility, for all who reside in Bend.



STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Economic Development Strategic Plan will be developed in close collaboration with the City of Bend staff and the Bend City Council. The Development Team will consist of Council and Community Champions, the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board, and City Staff.

City Council Champion

Bend Urban Renewal Agency Champion

The Council and BURA *Champions* should bring spirited advocacy for internal and cross-elected official collaboration. These individuals should be interested in economic development policies and investments. The *Champions* should have, or have the ability to, create and maintain strong business relationships, understand the value of the project, can effectively communicate the position of the City, and be able to participate in all levels of project development.

Council: Megan Perkins, Mayor Pro-Tem and BEDAB Council Liaison

BURA: Mike Riley, Chair of the Bend Urban Renewal Agency

Community Champions

Community Champions should have the capacity to be the “main street face” of the economic development campaign. These individuals have good relations with businesses, workforce, and place-making stakeholders and partners. These Champions should be eager and willing to facilitate focus group discussions, draft and implement community surveys, and engage in broader stakeholder relations. (*Identify Three*)

Main Advisory Board – Bend Economic Development Advisory Board

The role of the *main advisory board* is to provide non-binding strategic advice during plan development, assist in making informed decisions about project direction and information, identify new opportunities for engagement, provide feedback on draft documents, and recommend final product to the Bend City Council

Project Managers

The project managers will have the responsibility of planning, developing and executing the development of the Economic Strategic Plan.

- a. Cyrus Mooney, *Economic Development*
- b. Jonathan Taylor, *Urban Renewal*

Project Team

The Project team will have the responsibility of providing continue feedback on information gleaned and developed in the process of the formation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Cassie Lacy
Cate Schneider
Matt Stuart
Kerri Bell

Damian Syrnyk
Carrie Karl



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



PROJECT COST

A typical economic development strategy that includes data research, extensive community facilitation, and document development costs between \$100,000 and \$150,000. This does not include time or resources spent by staff, advisory bodies, facility rentals, and community stakeholder relations. Including these cost items, economic development strategy efforts could range over \$250,000.

Product/Deliverable	Estimated Cost
Industry Cluster Analysis	\$12,500
Labor Market Analysis	\$12,500
Focus Group Round 1 – Facilities, Food	\$5,000
Focus Group Round 2 - Facilities, Food	\$5,000
Focus Group Round 3 - Facilities, Food	\$5,000
Community Engagement	\$5,000
Document Preparation	\$1,000
ESTIMATED TOTAL	\$46,000

With a cost deviation of \$10,000, this proposal will save the City a minimum \$60,000 and maximum \$110,000. Staff will work to keep costs at or below the proposed total of **\$46,000**.

Cost Break Down

Juniper Ridge: \$13,000
Core Area \$13,000
Murphy Crossing: \$13,000

Economic Development: \$7,000

