



Planning Commission Minutes

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

November 12, 2024

REGULAR MEETING

Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Verner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street. Commissioners Perkinson and KenCairn attended the meeting via Zoom. Chair Verner congratulated Commission Knauer on being elected to City Council. Commissioner Knauer thanked the Commission and expressed appreciation for the knowledge and experience he gained while serving on it.

Commissioners Present:

Lisa Verner
Kerry KenCairn
Eric Herron
Russell Phillips
Susan MacCracken Jain
Gregory Perkinson
Doug Knauer

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director
Derek Severson, Planning Manager
Veronica Allen, Associate Planner
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant

Absent Members:

Council Liaison:

Paula Hyatt

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Staff Announcements:

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman made the following announcements:

- He thanked the Commission and the Housing Authority of Jackson County for the rewarding experience of the annual Planning Commission retreat which took place on November 7, 2024.
- The November 26, 2024 Study Session was cancelled and he inquired if the December 24 Study Session should likewise be cancelled.
- The December 10, 2024 Regular Meeting will review the third phase of the Kestrel Park subdivision.
- The City Council will hold its annual appreciation event and annual updates for all City Commissions and Committees. All members of these volunteer groups are invited to attend.

2. Advisory Committee Liaison Reports – None





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III. **PUBLIC FORUM** – None

IV. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. **Approval of Findings for PA-TI-2024-00245, 329 Granite Street**

Commissioners/Phillips/Knauer m/s to approve the findings as proposed. Commissioner KenCairn abstained from the vote due to her past involvement with the project. Roll Call Vote: All AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

V. **OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Economic Opportunities Analysis Public Engagement Plan**

Mr. Goldman acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the work that one of the City's Associate Planners, Veronica Allen, did on this project. He introduced Kourtney Cena and Elliot Weiss of Community Attributes Inc (CAI), who worked as consultants on this project and were attending the meeting via Zoom in order to present the team's findings. He noted that the consultant team and the City's Economic Development Specialist, Jordan Rooklyn, were able to tour various sites around the Rogue Valley to examine their economic development and also reviewed employment data focusing on employment needs of particular groups and on centers with greater employment opportunities.

Mr. Weiss stated that this meeting would focus on community engagement, particularly major employers and community members, and provided the following overview and timeline of the Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA):

- Ongoing – Project Kickoff
- Aug-Nov – Inclusive Outreach Plan
- Sept-Jan – Ashland/Medford Joint Analysis – National, State & Regional
- Oct-Feb – Ashland Community Outreach, Goals and Strategies
- Sept-Nov – Industrial and Commercial Buildable Lands Inventory
- Oct-Feb – Ashland Local EOA with Equity Considerations
- Mar-Apr – Comprehensive Plan Update to Goals, Policies, or Actions
- Mar-May – Final EOA Document Deliverable
- Jan-Mar – Equity and Inclusion Self-Assessment

Mr. Weiss stated that an EOA is a technical study that compares a city's land needs for industrial and





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other employment uses to the existing supply of such land, and can help communities implement their local economic development objectives and forms the basis for industrial and other employment development policies in the comprehensive plan (see attachment #1). Mr. Weiss emphasized the importance of coordination between the consultants, the Commission, and City staff to ensure the optimization of public engagement activities, adding that the EOA was being done in conjunction with the City of Medford. He added that the priority populations for such outreach should represent geographic diversity across the City, while other groups could include the following:

- Migrant, foreign born, and non-citizen communities
- Communities of color, including Ashland's Hispanic community
- Seniors
- Differently-abled community
- Young people
- Workers with high school degree or less
- Veterans

Mr. Weiss stated that the planned outreach projects included the following: discussions with focus groups; interviews with key stakeholders; public hearings with the Commission and Council; business and resident surveys; and a studio/pop-up event to allow widespread public participation. He then offered the following questions to help guide the Commission's discussion:

1. What populations, communities, or groups in Ashland should be prioritized for targeted outreach in this EOA process?
2. What other equity considerations should be front and center during the implementation of this Inclusive Outreach Plan?

Mr. Weiss concluded by offering a working draft schedule of CAI's public outreach activities:

- **October**
 - o Draft Inclusive Outreach Plan
 - o Field Work & City Tour (10/21, in-person)
- **November**
 - o Deliver CCI materials (11/5)
 - o **CCI meeting (11/12)**
 - o Determine priority populations / equity targets
 - o Launch business and resident survey
 - o Begin orientation interviews
- **December**





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- o Close business and resident survey
- **January**
 - o Begin focus groups
- **February**
 - o Studio / pop up meetings
 - o Pop-ups and focus groups (in-person)
- **March**
 - o Draft and Final Engagement Summary
 - o Final presentation (in-person)

Questions of the Consultants

Commissioners KenCairn and Perkinson emphasized the importance of including in the study those who work in Ashland but are unable to afford to live there and instead reside in Talent, Phoenix, and Medford. Commissioner Perkinson also suggested that the study utilize the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion study that was presented to the Council earlier in the year. Regarding the SOU focus group, Commissioner Perkinson recommended that CAI reach out to SOU after January and advised them to also contact the SOU student government.

Commissioner MacCracken Jain noted that several surrounding cities such as Yreka, Gold Hill, and Grants Pass have depressed economies and whose residents often commute for better work opportunities. She asked if there was a methodological imperative to focus on underrepresented populations and if there was an assumption that larger populations had already provided feedback. She also noted that the work that the Chamber of Commerce had done was not clear or how it weighed into the analysis. Mr. Weiss responded that CAI is receptive to additional forms of data gathering, such as travel data to see who commutes to the City for work. He stated that underrepresented peoples are not given preference in the analysis, but that CAI wants to ensure they are included. Mr. Goldman pointed out that the Chamber of Commerce recently conducted an Economic Diversification Study that will help inform the EOA. He added that the contract with CAI included developing the EOA, reviewing the Comprehensive Plan, and making recommendations, but not amending the Comprehensive Plan.

The Commission discussed the scale of the study and the wider economic development objectives for the City in the Rogue Valley. They emphasized the need to study the entirety of the City's population while not losing sight of small business owners, hospitality workers, and those who commute to the City for work but live elsewhere. The Commission cautioned against focusing too heavily on businesses that cater to tourists or omitting businesses stationed in Ashland but which export their services or products elsewhere. Mr. Weiss stated that the consultant team is open to all sources of data collection, but that the findings must be submitted to the Department of Land Conservation and Development (6DLCD) by June, 2025. The Commission reiterated the importance





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of contacting the SOU student government and examining the number of young, educated residents who cannot afford to live in the City.

Mr. Goldman stated that staff engages in bi-weekly meetings with the consultants to discuss the analysis, and that the scope of work includes a future Study Session with the Commission and another with the Council. He added that staff could provide additional information in the near future independent of the consultants. Chair Verner suggested that the Commission receive another update at the beginning of 2025.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEM

1. 2025 Priorities & Workplan Discussion

Mr. Goldman stated that there are some issues listed in the packet that are outside of the City's control in terms of timing, such as the Croman Mill Site and Railroad Property cleanup projects, while the City can more directly impact certain items like the Housing Production Strategy project. He added that some items like the EOA are ongoing.

Mr. Severson described how the Planning Department has experienced a higher volume of planning actions than normal, including two annexation requests and Phase III of the Kestrel Park Subdivision.

Commissioner Knauer suggested that the Manufactured Home Park Zone Ordinance be moved out of the Long-Range planning status and be completed in a more timely manner. Mr. Goldman responded that Long-Range are items that are typically completed in the near future, such as the EOA, which will be completed by June of 2025. He explained that these items are designated as Long-Range because they are subject to legal processes outside of the Planning Department's control, such as new ordinances.

Commissioner Knauer inquired why the Homeless Services Action Plan was included on the list. Mr. Goldman responded that it was included as work that City staff is currently working on, even if it may not be reviewed by the Commission.

Commissioner Herron advised caution when using the term "walkability" in regards to the Walkable Design Standards Ordinance recently introduced by the state. He advised that the term "accessibility" would be more inclusive of those who are differently-abled. He suggested that the City work closely with the Transportation Advisory Committee to improve human-powered transportation in the City. Mr. Severson responded that the state had instituted the guidelines for walkable communities, and therefore it is a specific design standard and terminology that cities must adopt.





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Commissioner MacCracken Jain noted that the description of Climate-Friendly Areas (CFAs) and its timeline had not been updated and required more specificity. Mr. Goldman responded that there would be ongoing discussions regarding CFAs and more detail would be added in the future.

Commissioner Knauer asked why the CFA overlay for the Railroad Property was larger than the area itself. Mr. Goldman responded that the overlay would also include Hersey Street since it contains redevelopment potential. He added that it would also include areas of Clear Creek Drive that have already been developed.

Commissioner Herron asked if there was an update to the designation of the CFAs from Council. Mr. Goldman responded that the Council concurred with the amendment to remove the Croman Mill Site from the list of potential CFAs, and that an overlay should be utilized to designate the CFAs to more easily adjust their number or scale in the future. Regarding the designation of the Downtown, the Council had directed staff to develop language within the existing C-I-D zone that would afford areas within the Downtown the same allowances that would exist within proposed CFAs. The Council also discussed the inclusion of the Railroad Property as a CFA, but expressed concern over whether townhomes would be allowed in this area given the deed restriction status, and the remediation plan from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Councilor Hyatt noted that the Council also discussed including the Downtown as a potential CFA, but expressed concern about redevelopment of the Downtown with the townhome provision in mind. The Commission discussed the inclusion of the Downtown as a CFA, with Commissioner Herron relating how it could be excluded from grants and other economic opportunities if not included. Commissioner MacCracken Jain remarked that the inclusion of the Downtown area may not have been adequately considered by the Council.

Chair Verner asked if the CFA project would come back to the Commission. Mr. Goldman responded that it would go to both the Commission and Council for review and approval, and that the Council had made no formal decision as this item was reviewed at a Study Session. He clarified that, with the Council's decision to not include the Downtown as a CFA, the City would not be utilizing the consultant services to study and develop a code analysis of the Downtown for what changes to make, other than those code changes to make it correspond with CFAs without an overlay. He noted that there is a clear distinction that the City would be reviewing the Railroad Property and the Transit Triangle as primary CFAs.

Commissioner MacCracken Jain asked if there is anything precluding the City from seeking grants or funding to study the feasibility of designating the Downtown as a CFA. Mr. Goldman responded that the primary restrictions are funding, staff availability, and timelines, as this project must be concluded by June, 2025. He stated that there is nothing precluding the Downtown from being included in the future and that the Council could include funding for its inclusion in the next biennial budget. He reiterated that no formal decision has been made since the Council reviewed this at a



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Study Session.

Commissioner Herron asked why the Council rejected the Rogue Valley Council of Government's (RVCOG) recommendation to include the Downtown. Mr. Goldman responded that the Council had directed staff to conduct a study of the Transit Triangle, Railroad Property, and Croman Mill Site back in early summer of 2024. He noted that RVCOG identified the Downtown area as a potential secondary CFA, not as a primary CFA, and that the Council packet included RVCOG's recommendation. Mr. Severson added that the Downtown was discussed early on to include as a CFA without encouraging redevelopment of existing buildings, but the use of secondary sites wasn't further developed by the state.

Commissioner MacCracken Jain asked how the Commission could keep the discussion of including the Downtown area as a CFA active. Mr. Goldman responded that this item could be included in the Commission's annual update and workplan presentation to Council, which would allow Chair Verner to make this recommendation. Councilor Hyatt emphasized that the current Council cannot prohibit future Council decisions and recommended that the Commission's advocacy for the inclusion of the Downtown area as a CFA be included in the workplan. She cautioned that funding may not be available for another study.

The Commission generally agreed to advocate for the inclusion of the Downtown area as a CFA. Commissioner Perkinson advised accepting the consultant's recommendation to not include it, and Commission KenCairn stated her neutrality on the subject.

VII. OPEN DISCUSSION

The Commission decided to cancel the November 26th and December 24th Study Sessions.

Councilor Hyatt reminded the Commission that all Commissions and Advisory Committees are invited to the December 16, 2024 Council Study Session that will include an appreciation event for these groups.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

*Submitted by,
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant*



CITY OF ASHLAND

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

INCLUSIVE OUTREACH PLAN DRAFT



November 12, 2024



CONTENTS

- 1 BACKGROUND
- 2 INCLUSIVE OUTREACH PLAN
- 3 APPROACH
- 4 NEXT STEPS

What *is* an EOA?

A technical study that compares **projected demand for land** for industrial and other employment uses to the **existing supply** of such land.

Helps communities implement their **local economic development objectives** and forms the basis for industrial and other employment development **policies** in the comprehensive plan.

Through updating Ashland's EOA, the city works to align **projected employment** growth with **land needs and availability** based on current data and extensive community engagement.

What *is in* an EOA?

The Content of an EOA is ruled by OAR 660-009-0015

This rule requires inclusion of the following four interrelated elements:

1

Review of national, state, regional, county and local trends

2

Identification of required site types (to accommodate expected employment growth)

3

Inventory of industrial and other employment lands

4

Assessment of community economic development potential

PROJECT SCOPE OVERVIEW

	Est. Time	Task
1	Ongoing	Project Kickoff
2	Aug-Nov	Inclusive Outreach Plan
3	Sept-Jan	Ashland/Medford Joint Analysis – National, State & Regional
4	Oct-Feb	Ashland Community Outreach, Goals and Strategies
5	Sept-Nov	Industrial and Commercial Buildable Lands Inventory
6	Oct-Feb	Ashland Local EOA with Equity Considerations
7	Mar-Apr	Comprehensive Plan Update to Goals, Policies, or Actions
8	Mar-May	Final EOA Document Deliverable
9	Jan-Mar	Equity and Inclusion Self Assessment

INCLUSIVE OUTREACH PLAN

Purpose

Presents the engagement activities, timing, and responsibilities for CAI, City staff, and partners to lead or support while developing the Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA).

The Role of CCI

The Committee for Community Involvement group of the Planning Commission reviews and approves this Inclusive Outreach Plan prior to implementation.

Equity and Inclusion in Outreach

Outreach conducted as part of this project aims to employ a broad and inclusive approach, which includes:

- a) Identification of priority populations for outreach (historically underrepresented or disenfranchised)
- b) Establishing equity targets for outreach

An Equity and Inclusion Self-Assessment, at the end of the project, will compare completed outreach results with the equity targets. (ex. *X% of participants were of X population*)

PRIORITY POPULATIONS DISCUSSION

Priority Populations or Other Equity Considerations for Outreach

- Participants for outreach (both for residents and businesses) should represent geographic diversity across the City

Potential Others

We are looking for CCI and City Staff input to further fill out the list above. Priority populations may include groups such as:

- Migrant, foreign born, and non-citizen communities
- Communities of color, including Ashland's Hispanic community
- Seniors
- Differently-abled community
- Young people
- Workers with high school degree or less
- Veterans

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What populations, communities, or groups in Ashland should be prioritized for targeted outreach in this EOA process?
2. What other equity considerations should be front and center during the implementation of this Inclusive Outreach Plan?

PLANNED OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Focus Groups

Potential focus group topics include:

- Health Care / Elder Care
- University / Education
- Arts and Entertainment
- Tourism
- Parks & Rec
- Land Owners & Developers

Interviews

Discussions with Key Stakeholders to orient the project and gather specific insights, ideas, and context surrounding Ashland's economy and regional role.

Public Hearings

Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

Business and Resident Survey

Aims to collect community perspectives on a vision for Ashland's future economy as well as strengths and weaknesses of Ashland's economy. Potential topics for survey questions include:

- Respondent Demographics
- Visioning Ashland's Economic Future
- Ashland's Economic Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities
- Business Demographics
- Business Challenges
- Vision for Ashland's Business Environment

Studio / Pop-Up Event

Allow widespread public participation and collect public input or reactions. Useful to solicit public preferences on economic goals and policies.

WORKING DRAFT SCHEDULE

Month	Outreach Activities
October	• Draft Inclusive Outreach Plan • Field Work & City Tour (10/21, in-person)
November	• Deliver CCI materials (11/5) • CCI meeting (11/12) • Determine priority populations / equity targets • Launch business and resident survey • Begin orientation interviews
December	• Close business and resident survey
January	• Begin focus groups
February	• Studio / pop up meetings • Pop-ups and focus groups (in-person)
March	• Draft and Final Engagement Summary • Final presentation (in-person)

NEXT STEPS

1 Upcoming Outreach

- Priority Populations / Equity Targets
- Draft and Final Business and Resident Survey
- Orientation Interviews

2 Data Analysis

3 Buildable Lands Inventory Findings