



## Community and Economic Development

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### Background

The 2025 – 2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan is due for adoption in September 2025, after a full year of deliberation and revision. A key step in this process is public review, which has occurred both at the quarterly meetings of the CWEDD Board and Executive Committee, and importantly, within the designated 30-day public comment period of the document, held between July 10<sup>th</sup> and August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

To facilitate speedy and actionable public comment, staff prepared a short survey under the advisement of the CWEDD Board, which focused the public to provide their feedback on the individual chapters of the plan, as well as soliciting their broad opinions on the readability and usability of the document. Staff, with the assistance of a working group made up of CWEDD Board members, identified rural and urban news outlets to promote the opportunity to comment, as well as a social media engagement strategy that CWEDD and its members could follow to drive further outreach.

### Survey Results

The survey received eight (8) responses from the public, which while small, marks substantial progress in public engagement, as previous plans have received almost no interest from the public. Seven out of the eight respondents were from rural communities, and most were from Lane County. They identified as public sector workers, business owners, retirees, and members of the nonprofit sector. Feedback was generally positive, and respondents broadly agreed that the draft is easy to understand and logically structured. In alignment with Federal best practices, the respondents appreciated the number of graphics and data visualizations.

Respondents found that the Priority Areas identified by the CWEDD Board were well targeted to the goals of the region, with one writing *"Business Development and regional collaboration are absolutely key to long-term success"*. The highest-ranking priority areas in terms of relevance and impact for respondents' communities were "Foundations for Economic Wellbeing" and "Grow Economic Vitality through Business Development". Which is notable as these two Areas received the most attention from the Board and staff during this plan revision (as compared to the Priority Areas of the previous plan).

### Implementation, Accountability and Metrics

Many respondents indicated a desire for CWEDD to more clearly track and communicate progress during plan implementation. Suggestions included using a public dashboard/scorecard (or similar) to share progress. A common refrain was a call for CWEDD to make a concerted effort to engage stakeholders within the business community and the public, traditionally underrepresented rural views. As one commentor put it:

*"Communicate, communicate, communicate with the public"*