

# **Community and Economic Development Readiness Assessment**

## **Guidebook**

### **Acknowledgments**

The Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECDD) has developed this guidebook and readiness assessment tool to help communities assess their business and community development capacity and to identify next steps in achieving their development goals. It attempts to condense much of the significant strategic thinking that has been conducted in the State of Oregon over the past 15 years into one simple document.

Many people and organizations contributed to the creation of this assessment tool. The project originated as a collaborative approach between the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, the Governor's Community Development Office and the Community Solutions Team. Key state agency contributors to this project include Yvonne Addington and Brian Cole.

In 2000, the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department decided to promote the use of this self-assessment tool more widely in rural Oregon. The Department engaged Rural Development Initiatives, Inc. (RDI), an Oregon based non-profit organization, to apply the tool in five rural communities and to evaluate its usefulness. As a result of this experience, the Department then engaged RDI to further refine the tool to reflect best practice in the field of assessment and to increase the practical application of this tool. A focus group of statewide stakeholders from the public and private sectors provided valuable input. Community leaders who participated in the test assessment also provided valuable input in the communities of Banks, Enterprise, Gaston, Irrigon, Jordan Valley, Nyssa, Richland, Rogue River, Roseburg, Spray, Stanfield and Waldport. We thank all who participated and provided their observations and suggestions for improvement.

The goal of this project has been to help communities assess their readiness for community and economic development. From this assessment, they can then determine areas needed to build their capacity. We are interested in hearing from communities in and outside of Oregon that use this tool. Please send comments to the department at:

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Attn: Communications  
775 Summer Street NE, Suite 200  
Salem, Oregon 97301-1280  
web site: <http://www.econ.state.or.us>

## **Introduction**

Perhaps you are an elected leader in your community ... or perhaps you are appointed on a board or commission ... or maybe you represent your community as a chamber executive, economic development staff person or volunteer. In any event, you are a person that cares about the future of your community.

Perhaps you would like to see the community achieve the completion of a particular project, or would like to see better economic opportunities for its citizens. The problem is, you may not know where to begin. One place to start is to take an objective assessment of your community and its current “capacity” to achieve its development goals.

On an individual basis, this guide provides an excellent method to objectively assess your community’s development capacity from your own unique, individual perspective. You may feel challenged, due to a lack of knowledge, to address all of the variables in this guide. Nonetheless, by “doing your best,” it will accomplish two objectives: 1) it will present *your* understanding of your community, and 2) it will give you a sense of some of the complexities of community development that you may wish to become more familiar with.

There are also distinct advantages to utilizing this guide in a group setting. For example, you may wish to collectively work through this guide as a member of a board or commission that serves your community. Your community may also wish to work with regional team members from the Economic and Community Development Department and other local, regional, and state experts that are trained in community and economic development techniques and programs. The advantage of working with these professional development staff is that you not only become more familiar with your community development capacity, you are instantly connected with the expertise to advance your capacity and complete community development objectives. In a group setting, it is recommended that a facilitator be used to assist you in utilizing this assessment tool. A facilitator’s guide is included as part of this guidebook.

## **Purpose**

This is a guidebook designed to enable users to understand and increase the capacity of community and economic development activities in Oregon. Hopefully, the diagnostic tools contained within this guidebook will have significant value to Oregonians that wish to create quality communities.

This document is all about asking and answering three basic questions:

- I. Where are we?
- II. Where do we want to be?
- III. How are we going to get there?

This guide can set the foundation for a community-wide effort to increase its capacity to meet future community-wide goals.

## **Components of the Guidebook**

- A. Assessment Questionnaire
- B. Facilitator’s Guide and Checklist
- C. Sample Final Report

## **Assessment Categories**

The assessment tool contains 85 statements in four categories. The categories are Baseline Capacity, Civic Capacity, Economic Development Capacity and Community Development Capacity.

**Baseline Capacity:** Services without which a community cannot function well as a community. These characteristics, such as safe water supply, modern phone service, and access to health care, are comparable across communities and over time, and are needed in all communities regardless of their economic development strategy.

**Civic Capacity:** Community vision, strategic plan, trained leadership, functional organizations, partnerships and collaboration. These items and baseline capacity need to be in place before community and economic development strategies or projects can be implemented and sustained.

**Economic Development Capacity:** Infrastructure, facilities and programs that contribute to economic development potential such as industrial sites, zoning that matches market, transportation, etc. The importance of these items depends on a community's choice of strategy, so these should not be used to compare across communities.

**Community Development Capacity:** Facilities, programs, attitudes and ordinances that contribute to community development potential such as a community center, park, public transportation, etc.

For each statement, the goal is to determine the level of progress and satisfaction with each community characteristic. The assessment statements are answered with the following scale:

- Yes, adequate
- Needs improvement, actively making progress
- Needs improvement, little progress to date
- Needs attention, no action yet
- NA, this item is not relevant for our community
- DK, Don't Know

There are also two open-ended questions at the end of the assessment.

# Community and Economic Development Readiness Assessment

## Assessment Questionnaire

The following statements will be answered with the following scale:

- Yes, adequate
- Needs improvement, actively making progress
- Needs improvement, little progress to date
- Needs attention, no action yet
- NA, this item is not relevant for our community
- DK, Don't Know

There are also two open ended questions.

**Baseline Capacity:** Services without which a community can't function well. These characteristics, such as safe water supply, telecommunications, and access to health care, are comparable across communities and over time, and are needed in all communities regardless of their economic development strategy.

<b>Baseline Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
1. The community has a water system that meets or exceeds state and federal standards. Comments:						
2. The community has a water system that has capacity for growth. How much capacity is currently being used? _____% Comments:						
3. The community has water meters. Comments:						
4. The community has a wastewater system that meets or exceeds state and federal standards. Comments:						

<b>Baseline Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
5. The community has a waste water system that has capacity for growth. How much capacity is currently being used? _____% Comments:						
6. The community has storm water drainage and flood retention systems. Comments:						
7. There are local businesses providing goods and services to residents. Comments:						
8. Community and businesses are served with adequate road and street system. Comments:						
9. There is local fire service available. Comments:						
10. There are police services available. What type? <input type="checkbox"/> city <input type="checkbox"/> county <input type="checkbox"/> state Comments:						
11. There are local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) available. Comments:						
12. There is a local clinic or primary care services (Nurse Practitioner, Physician Assistant, Family Physician) available in the community. Comments:						
13. There is a hospital within a 60 minute drive. Comments:						

<b>Baseline Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
14. There are local immunization services available for children and adults. Comments:						
15. There is an assisted living facility in the community. Comments:						
16. There are single and multi-family rental housing for low and moderate income levels. Comments:						
17. The community has phone service available. Comments:						
18. The community has local internet access. Comments:						
<b>Civic Capacity:</b> Community vision, strategic plan, trained leadership, functional organizations, partnerships and collaboration. These items and baseline capacity need to be in place before community and economic development strategies or projects can be implemented and sustained.						
<b>Civic Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
1. The community has a clear vision for the present and future. Comments:						
2. The community has considered its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and developed a strategic community and economic development plan. Comments:						
3. The strategic plan considers regional and state wide strategies and opportunities. Comments:						

<b>Civic Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
4. Citizens are well informed about economic development activities. Comments:						
5. Citizens are given the opportunity to join community and economic development efforts. Comments:						
6. There is a track record of positive community action. Comments:						
7. There is a system to measure progress and to learn from results of action. Comments:						
8. The community celebrates successes. Comments:						
9. There is a recognized community and economic development group with structures and procedures that sustain positive action in the community. What is the Name of the group? _____ Comments:  <b>If there is no recognized community and economic development group, skip to statement #18</b>						
10. The community and economic development group process is open and participatory; members are willing to contribute and explore new ideas. Comments:						
11. The community and economic development group is successfully building partnerships with other groups within and beyond the community. Comments:						

<b>Civic Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
12. The community and economic development group is successful in obtaining <b>local</b> assistance and resources necessary to carry out its project goals. Comments:						
13. The community and economic development group is successful in obtaining <b>external</b> assistance and resources necessary to carry out its project goals. Comments:						
14. The community and economic development group has active participation by the diverse segments of the community. (e.g., economic, cultural, educational, occupational, neighborhood, age, ethnic, length of residence, etc.) Comments:						
15. Leadership of the community and economic development group reflects the diverse segments of the community. Comments:						
16. The community and economic development group seeks out training and assistance to improve members' skills and knowledge base to carry out action plans and accomplish goals. Comments:						
17. The leadership shares responsibility for carrying out the work of the community and economic development group rather than trying to do it all themselves. Comments:						
18. Leaders have skills and technical knowledge to work effectively in our community. Comments:						
19. Over time, the council and community groups have been able to draw new people into leadership positions (executive committee members, task force chairs, project leaders, etc.). Comments:						



<b>Civic Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
20. A culture of entrepreneurship exists that recognizes and rewards new ideas, innovation, partnerships and collaboration. Comments:						
21. There is public and private sector participation and cooperation in local and regional efforts. Comments:						
22. The community boards, organizations and council have no open positions and there is a pool of volunteers to fill vacancies as they arise. Comments:						

**Economic Development Capacity:** Infrastructure, facilities and programs that contribute to economic development potential such as industrial sites, zoning that matches market realities, transportation infrastructure, etc. The importance of these items depends on a community's choice of strategy, so these should not be used to compare across communities.

<b>Economic Development Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
1. There is a community and economic development group that is proactive rather than reactive. Comments:						
2. There is a committee or group that provides or brokers assistance to start up businesses or entrepreneurs. Comments:						
3. There is a committee or group that provides or brokers assistance to help retain or expand local businesses and industry. Comments:						
4. There is a committee or group that is involved with targeted recruitment of new retail, service and industrial businesses. Comments:						

<b>Economic Development Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
5. The community has industrially zoned land that is ready to build or occupy at a reasonable market rate. Comments:						
6. The community has industrially zoned buildings that are ready to occupy or renovate at a reasonable market rate. Comments:						
7. The community has commercially zoned land that is ready to build or occupy at a reasonable market rate. Comments:						
8. The community has commercially zoned buildings that are ready to occupy at a reasonable market rate. Comments:						
9. The community has financial resources available for business and industrial development (revolving loan funds, venture capital, lending institutions, etc.). Comments:						
10. There is a focused business development organization that coordinates local efforts, markets assets, develops leads, negotiates and closes deals. Comments:						
11. There is local ownership of many businesses. Comments:						
12. Local owners of business and industry are committed to work with the community on improvements. Comments:						

<b>Economic Development Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
13. There is economic diversity (e.g., diversified industries and many smaller businesses providing jobs in the community). Comments:						
14. There is a capable and productive workforce available. Comments:						
15. There is at least one organization providing or able to provide workforce education and training. Comments:						
16. There are training and educational opportunities for citizens of all ages. Comments:						
17. There are school to work, job shadow and intern programs available. Comments:						
18. Community and businesses are within close proximity (3–5 miles) to interstate or major hwy. Comments:						
19. The community and industry have access to rail service. Comments:						
20. The community and industry have access to barge or river transport. Comments:						
21. The community has access to commercial air service within 60 minutes. Comments:						

<b>Economic Development Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
22. The community has competitively priced natural gas available. Comments:						
23. The community has competitively priced electricity available. Comments:						
24. There is access for citizens and business to high speed, broadband, interactive telecomputing technologies that support electronic exchange of data and information. Comments:						
25. There is wireless communication service available. Comments:						
26. There is a local or regional information technology forum or equivalent organization that is capable of providing planning, marketing, training and coordination in the use of telecomputing technologies. Comments:						
<b>Community Development Capacity:</b> Facilities, programs, attitudes and ordinances that contribute to quality of life and community development potential such as a community center, park, public transportation, etc.						
<b>Community Development Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
1. The community has public transportation available (bus or taxi) within the community. Comments:						
2. Community members feel a sense of pride and attachment to the community and are optimistic about their future. Comments:						

<b>Community Development Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
3. The community has clean-up and beautification as an ongoing priority. Comments:						
4. The community has a spirit of people helping each other. Comments:						
5. The community has library services available to citizens. Comments:						
6. The community has an adequately funded K12 school system. Comments:						
7. The community has at least one park. Comments:						
8. The community has recreation facilities available for residents of all ages. Comments:						
9. There is a community center. Comments:						
10. The community has a senior center and services. Comments:						
11. The community has a youth center and services. Comments:						
12. The community has childcare centers or services available sufficient to meet local needs. Comments:						

<b>Community Development Capacity Statements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Actively Making Progress</b>	<b>Little Progress To Date</b>	<b>No Action Yet</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>DK</b>
13. There is open or green space in and around the community. Comments:						
14. The community has working relationships with the public and private sector managers of surrounding natural resources (fisheries, forests, ranches, etc.). Comments:						
15. The environmentally sensitive resources of the community are being adequately protected. Comments:						
16. The community approaches community and economic development in a sustainable way. Please define what this means to you. Comments:						
17. There are uniform building codes, subdivision ordinances and architectural standards. Comments:						
18. There is a utility operation and maintenance ordinance including rates and connection fees. Comments:						
19. There is a systems development charge ordinance. Comments:						

What strategies or projects have been successfully completed?

What are the key strategies the community is pursuing?