



Economic Development – Civic Engagement Series

Tuesday, October 10th | 5:00 – 7:00 PM | In-Person

In-Person: La Pine Activity Center - 16450 Victory Way, La Pine, OR 97739

AGENDA

- 5:00 – 5:30 **A. Community Meal**
- Catered by La Pine Activity Center Kitchen
- 5:30 – 5:35 **B. Meeting Begins**
- Introductions
- 5:35 – 5:45 **C. Purpose & Survey Overview**
- Who are We?
 - Newberry Regional Partnership – a team of public and private citizens who have come together to develop a long-range plan for growth in South Deschutes County
 - Project Goal: collaborative organization of community leaders engaged in planning for and dealing with changes associated with growth in the future.
 - Purpose
 - Create a Community Strategic Action Plan
 - Address the effects of growth in Newberry Country (South Deschutes, North Klamath, West Lake Counties)
 - Population growth, changing demographics, effects on community culture and values, use of public services, health care needs, etc.
 - Discussions shared with the broader community.
 - Achieve community consensus on different matters.
 - Serve as facilitators for collaborative, community-led development.
 - Today's Purpose
 - Engaging community discussion on matter of interest and/or concern
 - Candid conversations welcome

- Bring forth issues, problems, challenges, successes, opportunities, and ideas for action to address today's topic.
- Survey Overview
 - Total study population: 16,800 in 97739 and 97707 zip codes
 - Sought to collect information on community priority issues and values.
 - There was an error on this slide that stated the target population for the survey was 12,000. This is wrong as it only reflects the 97739 zip code. The corrected number is above.
 - Biggest Concerns from Survey:
 - Growth & Change
 - Public Safety – wildfire, homelessness, drug use & crime
 - Increasing traffic
 - Social divisions in the community
 - Quality of public education
 - Lack of local restaurants, shops, and competitive grocery stores
 - Access to healthcare and 24/7 emergency care
 - Important Results
 - 47% - very/somewhat pleased with local retail opportunities.
 - 60% - very/somewhat concerned with lack of affordable and available housing.
 - 68% - Strongly/Somewhat agreed that “In the future my community should...” gain greater control over growth.
 - 71% Strongly/Somewhat agreed that “In the future my community should...” prevent over-building and development.

5:45 – 6:05

D. Panelist Presentation

Scott Asla – Broker, Team Asla/Windermere Central OR Real Estate

- We can be a part of the solution to the housing crisis. At the time of this meeting, there are 47 homes for sale under \$400,000. Median rental price is \$2298, which is comparable to a mortgage.
- 46% of these 47 listed homes have had a price decrease.
- Many renters do not think they can buy, don't have information about the resources available.
- A “first time homebuyer” is someone who has not bought a home in 3 years, based on definitions from lenders.
- Different types of loans available
 - [Oregon Department of Veteran Affairs – Veteran Home Loan Program](#)

- [Oregon Bond Residential Loan Program](#)
- Central Oregon VA program, 2% downpayment, no closing costs, no fees.
- USDA Loan, more difficult and harder to qualify, but they are available. 0% down loan, and available in La Pine, Prineville, Redmond
 - Have income cap, but they are reasonable, not too low.

Geoff Wullschlager – City Manager of La Pine

- Unique conditions and issues to be addressed both within the city and the greater area outside of city limits.
- Facing new challenges as the youngest city in Oregon, incorporated in 2006.
 - All part of the reason behind creating Newberry Regional Partnership. People live in the region and identify with, not just cities, not just counties.
- To address growth and change cities need to be flexible.
- Industrial Park is owned by Deschutes County but shared with La Pine, when sold the city will get some of those profits, opportunity for economic growth.
 - Competitively priced and open area for companies to move in and create jobs.
- The city's \$40 million water and sewer infrastructure project also extends to the industrial park to increase attractiveness.
- City is considering tax incentives for affordable housing at 60% of Average Median Income.
- Urban Renewal Agency programs: Storefront investment program.
- Community Giving Program – Music in the Pines, programs at La Pine High School and Middle School, Neighbor Impact expansion projects.
 - \$414,000 of reinvestment into the community by the city.

Dwane Krumme – Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity

- Habitat for Humanity has homeownership program for first time homebuyers (no restrictions on age)
 - The purpose is to get people started on accumulation of wealth that comes with homeownership.
 - Doesn't require a downpayment.
- 19-unit Putney Place Townhome development in La Pine.
- Would like to build 6-8 homes for families each year in La Pine.
- If they live in the home for 5 years, they can receive the gifted equity through the program.
 - Habitat only recovers what it costs to build the home. The difference between sale price and cost to build = gifted equity amount
- The average cost is \$1400-1600/month, less for many than rent.

- Critical Home Repairs – health and safety based. Efficient way for Habitat to spend their money as they keep people in homes, helping to prevent homelessness.
 - Funded by grants, no cost to the homeowner. About 100 were completed in the past year.

Ann Gawith – Executive Director, La Pine Chamber of Commerce

- The Chamber of Commerce is a business membership organization, they connect with State and local chambers to advocate for small businesses.
- 275 members, which is large for a Chamber of La Pine’s size.
- These are the people that made La Pine what it is today. Showed resilience through difficult times and are looking ahead to what lies in La Pine’s future.
- Ann runs the Made in La Pine store, a place for cottage industries, local artisans, etc. to sell their items.
- Recently lost the Wise Buys Weekly Newspaper, which was a huge economic driver through advertising.
 - This led to the invention of South County Shopper which is an online site for advisements, classified ads., etc.
- Tourism in South County helped revive the region’s economy.
 - Establishment of Newberry National Monument is an example.
 - [Newberry Country Trail Visitor’s Guide.](#)
- [Travel Oregon’s Rural Tourism Studio](#) allows communities to come together and create a marketable brand, included many partners.
 - Helped lead to the creation of the Newberry Country Trail.
- Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center is a connector for many individuals, government organizations, elected officials, non-profits, businesses, etc.

Patricia Lucas – Executive Director of Sunriver La Pine Economic Development (SLED) Program

- Attract and guide new businesses and employers. SLED helps them get started, they have guides for new businesses.
- SLED advises new businesses from start to exit.
- Work with local businesses to retain and expand operations.
 - 85% of new jobs come from existing businesses.
 - Identify resources and tailor assistance.
- Patricia helps companies with site selection to find what they need and ensure a smooth process. She also helps with the development process.
- Tax incentives for traded sector that are based on investments that result in job creation.

- Work in collaboration with small businesses development center at Central Oregon Community College and other organizations to help businesses find financing.
- They have workforce development resources and SLED created a Resource Directory.
- A new spec building being built for a company to move in to in La Pine.
- [SLED Website with additional resources.](#)

6:05 – 7:00

E. Group Discussion

- Participants wrote questions for panelists that were read by the moderator.
- Group activity – participants wrote on sticky notes about Challenges, Opportunities, Successes, and Ideas for Action for three topics related to Economic Development: Retail, Housing, and Growth & Change.

Questions:

What is the availability of commercial space? How to we support local retail businesses?

- Geoff – very little land left zoned for commercial space.
 - The city can apply for rezoning – must be approved by the State of Oregon.
 - City can annex more land – come with big price tag (infrastructure costs).
- Currently doing a Comprehensive Plan Update Community can be involved, city wants and needs your input.
 - Visit this website lapine45.com (will be up by next week) to learn more and make comments.
- Most state economic development funding is prioritized for larger industrial businesses, traded sectors.

Are sewer projects part of critical home repair done by Habitat for Humanity?

- Dwane – Habitat does not have sufficient funds to do complete repairs or replacements of septic systems. Can partner with NeighborImpact to help finance these projects.
- COIC is currently running the Central Oregon Septic Assistance Program
 - <https://www.coic.org/cosap/>
 - Application period closes Sunday, Oct. 15, COIC is encouraging people to keep applying and spread the word about the program if you know someone who may be eligible to receive funding.

Do the panelists support a bridge at Burgess Rd, over the railroad crossing at goes across Highway 97?

- Ann – something has to be done. It is a difficult transportation project.
- Geoff – ODOT is aware of the issue and monitoring the situation, data collection will conclude at the end of summer 2024 to evaluate the sinking land in the area. ODOT is currently in a budget crunch due to lack of expected funding from planned road/bridge tolls in the PDX Metro region.

- Community comment: Tests are being done on Cross Laminated Timber, they are as strong as steel and can be used to build high-rise buildings. More studies need to be done on the material's use in bridges.

What is the rule for how long people can live in trailers?

- Geoff – depends on the situation and details. State law and federal legal precedent are driving the answer to this question which supersedes city and local ordinances.

What new businesses are moving in?

- Patricia - La Pine Community Health Center received a \$1.6 million donation from billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott.
 - Funds will go towards creation of a Wellness Center at the La Pine campus.
 - They are looking for more donors, please contact Courtney (cignazzitto@lapinehealth.org) if interested in donating.
- Patricia - Have been some sales in the industrial park, SLED will help businesses access resources to help them succeed.

How many homes are projected to be built in La Pine?

- Geoff – hard to answer because of the volatility of the economy currently. Sometimes buyers back out at the last minute. There's been a slowdown in single-family residential development and an increase in interest in multi-family residential development.
 - Within the next three years could expect 200-230 units.
 - Scott Asla figured that to be a pretty conservative estimate.

Cascadia Design Standards – why did my building have to follow the standards but my neighbors have pink-ish colored buildings?

- Geoff- trying to reflect a mountain theme, angled roofs, natural materials (wood), unfinished metal, glass, browns & greens.
- Vicki – new buildings coming into the Cascadia theme area are required to be built with these design standards.
- Geoff: When there is redevelopment (building is scrapped, leveled, or footprint adjustment), design requirements come in. Preexisting buildings built before code overlaid, if they don't change their footprint (addition, change of structure) they don't need to adhere to these standards.

Huntington Road, when will they start the construction of the roundabout? Traffic is going too fast and increasing.

- Geoff – Memorial and Huntington traffic circle is a \$2-3 million project, and new developments must contribute to these projects. Huntington Rd is a county road and the County would like the City of La Pine to take ownership, but the City does not have the resources right now to create a Road Department.
 - Will be a left-hand turn lane constructed from the Southbound Lane.
 - City has engaged with Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, \$230,000 annual to increase police presence.

- Speed wagons are placed in this area to help slow down traffic.
- Another potential left-hand turn lane at Memorial.

Are we taking any initiatives for managing wildlife?

- Please attend the Environment and Natural Resources Engagement Session on Tuesday, Nov. 7 to engage in discussion on this issue.

Is the East Side of Highway 97 in La Pine still getting landscaping that was done on the West Side?

- Geoff: Received partial funding through ARPA to do so, but costs increased over time and there needs to be more funding.
 - Funds will be used to do a master plan that is completed to help solicit funds from donors. Intention is to mirror the west side of the highway.

Highway 97 and 6th Street?

- Community Comment: proposed roundabout.
- Geoff: It is ODOT's jurisdiction and will not be putting any funding towards it this biennium.
 - Problem similar to many state highways. ODOT has an unwritten mandate to not stop the flow of traffic/commerce, unless there is a situation that demands it.
 - Stoplight is cheaper but more problematic for ODOT's goals.

Are there any specific programs to attract diverse businesses and populations to South County?

- Geoff: In the recent funding cycle, the city applied to the state to help fund the Comprehensive Plan Update. City was required to have DEI programming to receive this funding, so they conducted demographic research.
 - 16% of city population is living in poverty.
 - There is an enormous push for DEI from the state and will be a part of the Comprehensive Plan going forward.
- Community Comment: DEI is what helps people get grants, need to be included when we're developing projects so that we can successfully help our communities in need (ex. Impoverished communities)

Where will water supply come from?

- Geoff: Within city limits the aquifer is doing well and is large. Incorporated communities north of La Pine are very worried about their water supply.
 - Large water and sewer expansion project done by City of La Pine to increase safe access.

How do we ensure communities outside of La Pine/Sunriver are represented and their needs met?

- Three Rivers would like to be included in conversations and other unincorporated areas as well.

Sticky Note Group Activity

Participants wrote on sticky notes what they thought were Challenges, Opportunities, Successes, and Ideas for Action for the following Economic Development topics:

1. Retail
2. Growth & Change
3. Housing

Responses for each topic are listed below:

1. Retail
 - a. Challenges:
 - i. Need retail space for small commercial businesses
 - ii. Not enough grocery store options
 - b. Opportunities:
 - i. Town is still small so lots of need for various businesses
 - ii. Town wants things to do for kids/teens, possible business opportunity
 - c. Successes:
 - i. Thai restaurant left La Pine – went to Bend – and is coming back. Let's find out why and leverage that success
 - d. Ideas for Action:
 - i. Developers to pre-build
2. Growth and Change
 - a. Challenges:
 - i. La Pine is split on growth vs. no growth. We have to agree to work together
 - ii. Low/no income resources for food/supplies/transportation
 - b. Opportunities:
 - i. More commercial and retail services in Three Rivers where there is more vacant land and large dense population
 - c. Successes:
 - i. Cascadia Design Standards
 - d. Ideas for Action:
 - i. Preserve our history - maintain small town feel
3. Housing
 - a. Challenges:
 - i. "Affordable" housing monthly payments still seem high for La Pine population
 - ii. Unsafe drinking water and road infrastructure in Three Rivers → largest, fastest growing community
 - iii. Houseless shelter needed – warming and cooling
 - iv. Safe spaces for the less fortunate

- v. How do you balance home growth with keeping La Pine “small.” One of the main things people responded with from the survey said keeping La Pine small was a priority. How do you balance that with home growth?
- b. Opportunities
- c. Successes:
 - i. Lots of new housing that draws new residents from surrounding communities. We need to keep them now!
- d. Ideas for Action:
 - i. Apartments and rental assistance for special needs adults.
 - ii. Incentives to homeowners to have extra dwelling (ADU) on their property.
 - iii. Change codes to build vet. type communities that are commercial small homes.