

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

STATE AGENCY STRATEGY & RESOURCES

Revised November 2015

Introduction

Many communities, particularly rural communities outside the Willamette Valley, continue to lag behind larger metropolitan communities in the post-recession recovery. Unemployment rates in rural counties are typically higher than in Willamette Valley counties with town centers continuing to degrade as they lose population and economic vitality to larger urban centers. With targeted assistance and investments from federal, state, local, and private funds they can rebuild, and once again become vital regional commercial centers.

Revitalizing downtown areas presents a significant opportunity for co-investment of public, private, and philanthropic funds in community and economic development. Revitalization starts with the community defining a new vision for its future, designing new streetscapes, incorporating multiple transportation modes, attracting new businesses to the downtown core, and planning for a broad range of housing and employment opportunities.

This strategy summarizes opportunities for state agencies to align their resources to support communities desiring to improve their downtown areas.

Priority opportunities

When a state agency is making an investment they will work with the Regional Solutions Team and the local community to ensure that integrated investment opportunities are identified and scheduled. Examples of state agency investments are:

- Downtown state highway preservation or modernization projects ,
- funding replacement of water and/or sewer pipes leading to or in a downtown,
- funding low income housing projects, and
- locating state agency field offices.

Regional Solutions Team Support

Where downtown revitalization is identified as a regional priority, the Regional Solutions Coordinator and the Regional Solutions Team (team) coordinate outreach with communities to determine issues and desired outcomes.

State agency staff responsible for administering or representing agency programs that support infrastructure investment share investments and timelines their agencies are proposing to make in the region. Where a community has created an inventory of infrastructure needs, the team reviews the inventory and seeks opportunities for aligning investments.

In both cases, the team explores opportunities for co-investment that allow for alignment of improvements to ensure coordinated and efficient expenditure of funds to achieve the most effective (greatest) results. The team also researches other public and philanthropic funds that may be leveraged to implement a community's vision.

STATE RESOURCES & TOOLS FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

DEPARTMENT OF LAND CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (DLCD)

- Community visioning, using in-house resources or assistance in engaging other resources (e.g. higher education) to create, facilitate, and document the process.
- Assistance in forming local improvement or renewal districts, or identifying other available sources of revenue.
- Technical Assistance grants to update comprehensive plans to accommodate housing and employment needs and plan for infrastructure development. Technical Assistance grants are on a two year cycle with applications accepted in late September. These grants focus on planning projects that would support economic development, streamlining planning processes, updating codes to comply with state law, and infrastructure finance planning. A downtown revitalization plan is not really a direct fit for this grant, but it might have a shot if there was a strong enough economic development and/or infrastructure provision tie.
- Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) program services. The joint ODOT/DLCD TGM program helps communities prepare for more livable, economically vital, and sustainable communities through outreach and education, development code modernization, and development design assistance. The following programs are offered through the TGM program; TGM Grant and Technical Assistance Grants have deadlines for funding applications, and the other programs are on demand:
 - ✓ TGM Education and Outreach. Through this program, DLCD hires a consultant from a pre-approved list to work with a city on a specific issue. For example, Prineville used this program for a parking study for its downtown and La Pine used it to kick off downtown design planning. Generally the consultant will take a day or two to tour the area, interview key community members, and facilitate a Charrette on the identified issues. This likely wouldn't be used for an entire downtown plan, but it is certainly a good thing to kick off or include in a downtown revitalization effort. There does have to be a transportation tie-in, but biking, walkability, pedestrian amenities, parking, and traffic circulation are always issues in a downtown.
 - ✓ TGM Code Assistance. Through this program, DLCD hires a consultant team to review a local code for compliance with TGM principles (which primarily have to do with biking, walking, transit, and other multi-modal issues – but also quality planning and zoning). The scope of the project can be narrowed down to focus on a sub-area, such as a downtown. For example, the Klamath Falls code could be reviewed for ways to

improve on providing bike and pedestrian amenities with development, upper floor uses, provide for better alternative access to the downtown, encourage greater density of residential uses in and adjacent to the downtown, etc.

- ✓ TGM Quick Response. This program is different than the others in that it focuses on a specific property and requires an imminent development that is being held up by an issue relating to land use or transportation. DLCD hires a consultant to work with the city and developer to resolve that issue, whether it be transportation, design, neighborhood compatibility, or other planning issues. This program is not used very often because it requires an actual development to be in process – communities often ask if they could use it to prepare for development (like cleaning up a hazardous site) but that’s not an eligible use.
- ✓ TGM Category 2 Grant. DLCD and ODOT have an annual cycle TGM grant. There are two categories: Type 1 is basically traditional Transportation Systems Plans or components thereof; Type 2 is for planning projects that combine land use and transportation. As long as there is a strong transportation component (bikeability, pedestrian friendliness, traffic circulation, parking, etc.) a downtown plan might be eligible for a TGM grant. Grant awards typically fall in the \$30,000 to \$120,000 range and require a minimum ~10% match. The application deadline is typically around June.

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT)

- Transportation Funding Programs. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) *Enhance* and *Fix-It* categories of the STIP fund the improvement, maintenance, and preservation of the transportation. Activities eligible for the *Enhance* program include bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities on or off the highway right-of-way, projects that add capacity to the system, Transportation Enhancement, and Safe Routes to Schools. The *Fix It* program includes activities related to repair, pavement preservation, operations, and safety. The STIP update process provides an opportunity for the Regional Solutions Teams to advise and help prioritize projects.
- Immediate Opportunity Funds, Type B: Revitalization of business or industrial centers to support economic development. Matching funds are required, but non-roadway project elements qualify as “match.” As a guideline, the maximum amount available for a project of Type B is \$250,000.

BUSINESS OREGON

- Assistance with identifying and targeting employment development opportunities.
- Business recruitment and retention assistance.
- Business finance loans and guarantees.

BUSINESS OREGON INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE AUTHORITY (IFA)

- Infrastructure financing (loans and grants) for water, waste water, essential service facilities, industrial land utilities, publicly owned space for business, and broad band infrastructure.
- Community Development Block Grants for rural income eligible communities for housing rehabilitation, water and waste water systems, libraries, senior centers, head start facilities, medical clinics, food banks, and homeless shelters.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (DEQ)

- Wastewater infrastructure. DEQ’s Clean Water State Revolving Fund program provides low-cost loans and bond purchase agreements to public agencies for the planning, design, or construction of projects that prevent or mitigate water pollution. Eligible projects include wastewater facility planning and studies, wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater facilities, treatment and projects, and other projects such as stream restoration that protect and improve water quality. Interest rates for the financing program are below market rates, and change quarterly based on a percentage of the national municipal bond rate. DEQ accepts new applications year-round.
- Brownfields Redevelopment. DEQ works with communities, organizations, and other government agencies to facilitate brownfield redevelopment for properties that are vacant or underused where actual or perceived environmental contamination complicates its redevelopment. DEQ receives federal funds from EPA biannually which are allocated over the course of the 2 years as projects are ready across the state. Regional priorities through the Regional Solutions Teams are one of the criteria used to determine which communities/projects are allotted funds and all projects funded have a link to economic development and/or community enhancements (i.e. parks, food banks, health centers, community gardens). DEQ works closely with all of the state and local agencies to ensure the funds are leveraged as much and best as possible and are doing so through the RST’s that have priorities around brownfields.

OREGON EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT

- Data and analysis to assist in community visioning and economic opportunities analyses.

OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (OHCS)

- Encourage affordable housing to be developed or redeveloped on Main Streets and in or near town centers in relevant funding competitions.
- Inform local leaders and housing developers about the benefits of well-located affordable housing both in service to lower-income community residents, and also to support thriving community centers.
- Assist housing developers who face opposition to proposed housing construction to overcome concerns from neighbors.

- Facilitate high-quality design and construction so affordable housing becomes an asset in support of local and regional economic and community development.

TRAVEL OREGON

- Data. Economic impact (e.g. jobs, visitor spending) on a statewide, regional, and county level; visitor profiles (e.g. demographics, activities, attractions) on a statewide and regional level.
- Cooperative promotions and marketing technical assistance. Brand toolkits, media planning, and partnership opportunities.
- Destination development. Rural tourism studios, niche market, and product development.
- [Travel Oregon Matching Grants Program](#). Cities, counties, port districts, federally recognized tribes, and nonprofit entities located in Oregon and involved with tourism promotion and development are eligible for grants from this matching grant program. Projects that contribute to the development and improvement of local economies and communities throughout Oregon by means of the enhancement, expansion, and promotion of the visitor industry are eligible to receive funding.
- The biennial Matching Grants Program will open its next cycle in 2016. Communities, visitor associations, and tourism-related organizations are invited to apply for funding. An applicant may apply for one grant per cycle and must match the grant amount awarded, dollar for dollar. Up to 50% of the match may be in-kind.
- [Rural Tourism Studio Matching Grants Program](#). Graduating communities of the Rural Tourism Studio are eligible to apply for up to \$10,000 in matching grant funds. Applications may be submitted for up to two projects which must be supported by the local priorities identified in the Rural Tourism Studio program. Projects must be completed within one year of the grant award.
- [Wine Country License Plate Grants Program](#). The revenues from the sale of the Wine Country license plate will be used to support culinary projects and tourism programs in Oregon. Rules and guidelines to implement this effort are being developed.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & BUSINESS SERVICES, BUILDING CODES DIVISION (BCD)

- Regional Services Program. Provides technical assistance to local building departments on permitting innovative, sustainable, construction technologies to address the unique aspects of existing building renovation.
- Rapid Approval Process. Makes available the BCD Rapid Approval Assessment Team to expedite the plan review and permitting process for qualifying downtown revitalization projects.
- At this time, more than 130 local jurisdictions administer their own local building permit and inspection programs. Although we are not the direct service provider, we are committed to helping our local partners be successful and would be happy to help the Regional Solutions Teams in their efforts at downtown revitalization.

OREGON ARTS COMMISSION

The Oregon Arts Commission has the following resources to support downtown revitalization related to furthering arts and culture:

- Operating Support Grants (\$920,000 distributed annually) support activities of Oregon's medium and large not-for-profit arts organizations.
- Access Reimbursement Grants (\$10,000 distributed annually) range from \$200 to \$1,000 and assist in making the arts accessible to people with disabilities by removing barriers and providing opportunities.
- The Ford Family Foundation's Visual Arts Program (\$101,000 distributed annually). The Ford Family Foundation's Art Acquisition Program, managed by the Oregon Arts Commission, provides resources to Oregon visual art institutions and public visual arts collections for the purpose of acquiring seminal works by Oregon visual artists to preserve public access to them.
- Arts Recognition Grants (\$20,000 distributed annually) award \$1,000 to exemplary arts organizations that have a record of excellence in programming, service, and organizational capacity.
- Arts Learning Grants (\$185,000 distributed annually) support projects that expand opportunities for K-12 students to learn in and through the arts, producing measurable learning outcomes; Respond to an arts education issue demonstrated by specific schools(s) or a community; Provide professional development opportunities so Oregon's teaching artists, teachers, and administrators increase their knowledge about the value of the arts in student learning; Promote the arts as integral to a comprehensive education; Embed meaningful evaluation practices in the project design; and include sustained and substantive interactions with students over time, rather than single events or stand-alone activities.
- Arts Services Grants (\$157,000 distributed annually) provide operating support to local and regional art councils or other arts organizations that offer: Regular, ongoing arts services to a broad population; Programming and services that encourage all people to participate in arts activities; and Opportunities that enhance the capacity of artists to contribute to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of their communities.
- Arts Build Communities Grant (\$114,000 distributed annually) program provides \$3,000-\$7,000 matching support to arts and other community-based organizations for projects that address a local community problem, issue, or need through an arts-based solution.
- Cultural Tourism Grants (\$70,000 distributed annually) support projects and partnerships that positively impact arts-based cultural tourism activities.

OREGON PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

OREGON MAIN STREET PROGRAMS

The Main Street Approach is a proven comprehensive approach to commercial historic district revitalization. This approach has been implemented in more than 2,200 cities and towns in 40 states across the nation with the help of the National Main Street Center and statewide downtown revitalization programs. The Main Street Approach® is based on a comprehensive, four point strategy:

- Organization

- Promotion
- Design
- Economic Restructuring

Oregon Main Street provides assistance to all communities no matter where they are in the process. Currently, there are 92 communities participating in one of the levels of the Oregon Main Street network:

- The “Affiliate” level is for communities that do not wish to become a designated Main Street community or wish to apply the Main Street Approach® in a non-traditional commercial setting. Communities participating at this level receive notification of workshops and conferences sponsored by Oregon Main Street and are invited to participate in the listserve. They do not receive on-site technical assistance. Interested communities may join by submitting an Affiliate level application.
- The “**Main Street Track**” is for communities that are ready to begin their revitalization efforts or are well on their way. This track includes 3 levels:
 - **Performing Main Street** is for those communities who were previously certified National Main Street cities and those communities with advanced downtown programs following the Main Street Approach®. Application rounds are held as resources permit.
 - **Transforming Downtown** is for communities who are committed to downtown revitalization using the Main Street Approach® but need technical assistance to take them to the next level. Application rounds are held as resources permit.
 - **Exploring Downtown** is for communities just starting a downtown revitalization effort who wish to learn more about using the Main Street Approach®. Interested communities may join at any time by completing a brief application form.

General participation requirements for the “Main Street” track include:

- The boundaries/primary focus area of the organization must be that of a historic downtown or neighborhood commercial district – basically a “Main Street district.” This area must be:
 - ✓ A historic central business district and center for socio-economic interaction.
 - ✓ Characterized by a cohesive core of historic or older commercial and mixed-use buildings that represent the community’s architectural heritage. It may also include compatible in-fill development.
 - ✓ Have a sufficient mass of businesses, buildings, and density to be effective.
 - ✓ Typically arranged with most of the buildings side-by-side and fronting the sidewalk along a main street with intersecting side streets
 - ✓ Compact, easily walkable, and pedestrian-oriented.
- In general, districts containing newer low-density automobile-oriented commercial development (e.g., sprawl), strip malls, and enclosed shopping/entertainment centers will not qualify for designation unless they are fully integrated into the fabric of a traditional “Main Street district.”

For More Information:

Contact [Sheri Stuart](#), Oregon Main Street Coordinator
 725 Summer St NE, Suite C
 Salem, OR 97301
 503-986-0679

Other resources Oregon Main Street program is embarking on:

- **Historic Theater Project:** <https://orhistorictheatres.wordpress.com>

- **HB 3526 Establishes the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant Program** within Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for the purpose of awarding grants to acquire, rehabilitate, and construct buildings in designated downtown areas statewide and to facilitate community revitalization. The grant will be funded through lottery bonds sold in spring of 2017. The application process most likely will be similar to other Heritage Program grants. The intent is to fund “bricks and mortar” type projects and to facilitate community revitalization that will lead to private investment and job creation or retention. Communities participating in the OMS Network will be eligible to have projects submitted.

OREGON HERITAGE PROGRAMS

Includes the State Historic Preservation Office, the Oregon Main Street program, the Oregon Heritage Commission, and the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries.

GRANTS

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH GRANT:

"Diamonds in the Rough" grants are to restore or reconstruct the facades of buildings that have been heavily altered over the years. The purpose is to return them to their historic appearance and potentially qualify them for historic register designation (local or national).

- Eligibility: buildings with heavily modified primary facades
- Awards: up to \$20,000
- Match: 1:1, match may be in the form of cash, volunteer time, in-kind donations
- Timing: offered twice per biennium, usually spring deadlines

Contact: Kuri Gill, Kuri.Gill@oregon.gov, 503-986-0685

OREGON HERITAGE GRANT:

Support of projects for the conservation, development, and interpretation of Oregon's cultural heritage. Priority will be given to projects that preserve, develop, or interpret threatened heritage resources and/or heritage resources of statewide significance.

- Eligibility: 501(c)3 nonprofit, incorporated in the state of Oregon, local governments, and Oregon colleges and universities
- Awards: typically \$5,000 - \$20,000
- Match: 1:1 required 50% of the match must be cash
- Timing: offered once per biennium, usually fall of the odd year

Contact: Kyle Jansson, Kyle.Jansson@oregon.gov, 503-986-0685

OREGON MUSEUM GRANT:

Support of projects for the collection and management of heritage collections, for heritage-related tourism, and heritage education and interpretation. Grant proposals from museums of all sizes and purposes are encouraged and will be considered.

- Eligibility: must be a qualifying museum
- Awards: typically \$1,000-\$8,000
- Match: not required, but recommended
- Timing: offered twice per biennium, usually spring deadlines

Contact: Kyle Jansson, Kyle.Jansson@oregon.gov, 503-986-0685

PRESERVING OREGON GRANT:

Preserving Oregon Grant Program funds are to be used for: Rehabilitation work on properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or significant work contributing to identifying, preserving, and/or interpreting archaeological sites.

- Eligibility: open, must meet one of the two above criteria
- Awards: up to \$20,000
- Match: 1:1, match may be in the form of cash, volunteer time, in-kind donations
- Timing: offered twice per biennium, usually spring deadlines

Contact: Kuri Gill, Kuri.Gill@oregon.gov, 503-986-0685

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT:

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program offers matching grants to cities and counties that have been "certified" as historic preservation partners with both the state and the federal governments. These grants can be used for a wide-range of preservation projects, including National Register nominations, historic resource surveys, preservation education, preservation code development, building restoration, and preservation planning.

- Eligibility: certified local governments
- Awards: typically \$10,000-\$15,000
- Match: 1:1, match may be in the form of cash, volunteer time, in-kind donations
- Timing: annually

Contact: Kuri Gill, Kuri.Gill@oregon.gov, 503-986-0685

TAX INCENTIVES

FEDERAL INCOME TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

The Federal government offers an income tax credit as an incentive for rehabilitating income-producing historic buildings. The program can offer tax credit up to 20% of qualified project costs. This tax credit program is administered in Oregon by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS) in Washington, D.C., which makes the final decisions on project eligibility, and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) who handles the actual tax credit component.

Contact: Joy Sears, Joy.Sears@oregon.gov, 503-986-0688

STATE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The incentive "freezes" a property's assessed value for 10 years while rehabilitation work is completed. It is most effective when the "freeze" is in place prior to any substantial rehabilitation of the property.

Properties must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Contact: Joy Sears, Joy.Sears@oregon.gov, 503-986-0688

AWARDS AND DESIGNATIONS

OREGON HERITAGE ALL-STAR COMMUNITY

The Oregon Heritage All-Star program is a way to recognize communities that make the most of their heritage resources. Oregon Heritage created a list of heritage related criteria by which the program can be measured. A Heritage All-Star Community meets 15 of the 20 criteria. To receive designation the community must apply using the form provided. The application is reviewed by Oregon Heritage staff and the designation is approved by the Oregon Heritage Commission.

All-Stars receive special benefits.

- a certificate for display
- two metal signs for display

- the designation noted on the online Oregon Blue Book entry
- the designation noted on the Travel Oregon web site
- a logo to use in publications and marketing materials
- Heritage All-Star Community Technical Services

Contact: Kuri Gill, Kuri.Gill@oregon.gov, 503-986-0685

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register is the nation's official list of buildings, structures, districts, sites, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture, and is maintained by the National Park Service in Washington D.C. The State Historic Preservation Office assists property owners, governments, and interested citizens in identifying and listing Oregon's most historically important resources in the National Register.

Contact: Ian Johnson, Ian.Johnson@oregon.gov, 503-986-0678

Diana Painter, Diana.Painter@oregon.gov, 503-986-0668

OREGON HERITAGE TRADITION

Communities in Oregon have events that have, over the years, become associated with what it means to be an Oregonian. In short, if you have attended these events, you are truly an Oregonian. The Oregon Heritage Tradition designation recognizes those events more than 50 years old that represent what it means to be an Oregonian.

Contact: Kyle Jansson, Kyle.Jansson@oregon.gov, 503-986-0685

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & TRAINING

HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

The State Historic Preservation Office offers sight visits to historic properties to review the building's needs, discuss how to meet those needs while preserving the historic character, and plan priorities for work on the building.

Contact: Joy Sears, Joy.Sears@oregon.gov, 503-986-0688

STATE AND FEDERAL CULTURAL RESOURCE COMPLIANCE

Some development and projects may require compliance with State and/or Federal cultural resources. Projects with Federal funding or oversight and projects on public properties are some of these projects. The State Historic Preservation Office provides technical assistance to navigate the process and address the requirements of these laws.

Contacts:

Historic Properties: Jason Allen, Jason.Allen@oregon.gov, 503-986-0579

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Archaeology: John Pouley, John.Pouley@oregon.gov, 503-896-0675