

# **CITY OF BEND**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

A strategic plan to implement a forward-looking, directed economic development program for the City of Bend

DRAFT

**Bend –**

## **Where Businesses, their Employees and the Community Thrive**

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## INTRODUCTION

Guided by the Bend City Council's Economic Prosperity Goal, the city is developing a comprehensive economic development program purposed to make Bend a great place to do business and of opportunity, where everyone can prosper. The program will be run by a newly formed department, and in coordination with internal City leadership and inter-departmental teams whose areas intersect economic development goals.

To guide the department's work, this Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) will provide goals, strategies and metrics to build productive and supportive relations with Bend's businesses, deploy strategies to keep Bend's economy durable and innovative, provide a plan for developing Bend's urban renewal areas, and ensure there are opportunities for mobility and generational wealth for all Bend residents.

Bend is recognized as one of the fastest growing small metropolitan areas in the country. The city is noted for its high quality of life, outdoor recreation, and scenic environment, attracting businesses and employees alike. Bend is the largest city in the Central Oregon region and has a population exceeding 100,000 and a workforce of over 60,000. The local economy includes diverse industries such as aerospace, brewing and specialty beverages, bio and health sciences, value-added manufacturing, and outdoor products and recreation. Educational institutions include the Bend-La Pine School District, Central Oregon Community College and Oregon State University-Cascades. This robust education system supports workforce development, business innovation, and economic growth.

Despite significant opportunities, Bend, the Central Oregon region and the State of Oregon face barriers to sustained and accessible economic growth. Challenges include strained housing production and affordability, with rising median home prices making Bend one of the least affordable cities in the United States relative to local wages. Increasing threats from wildfires and prolonged droughts are reducing snowpack, jeopardizing regional forests, water resources, recreation and tourism.

These factors, along with other statewide challenges to business, including high business tax, long permitting timelines and increased regulation have hampered Bend and the state's ability to attract and retain business.

While no strategic plan can fully anticipate or prevent unforeseen disruptions, engaging the community in meaningful dialogue through the EDSP process promotes greater economic alignment, improved collaboration, and enhanced adaptability among public and private sector leaders.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Building an Economy Where Businesses, their Employees and the Community Thrive**

With a focus on business retention and growth with targeted recruitment, Bend's Economic Development Strategic Plan includes five goals to frame its work. The development of the plan included robust input from stakeholder and subject matter experts and peer-city insights. These stakeholders provided a vision and guidelines for the plan, along with specific recommendations for strategies to retain, grow and attract business in Bend, and provide pathways to prosperity for all. Also included is the formation of the new economic development department and staffing plan, internal cross-departmental team development, data and trend tracking.

## Inclusive Feedback

The development of the EDSP was vetted by focus groups, representing a diverse range of industries and businesses. Additionally, nearly 100 interviews with the Bend business community were conducted, and approximately 180 businesses were engaged through surveys. A second survey of Bend area employees was conducted to collect workforce information. All these touchpoints helped form the foundation and direction of the economic development program strategies.

## Program Goals & Strategies

**Aligning with Council Goals, the economic development work plan includes five program areas:**

- Retain & grow businesses while recruiting target industries for the future
- Build resiliency into Bend businesses and neighborhoods
- Create inclusive prosperity & access to quality jobs
- Plan for a thriving economy and community of the future
- Leverage and grow urban renewal and investment

Each goal includes specific strategies and metrics to monitor trends and the success of the city's program.

### Staffing

The new economic development team will be built around the deliverables in the five program goals. Staff will focus on small business support, business retention and growth, recruiting targeted industry sectors, and leveraging and creating new development for the urban renewal areas. This will be accomplished by merging BURA staff into Economic Development, along with collaboration with other city staff members and teams to deliver internal coordination and support. One new hire will occur in a contracted agreement with Economic Development Central Oregon (EDCO). This will be an FTE co-located at the City of Bend and EDCO, who will focus on business retention, recruitment and BURA development. An additional hire will likely occur at the end of FY2026 to aid BURA in marketing and delivery.

To support the City's economic development team and ensure well-informed implementation of the EDSP strategies, an internal policy team was formed to provide support and a platform to vet strategies and align with council goals. Economic development staff is fully integrated into City planning, operations and delivery.

### Tracking Trends & Planning for the Next Biennium

This work plan and corresponding strategies comprise the City's 2025-27 Economic Development program budget. Strategies are focused on a five-year horizon and will be updated each biennium. The program will be monitored and adjusted as needed to prepare for the 2027-29 Biennium and beyond. Data trends for economic indicators, labor, housing and more will be tracked to identify trends, inform strategies and monitor success.

## Stakeholder Feedback & Guidance

This section includes the vision, goals and guiding principles garnered from the stakeholder outreach effort to help form the focus and direction of the EDSP. The initial discovery phase focused on data collection and analysis, drawing from a variety of sources. Plan development was also informed by individual and group conversations, surveys, and targeted stakeholder interviews to better understand the needs of business and the City's opportunities and challenges.

The community vision process included multiple forums to bring together a diverse group of voices to define what economic prosperity means for the region's future for the economy and its residents, and strategies to achieve it. To broaden feedback, business and employee surveys were conducted to integrate broader business and workforce perspectives on Bend's economy, City services and strategies to ensure Bend is a place where business and their employees thrive.

### **Vision**

Bend is a leading competitive economic center and best place to do business in the country, with inclusive access to economic opportunities for all.

### **Goals**

Based on council goals, economic analysis and deep engagement with key stakeholders, the strategy identifies five goals to achieve that vision:

- Increase business retention and growth while recruiting target industries for the future
- Build resiliency into Bend businesses and neighborhoods
- Create inclusive prosperity & access to quality jobs
- Plan for a thriving economy and community of the future
- Leverage and grow urban renewal and investment

### **Guiding Principles**

Input from the EDSP Focus Group and stakeholders culminated in the following guiding principles to support Council goals and help shape the plan's strategies:

- **Inclusive economic growth** that prioritizes targeted economic and community investments designed to generate measurable opportunities for all residents and workers.

- **Customer service** that centers decision-making on the needs and experiences of city businesses to ensure responsiveness, transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in all interactions.
- **Adaptable and innovative** approaches that ensure that policies and investments remain responsive to evolving business needs, market conditions, and community priorities.
- **Accountable and Transparent** actions that ensure openness in decisions and operations, clear responsibilities, and accessible information for residents and stakeholders.

## Inclusive Plan Development

The plan development process was inclusive and outwardly focused on informing a plan that is responsive, anticipatory and supportive of Bend's growing business and workforce needs.

## Outreach Components (Figure 1.)



## Population, Labor, Earnings & Housing Data

As part of the strategy development process, the City of Bend conducted a comprehensive analysis of economic and social conditions affecting local prosperity and competitiveness. Data sources included the United States Census Bureau, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Oregon Employment Department, Implan, CoStar, and Lightcast. The resulting dataset summarizes recent trends and patterns. These findings informed the SWOT Analysis, the 2025 State of Housing and Economy Reports, and the strategies outlined in the Action Plan. A summary of key findings is provided below, with the full reports provided in the appendices.

## Peer City Learnings

Several peer cities were explored to compare strategies, identify successful programs and inform the formation of the EDSP and the Economic Development Department. Some examples of these findings, including programs for business retention and attraction, supporting entrepreneurs, and cultivating urban redevelopment, core commercial areas and neighborhoods.

Additionally, the economic development team conducted three site visits with peer city economic development departments, including Vancouver, Washington, Beaverton, Oregon and Gresham, Oregon. Each

city had overlapping goals with a variety of approaches to business retention and attraction, urban development and workforce development.

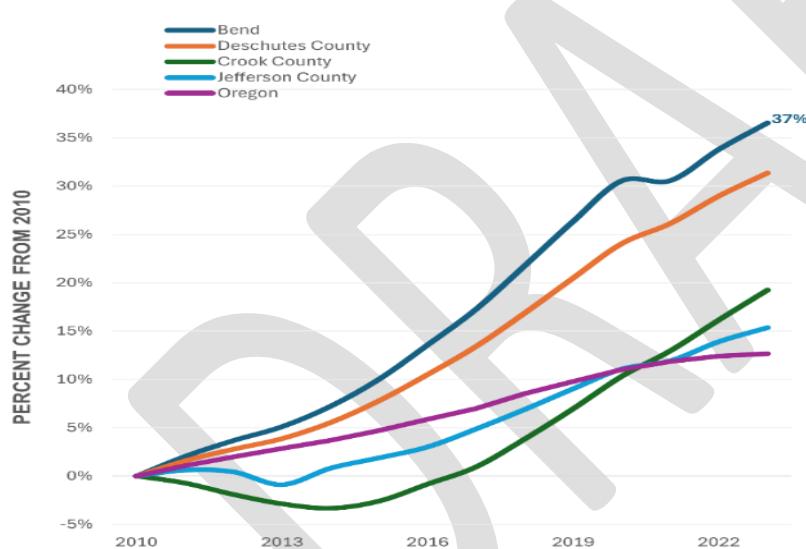
## DATA SUMMARY

The following are excerpts from the full economic and housing reports provided in the appendices.

### Key Findings:

#### Bend and Central Oregon are the Population Growth Engine of Oregon

Over the past two decades, Bend has solidified its position as Central Oregon's most populous city, with an estimated 2024 population of 104,089. Since 2010, the city has grown at an average annual rate of 2.5%, underscoring its enduring appeal and adaptability.



#### Bend's Economy Is One of The Fastest Growing in Oregon

In 2023, the Bend Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), including Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties had about 267,000 residents, reflecting steady growth and rising regional importance. The area's gross domestic product reached \$15.25 billion in 2023, a 41% nominal increase since 2019. This growth makes the Bend MSA one of Oregon's fastest-growing regions. Bend contributed \$11.2 billion, or 74%, of the metro area's total economic output.

Bend continues to experience a substantial trade deficit in goods and services. In 2023, the city recorded a \$2.5 billion imbalance, with \$7.9 billion in exports and \$10.5 billion in imports. Despite persistent trade deficits, Bend's export totals have increased by 18% over the past five years.

## **Business Investments High & Healthcare Remains Largest Employment Sector**

Despite broader and changing economic challenges, Bend continued to attract capital investment, supported by a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, a high quality of life, and a growing population that sustains diverse industries. In 2024, commercial and industrial investments reached \$93.7 million, the second largest on record, totaling nearly \$500 million since 2019.

New business formation in Bend has seen a notable increase in high-propensity business applications and corporate filings since 2019. Since the pre-pandemic period, new business formations have increased by 50%, with a 10% rise between 2022 and 2023.

Business closures decreased by 62%, from 618 in 2019 to 232 in 2023. During the peak of the pandemic, 945 businesses closed, a 90% increase over the previous year. Despite these challenges, Bend has consistently experienced net positive business formation annually since 2016.

Healthcare remains the largest employment sector in Bend, accounting for over 12,400 jobs in 2023, or more than 20% of total employment. Retail, accommodation, food services, and entertainment are also major employment sectors.



## Real Estate Markets Hold Steady, Remote Work Surges, & Commuting Patterns Shift

In 2024, Bend's average vacancy rates remained below the healthy benchmark of 5%, at 3.2%. This was primarily due to low vacancies in industrial and flex spaces (2.4%) and retail properties (4.1%).

Remote work, boosted by the pandemic and technology, has changed the national commercial real estate market, dropping demand for traditional office space. In 2024, about 25% of Bend's workforce was fully remote, and office vacancies averaged 5.7%.

Bend's workforce has shifted to commuting from outside communities. Approximately 52% of Bend's workforce commutes into the city, an increase from 47% in 2019. Nearly 29% of commuters originate from Central Oregon, while 22% travel from Portland.

## Labor Force Participation Remains Stable & Education Attainment Grows

Bend's labor force participation rate has increased steadily since 2018, peaking at 68.1% in 2022, but participation declined slightly to 67.9% in 2023. Bend's labor force participation remains significantly higher than state and national averages.

The Bend MSA unemployment rate increased from 4.2% in December 2023 to 4.34% in December 2024. Since 2022, the area's average unemployment rate has been 4.09%, marginally lower than the national average of 4.34% but slightly higher than Oregon's average of 3.95%.

Bend has a highly educated populace with 56% having a bachelor's degree or higher – substantially higher than Oregon (38%) and the nation (15%).

## **Incomes Grow but Disparities Continue**

Bend's median household income increased by \$23,130 (35%) between 2019 and 2023. Median income levels for both homeowners and renters have also grown since 2019. The median homeowner income was \$109,136 in 2023, \$28,351 more than in 2019. In comparison, renters saw their household income increase by \$18,193 (38%), lagging behind homeowners.

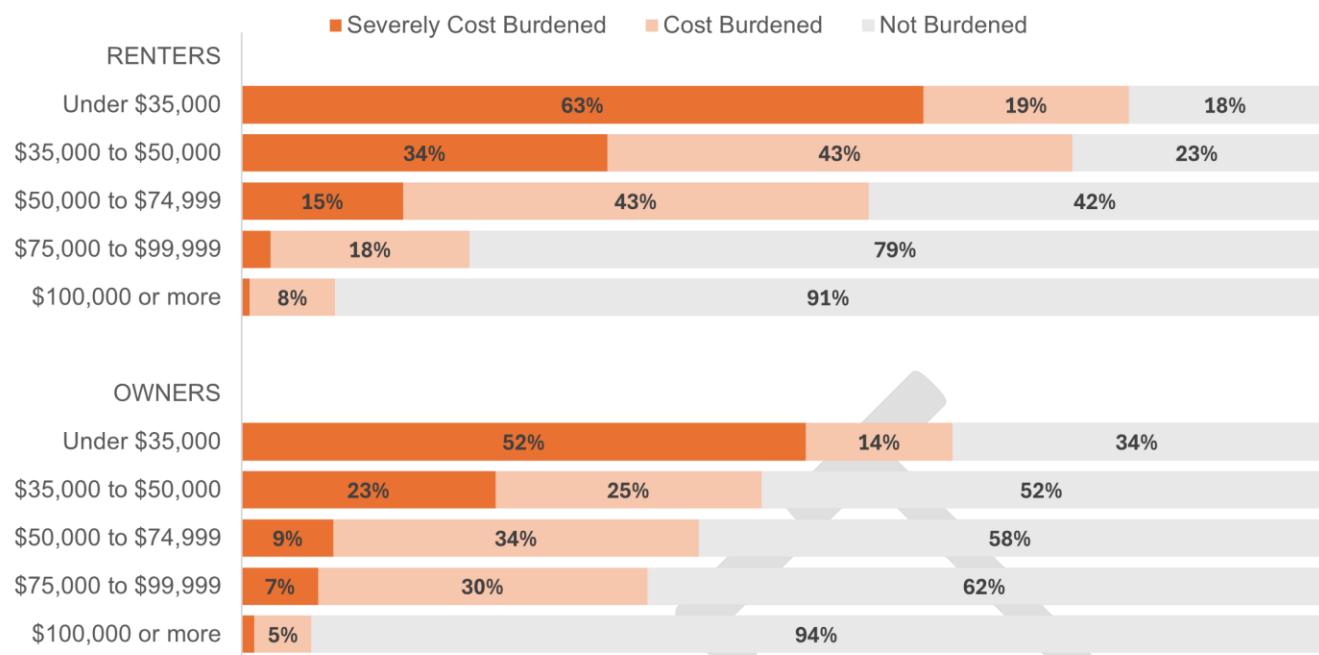
Although median household income increased by 35%, most of this growth is attributable to households earning \$100,000 or more. The number of households earning \$200,000 or more increased by 154% since 2019, while those earning between \$150,000 and \$199,999 grew by 53%.

Bend's income disparity has risen steadily between the top 5% and the lower 80% of households. In 2023, the lower 80% of households earned, on average, \$76,400 and accounted for 48% of the total income earned among all households. The top 5% earned eight times more, averaging \$608,000, and accounted for 24% of total income.

## **Housing Affordability Needed to Retain & Attract New Businesses & Talent**

The high cost of living, especially in housing, is an increasing concern for employers and employees. As housing prices rise more rapidly than wages, many workers are compelled to relocate or commute long distances, exacerbating labor market constraints.

In 2024, the typical home sales price in Bend's 13 neighborhood districts was \$848,000, and the median rent exceeded \$1,800. Over one-third of households in Bend are cost-burdened, with 47% of renters and 25% of homeowners spending more than 30% of their income on housing.



## Business Cost Burden is Also High

A significant challenge for Oregon businesses is the high cost of operations. The state consistently ranks among the highest nationally for overall tax burden. According to Oregon Business & Industries Oregon's tax burden is ranked second highest in the U.S., with Oregon's state business taxes increased by \$3.4 billion – 77 percent – between 2019 and 2023. \* Local business owners frequently cite increasing property taxes, fees, and the corporate activity tax as primary concerns.

\*Oregon Business & Industry Education Foundation

## Priority Industry Sector Analysis Overview

Based on an analysis conducted by Eco Northwest, including quantitative, qualitative, and strategic factors, four sectors were identified as priority clusters for business development. These sectors have a strong presence in Bend, Central Oregon, and the state, and demonstrate significant growth potential. Industries within these sectors include traded-sector businesses and other key enterprises. The full report is included in the appendices.

1. Craft Beverages & Specialty Products
2. Value-Added Manufacturing
3. Bio & Health Sciences
4. Outdoor Lifestyle and Products

## Economic Plan Assumptions

Based on data analysis and stakeholder input, the following assumptions help inform the City's economic development plan. These assumptions incorporate the above data and analysis, along with stakeholder guidance. As the economy is a dynamic force, fluctuations will occur that are beyond our control, but with planning, monitoring data and economic strategies we can navigate these fluctuations.

### **Retaining & Growing Businesses –**

As Bend and Central Oregon have been top job generating performers in the state for several years, there is a need to focus on retention and competitive value to retain this status. Land constraints, labor, infrastructure, distribution network needs, and rising land costs are impacting Bend's ability to attract and grow businesses. The City's economic program will include a small business retention strategy to ensure our city is welcoming to all, and the best place to start and grow a business.

### **Housing affordability & Availability is Key to a Thriving City and Economy –**

Another assumption is that our housing shortage will continue for the foreseeable future to ensure there is housing availability and affordability for everyone. The city has several initiatives toward meeting state housing production goals. Housing, affordability and a path to wage growth are connected and will continue to be a focus for Bend's economic program.

### **The Regional Economy –**

The Central Oregon Region is connected and interrelated. Each city showcases strengths and assets that contribute to a collective opportunity to retain, grow and attract business and economic activity. Combining our strengths and focus on attaining funding for infrastructure, workforce development, transportation and a stronger commercial and industrial base benefits us all as the fastest growing region in the state.

### **Focusing on Target Industries for revenue, high-value jobs and wage mobility –**

Emerging industry growth continues in health and bio sciences, outdoor product development, specialty food and beverages, and value-added manufacturing, also attracting an array of support businesses. Along with these target sectors, Bend's professional services, recreation and a myriad of other sectors will require labor and growth opportunities.

### **Leveraging Urban Renewal –**

Urban renewal areas will continue to be a focus of investment and activity in generating housing, commercial and industrial growth. The performance of some of these areas has been uneven and will require an outcome-based investment strategy, including infrastructure and development investment from the City.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS & STRATEGIES**

### **GOAL 1 –**

# Increase business retention and growth while recruiting target industries for the future while recruiting target industries for the future

## Opportunity –

The city of Bend becomes known as a city of opportunity, where business is welcomed and supported, where innovation and creativity create new levels of opportunity. Businesses move to Bend because they know they will want to stay.

## Stakeholder feedback on this goal:

- Continue improving permitting, engineering, planning interactions with City
- Land and lease costs are high in Bend, and availability limited
- Supply chain is challenging and expensive
- Cost of doing business is high and continues to increase
- Labor supply for certain sectors is low and skill set requirements are changing
- Housing prices are high and there is not enough inventory – workforce is living elsewhere and commuting to Bend
- Childcare is unavailable or too expensive

## Business Voices:

“A severe lack of knowledgeable tradesmen. As the current generation of skilled workers retires, some will close their businesses. There are fewer and fewer young folks entering the trades which will have a dire impact on construction. I hear this consistently throughout our industry.”

“We need more housing affordability to attract quality workers. Working with the schools and colleges to enlighten young ones that the building trades are a viable option for a career needs to be done at a broader scale.”

“The permitting process has improved but still needs to make strides. Delays in the workflow on top of the high cost of land creates real problems when we don’t have any reasonable predictability in when we will be able to occupy the site and open for business.”

## Metrics:

- Net business loss/gain in Bend
- Unemployment statistics
- Lease occupancy and sales data
- Housing prices in Bend and surrounding cities
- Tariff increases/impacts on area businesses (survey)
- Tax & fee costs (Oregon Business & Industries)
- GDP for Bend and the Central Oregon MPA
- Small business grant awards & longevity of recipients
- Business retention/longevity

## Work Plan Elements:

- Business retention & growth
- Business recruitment
- Startup & entrepreneur support
- Business services – planning, developing, permitting
- Neighborhood/small scale commercial integration (short term)
- BEDAB Work Plan
- Economic development policy
- Business communications

**Strategies:**

- Business Retention & Growth
  - Develop and implement a business retention and small business support program centered on building relationships, removing obstacles and providing information and connection to resources that enable businesses to remain and grow in Bend
  - Develop and deploy a pilot small business grants targeted toward businesses with intent to remain and grow in Bend
  - Assist businesses in identifying and applying for grants and state/federal funding programs. Work with Business Oregon and other partners to identify and pursue applicable incentives, grants and other assistance
  - Work in collaboration with EDCO to hire a co-located recruitment and growth FTE. This will enable the City and EDCO to work together to build business relations and identify businesses in distress, who are being courted by other states, or require expertise and resources to expand
  - Continue to streamline permitting and other processes that intersect with City government
  - Assist employers in finding resources for employees seeking childcare and advocate for childcare at the state level. Economic Development Officer will continue to serve on the Oregon Early Learning Council through 2027 when her term ends
  - Hold industry roundtables to match needs of specific sectors with strategies to retain and grow sector strength and depth
  - Identify tools and initiatives that assist in operations, supply chain, investment and workforce development
  - Coordinate priority infrastructure needs with partners and city departments to support business growth and freight mobility
  - Align the City's EDSP with state economic development strategies
  - Identify and pursue funding for key industry business retention and growth
  - Assist in supporting Enterprise Zone refinement to better serve businesses, increase applications, and track use and outcomes
  - Build opportunities for business growth from start up to middle/growing concern
  - Form key industry sector focus groups for input on retention and growth
  - Collaborate with OSU-Cascades, COCC, East Cascade Works and other on workforce development & research
  - Participate in regional discussions of a potential port and other mutually beneficial structures and initiatives
  - Increase customer service & business relations
  - Provide deliverables and expedition of preparing, funding and troubleshooting for businesses with major planning and expansion projects

- Recruitment
  - Focus on recruitment of priority traded-sector businesses.
  - Satellite location recruitment – identify companies looking to locate satellites where labor force preference, research, production and other operational functions can be carried out remotely from company headquarters.
  - Recruit supporting industries to Bend's priority industry clusters.
  - Through a co-located FTE, work closely with EDCO to develop relationships with potential new businesses, and leverage EDCO recruitment software & methods to identify and solicit new business to Bend.
  - Identify niche industry clusters (i.e. satellite business for larger target industries)
  - Explore Opportunity Zone deployment in OZ areas for business and community asset location
  - As with business retention and growth, pursue use of Enterprise Zone employment waiver for companies planning to relocate or grow.
- Startup and entrepreneur support & acceleration
  - Work with EDCO as the Regional Innovation Hub to support entrepreneurs in the traded sector
  - Support non-traded sector entrepreneurs through business retention strategies
  - Explore potential assistance to startup and entrepreneurial interests with an inclusionary lens
- Business services & permitting
  - City Community Development will monitor progress on permit times and responsiveness
  - Ensure businesses feel welcome and experience high customer service when interacting with the City when opening, building, expanding and operating in the City of Bend
  - Identify customer service expertise to improve external perception to all businesses interacting with the City
  - Provide assistance to businesses and developers navigating through city processes
- Neighborhood micro commercial integration – (short term)
  - Clarify legislation that solidifies requirements for neighborhood commercial in master planned areas
  - Conduct a study of micro/neighborhood business viability beginning with BURA, then extending to the entire city
- BEDAB
  - Update BEDAB code
  - Develop workplan based on Economic Development Strategy
- Policy
  - Monitor State of Oregon regulatory climate and policy changes impacting businesses and employees
  - Pursue economic development policies that support business retention and growth
  - Explore potential economic development initiatives that will benefit development in Bend and the region, including a potential port district and associated freight, economic and trade benefits

- Communications
  - Update the economic development and BURA webpage and develop/improve economic & business communications tools.

## **GOAL 2 –**

### **Build Resiliency into Bend Businesses and Neighborhoods**

#### **Opportunity –**

Bend is known as prepared and secure in addressing natural disasters and economic challenges, changes in foundational factors of how we do business, and as having a future-ready workforce.

#### **Stakeholder feedback on this goal:**

- Develop a wildfire and natural disaster plan for businesses to cope with these events
- Develop resources to help businesses prepare for and survive economic fluctuations and downturns
- Help identify and prepare businesses and the local workforce for changes in skills needed for the future, and for the changing landscape being caused by AI and automation

#### **Business Voices:**

“AI, speed and analysis, intellectual efficiencies, tariffs, aging workforce, increased healthcare costs are all direct impacts to our business, we need more alignment in how to prepare as a region.”

“The food industry is changing shape. Fewer staff, same output. Something has to give with the food and beverage industry, because we want to keep servicing our community and keeping our staff employed.”

“Outdoor products could one day be completely gone in Bend if we don’t plan accordingly. There are more and more pain points in distribution and continued challenges in workforce. Freight and distribution constraints require us to ship through the Port of Portland, increasing time and cost. 19% tariffs are anticipated to increase our costs by over \$1M.”

#### **Metrics:**

- Unemployment statistics from the state by sector or job type
- Visitor/recreation annual visits, and impacted visits and revenue from smoke – Visit Bend
- Number of smoke and adverse weather and winter recreation snow days per season

#### **Work Plan Elements:**

- Economic Resilience Plan in collaboration with partners
- Disaster resilience planning led by City and County experts
- Workforce planning in partnership with East Cascades works, higher education and business outreach
- Understanding impacts of AI & automation on industries/labor

#### **Strategies:**

- Leverage partnerships for economic resilience and navigating workforce changes
  - In collaboration with partners, develop communications and resources and information to prepare for and survive economic downturns

- Natural disaster preparedness
  - Working with City and County emergency preparedness teams, include information and resources protection and recovery procedures for businesses and their employees
  - Add insights into natural disaster planning to include potential resilience Hubs, and energy redundancy & backup planning for business
- Prepare for changes in the workforce
  - In collaboration with partners, conduct an industry sector analysis to identify potential impacts of AI, automation and attrition in trades
  - Based on the workforce assessment for AI, automation, identify trends in industry sectors and labor skills that may impact Bend and Central Oregon
  - Work with partners who will develop training, information and resources for employers and employees to prepare for changes in skill requirements and growing professions due to AI/automation
  - Support the work of partners in recruiting and developing training for a depleted trades workforce

## **GOAL 3 –**

### **Inclusive Prosperity & Access to Quality Jobs**

#### **Opportunity –**

Bend is a place where anyone finds an affordable place to live, and a job, allowing them to live here comfortably. It is a city that nurtures a broad spectrum of opportunities and pathways to wealth-building and upward mobility. Bend is where a healthy diversity of businesses and employment opportunities thrive, along with the community who lives here.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback:**

- Affordability of Bend continues to decrease due to the cost of living
- Housing costs are too high for many to both live and work in Bend
- The wage gap between certain industry sectors and job market entry is increasing, with a need to identify career pathways to quality jobs and wage growth
- Access to city procurement needs to be more accessible to small and minority-owned businesses
- Under-represented and small businesses need access to expertise and capital

#### **Business Voices:**

“What our business needs support from the City of Bend with is access to workforce/affordable housing, mitigating taxes when possible, and options for more flexible zoning to encourage new development. As it stands, none of these things are being accomplished from my perspective in the business community.”

“I don’t even know where to get started in contracting with the City. It seems like larger prime contractors don’t have any reason to hire local subs, having more intentional coordination could help in keeping money in our community and bolstering our trades workforce.”

**Metrics:**

- Employment data by industry sector/wage categories
- Housing and rent cost burden analysis
- GINI index
- Procurement award data
- Minority-owned business data – City business licenses and Milken Institute Report

**Work Plan Elements:**

- Workforce housing delivery
- Supporting small and underrepresented businesses
- City procurement inclusion/accessibility to small and underrepresented businesses
- Supporting upward mobility for the workforce
- Commuter transportation availability/affordability (CET, City, MPO)

**Strategies:**

- Workforce housing delivery
  - Affordable & Mid-market programs to build more attainable housing – both rental and ownership
  - Work with the City's housing team to communicate ADU pre-approval to streamline construction to create more attainable housing for the workforce
  - Work with the housing team on the HOME committee work on identifying potential financial methods of increasing housing supply
  - Work with housing developers and City staff to streamline housing construction
- Supporting small businesses
  - Also a retention and growth strategy, small business grants can support nascent and under-represented business owners
  - With City partners, develop and support programs that form pathways for skill development and wage growth in the trades and targeted sectors where labor is needed
- Inclusionary city procurement
  - Partner with Professional Business Development Group to assist under-represented businesses in preparing for and navigating the City (and other public agency) procurement process to increase contract awards to this group of businesses
- Pathways to upward mobility in the workforce
  - Working with partners, identify emerging skills development to transition the labor force to meet changing needs
- Commuter transportation & transit programs
  - Working with CET, ODOT, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Bend area, identify commute options to either reduce transportation costs or provide alternatives to the 53 percent of the workforce who must commute to Bend to work

**GOAL 4 –****Planning for a Thriving Economy and Community of the Future****Opportunity –**

Bend is the panacea of forward-looking planning and preparation for the future. It is a city that incorporates thoughtful use of residential, commercial and industrial properties into a plan to help fund the infrastructure, connectivity and sustainability that will enable businesses and the entire community to thrive.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback:**

- There is not enough industrial and commercial land availability
- We need to start the work to extend the UGB for housing, commercial and industrial use
- The cost of infrastructure is prohibitive as we bring in new land -we need new land to be developed in a timely manner
- Long term supply chain needs - transportation

#### **Business Voices:**

“We are incredibly excited to see the City take more of a direct role in strategic planning for economic development. We need a shared vision that is specific to Bend that we can all coalesce around that addresses our challenges and opportunities.”

“There is virtually no industrial land available for the needs of my development. Even with the cost of land and construction, land availability is the most significant factor in moving a business for us.”

“For smaller companies using a shared model of transportation and distribution can work, but once you reach mid-large scale market demand we feel like we spend an exorbitant amount of resources in getting our product out of Central Oregon. This comes with unreliability depending on the season and condition of our highway system.”

#### **Metrics:**

- Regional industrial and commercial lands supply, including infrastructure assessment
- Economic inputs to Comprehensive Plan
- Housing inputs to Comprehensive Plan
- Construction & absorption rates of commercial and industrial lands

#### **Work Plan Elements:**

- Comprehensive & Growth Plan
- Regional industrial land inventory
- Neighborhood commercial development
- Transit & transportation commute programs and walkable communities

#### **Strategies:**

- Comprehensive & Growth Plan
  - Economic components incorporated into the plan, including industrial & commercial land needs identification
  - Include housing needs identification also included
- Regional industrial land inventory
  - In partnership with COIC and other regional partners, conduct a regional inventory of available/undeveloped industrial lands
  - With regional partners, explore potentially forming a Central Oregon Port entity

- Neighborhood & micro-commercial development
  - Conduct market analysis (begins with BURA and is extended) to determine market success
  - Map micro commercial across the City with help from GIS and Performance Management teams to identify where certain businesses are likely to succeed and where they are not, both in TIF areas and throughout Bend
  - Conduct a high-level review of the code to see where current rules support or limit market opportunities
  - Incorporate findings into Growth Management and the Comprehensive Plan.
- Transit & transportation commute programs and walkable communities
  - Work with COIC/CET to assess transit & community options.
  - Include the Transportation System Plan and Climate Friendly Equitable Communities (State of Oregon) into Comprehensive plan to address workforce and job center accessibility

## **GOAL 5 –**

### **Leverage & Grow Urban Renewal & Investment – Invest Bend**

#### **Opportunity –**

Bend Urban Renewal Areas will become thriving epicenters of blended development, where job centers and industry grows, and housing and community amenities are connected and accessible to all.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback:**

- Generate more TIF revenue through development
- City must stimulate development in the CORE area and BCD
  - City investments in vertical development
  - New staff (Q4 2026) to build business relations, recruit and assist with potential expansion & development projects
  - Leverage city-owned land for development
  - Complete full improvements to Franklin underpass
  - Build the Hawthorn overcrossing and landing areas for better accessibility
  - Micro-commercial assessment
- Bring more industrial property on-line at Juniper Ridge
  - Invest in infrastructure
  - Continue to recruit new industrial businesses

#### **Business Voices:**

“We need to look at a more innovative approach to incentivize job creation and wage increases. The current offerings from the state are not meeting the needs or even the business model of industries like ours (advanced manufacturing).”

“Private money follows public money. We need the Central District of Bend to be invested in from the City to meet the vision that our community has expressed we want to see happen as soon as possible.”

#### **Metrics:**

- TIF annual & projected revenue
- Redevelopment activity (projects and acreage) from City and private sector

- City infrastructure project completion
- Business retention & attraction

#### **Work Plan Elements:**

- Investment strategy
- Location & highest/best use analysis (city hall, events venue, housing, etc.)
- Infrastructure construction (Hawthorn overcrossing, Franklin undercrossing, etc.)
- P3 projects – vertical buildings
- Community-centered development

#### **Strategies:**

- Invest Bend – BURA's investment strategy
  - Develop and implement strategies for each of Bend's three urban renewal areas
  - Identify potential properties for investment by the City
  - Identify subject experts to provide feedback on BURA investment strategies and work with representatives from BEDAB, CAAB and potentially Transportation Bond Advisory Committee (TBOC)
- Site location analysis for Bend's City Hall, determine highest/best use of City properties
  - Working with the real estate team, conclude a highest/best use study of City properties, prepare an analysis of City Hall investment and recommendations for development of City properties within the Central District and downtown.
  - Conduct a micro-commercial analysis to determine feasible locations and businesses likely to succeed
- Work with City teams on delivering infrastructure projects to enable development, mobility and capacity in urban redevelopment areas.
  - Complete Franklin undercrossing
  - Design and construct the Hawthorn multi modal bridge
- Deploy Core Area small business assistance loans
- Identify potential community centered development & collaboration with partners (Visit Bend, BPRD, etc.)
  - Participate in Visit Bend's public event/assembly feasibility study
- Develop priority outcomes for BURA P3's & investments
  - Leverage BURA infrastructure and vertical investments to generate activity, revenue and private investment.
  - Develop relationships with businesses interested in BURA areas to determine potential expansion and new investment.