



CITY OF

# West Linn

## 2023 Advisory Group Annual Report

---

### **Advisory Group:** *Economic Development Committee*

#### **Group Leadership:**

Chair:	Shannon Ilas
Vice Chair:	Shannen Knight
Council Liaison:	Leo (Lou) Groner
Staff Liaison:	Alena Schnarr, Business Support & Economic Dev Coordinator

#### **Meeting Times, Dates & Location:**

- EDC meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, 6:00-7:30 pm.
- In 2023, the EDC met 8 times.  
(February, April, May, June, July, September, October, December).
- Four meetings were canceled. (January, March, August and November).

#### **2023 Accomplishments**

- Helped develop a [work plan](#) based on 2023 goals, listed in 2022 EDC report.
- Advised on development of a Technical Assistance grant for small businesses. 47 grants totaling \$85,000 of ARPA funds were distributed in June 2023.
- Advised on strategy and implementation of Hwy 43/Willamette Drive business group and mixer. Inaugural mixer was held on October 3, 2023 at McLean House.
- Collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce and advised on a Tourism video which was produced by Here is Oregon.
- Advised on business licensing process/fees and made suggestions to West Linn's finance department to improve process. Discussion of incentive program for 2024.
- Advised on future Tourism hub on West Linn's website – Schnarr would like to develop in 2024 and call "Explore West Linn".
- Advised on Chamber of Commerce/Business Recovery Center's Business Directory.
- Advised on winter Business Resource Fair concept.
- Advised on the development of Business Support toolkit. This was completed in July 2023.

## 2023 Challenges

1. Lack of clear Economic Development goals and direction from City Council. The group would like to have more clarity on their role as it relates to City Council's priorities.
2. Due to lack of direction, the Chair was not able to draft the agenda. Schnarr developed each agenda and reported on Business Support work. Schnarr would like to liaise and not chair meetings.
3. Some members feel the group is now a Business Support advisory group as opposed to working on Economic Development for the City. They would like to meet less or as needed if specific goals are not clear from Council and there is no need.
4. Would like more quantifiable data/metrics on the business community.

## 2024 Council Goalsetting

1. **Business Support + Entrepreneurism:**
  - a. Continue to develop ways to create an inclusive, diverse and equitable business climate in West Linn.
  - b. Continue work on growth of Hwy 43/Willamette Drive business group.
  - c. Develop a way to support home-based businesses.
2. **Tourism Development:**
  - a. Focus on continuing to promote West Linn as a tourism destination in collaboration with local and regional partners.
3. **Long-range Economic Development projects:**
  - a. Support the long-range Planning department projects (Waterfront Plan and Vision 43) as needed.

## Any additional feedback to share with the City Council?

- In the next biennium, it might be helpful to hire a consultant to develop a new Economic Development plan, revise the existing Economic Opportunities Analysis or create a strategy to effectively support the long-range economic development projects mentioned above. The EDC would like to see more Community Development direction to help make these projects succeed and integrating the work of the Planning, Parks, and Economic Development departments so we are all working together towards one goal.
- EDC was curious about what Council and the City has gained from this committee over the years? A few members researched other municipalities of West Linn's size and they do not have an Economic Development Committee.