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During the 2020-21 goal setting session, the City Council identified the creation of a Monmouth Economic Development Strategic Plan as one of its top priorities. The description includes:

“Develop a 5-Year Economic Development Plan to guide the City in identifying key priorities to diversify the City’s economy, identifying key challenges, ensuring stakeholder consensus and preparing strategies and initiatives to proactively guide the City’s business development efforts. The priorities, objectives and policies will be designed in four main areas including business retention and expansion, business recruitment, downtown development and tourism.”

The specified outcome is a 5 – Year Economic Development Strategic Plan assigned to the City Manager and Community & Economic Development Department. A committee made up of community stakeholders met together on five occasions. The Committee reviewed current economic and demographic trends and identified Monmouth’s assets and weaknesses. Next, the Committee determined the vision statement, mission statement, focus areas and strategies. Performance outcomes were also identified to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Monmouth Economic Development Strategic Plan. During the strategic planning process, input was gathered from local businesses through the Monmouth Business Association and the Monmouth Engaged University/Community Connections Committee.
The City recognizes economic development is a team sport best played when the City’s efforts are coordinated and aligned with other organizations and individuals involved in economic development at the local, regional and state level. Working collectively on common goals, builds on the strengths of other organizations, reduces duplication of services, and extends the reach of the City’s ability to create economic prosperity.

Successful implementation of this strategy will require collaborating with a variety of economic development partners, many of whom are listed below.

- Business Oregon
- Central School District
- Chemeketa Small Business Development Center
- City of Independence
- Indy Commons/Indy Idea Hub
- MERIT Program
- Mid-Valley Regional Solutions Team
- Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments
- MINET
- Monmouth Business Association
- Monmouth Engaged University/Community Connections Committee
- Monmouth Independence Chamber of Commerce
- Monmouth Power and Light
- Monmouth Urban Renewal Agency
- Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
- Oregon Main Street Program
- Polk County
- Polk County Community Development Corporation
- Polk County Tourism Alliance
- SEDCOR
- Travel Salem & Travel Oregon
- Western Oregon University
- Willamette Workforce Partnership
> COMMUNITY PROFILE

Demographic Trends

POPLATION

⇒ Current population: 9,940 (PSU estimate)
⇒ Steady population growth rate (~1.5% Average Annual Growth Rate)

AGE

Median Age
⇒ Monmouth: 26
⇒ Polk County: 37.4
⇒ State of Oregon: 39.6

RACE & ETHNICITY

⇒ 3.5% increase in communities of color between 2000 and 2010 Census.
⇒ Over 13% identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race. (18.5% U.S.)
⇒ Approximately 17.9% of Monmouth’s population speaks a language other than English at home. (21.5% U.S.)

EDUCATION

⇒ High school graduate or higher – 87.5% (87.7% U.S.)
⇒ bachelor’s degree or higher – 36.4% (31.5% U.S.)
⇒ Home to Western Oregon University

Data Source: Applied Geographic Solutions 2020 (https://www.oregonprospector.com/)
COMMUNITY PROFILE

Economic Trends

INCOME & POVERTY
⇒ Median household income $43,929 (31% less than the county, state and nation)
⇒ Persons in poverty – 33.8% (11.8% in U.S.)

EMPLOYMENT LOCATION TRENDS
⇒ Jobs/Household Ratio: 0.8
⇒ Ratio = Comparison of # of jobs in Monmouth to # of residents in the labor force
⇒ Healthy ratio, tipped to housing side.
⇒ 85% workforce commutes outside of Monmouth

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS
⇒ Total business establishments = 208
In 2019, the leading industries in Monmouth were:
⇒ Health Care and Social Services
⇒ Retail
⇒ Accommodation and Food Services
⇒ Education

BUSINESS SIZE
⇒ Almost 80% of Monmouth businesses have 9 or fewer employees

Data Source: Applied Geographic Solutions 2020 (https://www.oregonprospector.com/)
Strengths & Weaknesses

The Monmouth Economic Strategy included a review of strengths and weaknesses in order to understand where the City is now and how to position the City to where it wants to be in the future.

What is working for us now (strengths)?

- Positive relationship with University
  - Opportunity to tie University and City branding together
- Highly educated labor force
- Access to affordable multi-family (workforce) housing
- Urban renewal as a tool to help fund economic development projects (5 years left)
- Development of Ash Creek Station providing additional commercial services locally, & adding to tax base
- Available public utility capacity to support growth (e.g. water/sewer service)
- Attractive downtown with new investment underway (Nelson Station, Monmouth Commons)
- Monmouth Business Association (MBA) – organization to support business retention
- Centralized location – 50 miles to anything
- Edwards Addition – attractive neighborhood

What is not working (weaknesses)?

- One large employer (WOU) leaves the City’s economy vulnerable and in need of further diversity
  - Fluctuating enrollments at WOU
- Very little existing industrial development to contribute to the property tax base
- Constrained land availability (dwindling supply, wetland/flood impacts, high infrastructure costs)
- How to get traffic off 99W into downtown?
  - Need for better wayfinding
- Better connections between east and west (of HWY 99) development so they don’t detract from each other
  - Concern that growth on the eastside of HWY 99W (housing and retail) means less flow downtown
- Lack of a shared economic development vision to work toward (who are we and what do we want?)
  - A "consistent and cohesive" business/development direction
- Constrained single family/owner-occupied housing opportunities
  - Short term residential land supply limited due to large unannexed parcels inside the UGB
- Limited tax base (many institutional and non-profit properties off the tax rolls)
- Better communication needed between businesses, City, WOU
- MBA not well attended, additional support needed
Advantages & Assets

Monmouth is fortunate to have a number of economic advantages and assets to support future economic growth. Asset based economic development strategies focus on how to utilize the City’s unique advantages and assets to encourage sustainable economic growth that leverages existing resources to their fullest potential.

“How is Monmouth’s economy different (advantages)?

➢ Western Oregon University and all of the tremendous assets the University brings (e.g. cultural, athletic events, student workers, diversity, etc.)

➢ Access to Pacific Highway 99W – high traffic volumes, life blood of transportation access on the west side of I-5.

➢ The City has its own municipally owned electric utility (Monmouth Power and Light) with power rates ~50% less than other power service providers, and reliable, efficient service.

➢ MINET – high speed broadband

➢ Proximity to agricultural markets that offer a variety of local food options and world renown wineries

➢ Small town livability

➢ Proximity to Independence resulting in a larger population service area (~20,000 pp).

“We have all the right ingredients for economic development, we just need to find the right recipe.” - Don Patten, MINET
> VISION & MISSION

The Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee developed a vision and mission statement to guide the City’s overall economic development efforts.

Vision Statement

A vibrant and diverse economy that provides a sense of community pride and prosperity to all.

Mission Statement

We foster an agile, exceptional and forward-looking dynamic local economy that rewards innovation, nurtures financial success and creates equitable opportunity for prosperity. We are committed every day to supporting those whose talent, investment, grit and vision drive Monmouth forward.
Upon developing the economic vision & mission statements, the Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee identified six (6) focus areas (goals) to work over the next five years to help achieve the desired vision for the City. The committee further identified a series of strategies within each focus area to accomplish each of the focus area goals.

1. **Invest in and Promote Entrepreneurship**
2. **Use the City’s Assets to Encourage Diverse Economic Growth**
3. **Identify & Prepare for the Economy of the Future**
4. **Assist in the Development of a Vibrant Downtown**
5. **Expand the Economic Impact of Tourism**
6. **Support Small Business Retention**

Implementation of the strategy is guided by the following overarching principles:

- **Collaboration**—Monmouth will collaborate with economic development partners at all levels to further leverage local resources in support of economic development priorities.

- **Equity and Inclusion**—Monmouth will work to improve access to resources to diverse members of the community and seek to improve the status of economically disadvantaged populations.

- **Communication**—Monmouth will communicate both internally and externally to build support and engagement for economic development initiatives.

- **Sustainability** - Monmouth will support economic initiatives that are sustainable.

This star marks the Strategies that are Short-Term Priorities and are meant to be accomplished with 1-2 years. A full list of short-term priorities is included on page 15 of the report.
Invest in and Promote Entrepreneurship

Having Western Oregon University (WOU) as an asset gives Monmouth the potential to become a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship. Together with key partners, the strategies listed below will achieve our vision of promoting a diverse economy.

**STRATEGIES:**

- **Support partners** that provide entrepreneurship services (e.g. SBDC, Indy Commons).
- Support efforts of the Oregon Innovation Plan to foster early stage innovation at WOU & catalyze the commercialization & deployment of new products/services.
- **Recognize and promote** entrepreneurs and innovators in Monmouth.
- Provide easier **access to resources and tools** specifically for new businesses.
- Work with the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs to **support minority owned businesses** in Monmouth.

**OUTCOMES:**

- **Growth in new business start-ups.**
- **Increased utilization of business services and programs.**

**KEY PARTNERS**

City, MICC, MBA, WOU, CSD, SBDC, Indy Commons, Entrepreneurs, Business Oregon
Use the City’s Assets to Encourage Diverse Economic Growth

The City of Monmouth has unique assets that contribute to its success. By utilizing Western Oregon University, Monmouth Light and Power, MINET, and Highway 99, the City is able to use it’s assets to encourage diverse economic growth.

STRATEGIES:

⇒ Identify target industries that require highway access, affordable power and high speed broadband services.

⇒ Prepare and distribute promotional materials that identify the City’s economic development strengths and incentives.

⇒ Encourage agricultural and food related industries (e.g. beef processing for local restaurants, wine cooperative, hazelnut processing, hemp industry).

⇒ Support the development of green industries & renewable energy development.

⇒ Develop a “Strike Team” to respond to economic development inquiries, communicate & market strengths, and create a supportive & positive business climate.

⇒ Research where WOU graduates go to work and recruit employers to locate in Monmouth.

OUTCOMES:

⇒ Increased jobs, businesses and revenues in target industries

⇒ Growth in electric/MINET customers

⇒ Increased visibility of Monmouth’s assets to targeted industries

KEY PARTNERS

City, SEDCOR, MINET, MICC, MBA, WOU, Target Industries
Identify & Prepare for the Economy of the Future

Most job growth comes from the expansion of existing businesses. Therefore, it is critical to evaluate lands where business expansion is likely or desired. This evaluation can identify obstacles, barriers, and estimated market growth. Together with key partners, the short-term priority strategies listed below will achieve our vision of promoting a vibrant economy.

**STRATEGIES:**

- **Ensure the City has an up-to-date 20-year supply of land** to support future commercial and industrial growth.

- **Update the City’s codes** to respond to economic trends and streamline development review procedures.

- **Invest in and expand infrastructure** to provide capacity or future economic growth.

- **Assist in Highway 99W redevelopment efforts.**

- **Extend the duration of the City’s Urban Renewal Plan.**

**OUTCOMES:**

- Updated 20-year land supply for employment uses

- Updated zoning ordinance with streamlined review procedures and zoning that supports targeted industry clusters.

- Expanded infrastructure that supports economic growth.
Develop a Vibrant Downtown and Commercial Areas

Downtown Monmouth is the heart of the community for both residents and visitors. It sets the tone for our tourism economy and plays a strong role in the quality of life of residents. Elements of the infrastructure and associated amenities are in need of repair, improvement, or replacement. Together with key partners, the strategies listed below will achieve our vision of creating an economy that provides a sense of community pride.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Join the **Main Street Program**.  
- **Utilize urban renewal** as an incentive to spur redevelopment and façade improvements in the downtown & commercial areas.
- Market, promote and increase visibility of **events and activities**.
- Improve downtown **wayfinding /signage** (e.g. historic area, digital event sign).

**OUTCOMES:**

- Member of the Main Street Oregon Program
- Improved commercial facades
- Increased building occupancy & low vacancy rates
- Increased visitation at community events and activities

**KEY PARTNERS**

City, URA, MBA, MICC, Main St Program, UCCC
Expand the Economic Impact of Tourism

Tourism is an essential component to the regional economy of Polk County and the City of Monmouth. Effective marketing ensures that key messages reach and influence their intended audience. By partnering with neighboring communities, the City will be able to expand the economic impact of tourism.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Participate in the Polk County Tourism Alliance (PCTA) and engage with tourism partners to promote Monmouth and Polk County as a tourism destination.

- Develop strategies for marketing, branding, capital projects, and event development through contracted services.

- Work with WOU to promote tourism opportunities to campus visitors, and market WOU activities & events through PCTA tourism marketing efforts.

**OUTCOMES:**

- Increased number of visitors in Monmouth
- Improved visibility of Monmouth & Polk County as a tourism destination.
- Increased transit occupancy tax

**KEY PARTNERS**

City, Polk County Tourism Alliance, Travel Salem, WOU Conference & Event Services
Support Small Business Retention

Small businesses play a critical role in Monmouth’s business landscape. They provide key goods and services to the city’s residents, firms and workers. Together with key partners, the strategies listed below will achieve our vision of bringing prosperity to all.

**STRAATEGIES:**

⇒ **Disseminate and maintain information**, technical assistance, programs, initiatives, and incentives that support small business growth and operations.

⇒ **Work to identify and address** the challenges and barriers faced by businesses.

⇒ **Convene resource partners and small businesses** to better understand existing resources and the needs and challenges faced by small business.

⇒ **Expand student internships & career development opportunities** with local businesses.

**OUTCOMES:**

⇒ Updated economic development [website](#)

⇒ Improved awareness and utilization of business resources and support programs

⇒ Increased number of businesses retained

**KEY PARTNERS**

City, MBA, MICC, Indy Commons, SBDC, WOU
The Economic Development Strategic Planning Committee and local business owners identified several key priority strategies that should be undertaken in the short term (1-2 years) as noted below.

**Short Term Priorities:**

- Develop a *Strike Team* to respond to economic development inquiries, communicate & market strengths, and create a supportive & positive business climate.
- Invest in and expand the City’s *infrastructure* to provide capacity for future economic growth.
- Update the City’s codes to respond to economic trends and *streamline review procedures* (e.g. Code Assistance Update).
- Use *urban renewal* as an incentive to spur redevelopment and façade improvements.
- Ensure the City has an adequate *land supply* (e.g. 99W redevelopment opportunities).
- Work to identify and address the *challenges and barriers* faced by businesses.
- Join the *Main Street Program*. 