

Oregon's Economic Revitalization Team

Name of Tool: Multi-agency coordination of State Funding and Technical Assistance

Implementing Agency: State DOT, other state agencies

Scale of Application: State/regional planning, corridor/subarea planning, transportation project development, local comprehensive planning, site planning and development

Description: The 72nd Oregon Legislature asked the Governor to establish the Economic Revitalization Team (ERT) in 2003 to focus state agencies on working together at the local level to increase economic opportunity and help local governments and business and property owners bring industrial sites to "shovel ready" status. The ERT emphasizes multi-agency coordination on economic and community projects of local and statewide significance. The ERT has five regional coordinators deployed around the state to help Oregon communities and businesses succeed. These coordinators serve as Governor's Office ombudsmen to local governments and businesses. They work closely with ten multi-agency regional teams to provide coordinated state assistance to local jurisdictions and businesses. Assistance can include:

- Expediting and streamlining state agency permitting processes;
- Coordinating and leveraging state technical and financial assistance; and
- Improving local access to state services and resources.

Purpose and Need

The ERT has its origins as Oregon's Community Solutions Team (CST), which was created by Executive Order in 1997 to encourage state and local government agencies to address land use, transportation, and development issues cooperatively, rather than individually. The goal of the CST was to maintain and increase the state's livability, while the goal of the ERT is to increase the state's competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Both efforts focused on providing coordinated state assistance on high priority local projects and state initiatives.

The State of Oregon values a coordinated state approach to economic and community development for a number of reasons. First, state agency coordination at both the agency director and field staff level is a valuable cross-agency training tool that results in improved state agency service delivery and customer service to local governments and businesses. Multi-agency coordination at the agency director level is a mechanism for reducing and resolving policy conflicts. In addition, working in a multi-agency team environment at the local and regional level increases efficiency by leveraging multiple funding resources and expedites state permitting processes without compromising environmental protection. And finally, early involvement of the ERT coordinators and the multi-agency regional teams with local jurisdictions on high priority projects improves state/local relationships and often produces a better end product.

Description

The ERT is a seven-member team within the Governor's Office, which takes a collaborative, customer-service oriented and outcome-based approach to economic and community development. The ERT's five regional coordinators, located throughout the state, and two staff in Salem report to the Governor's Intergovernmental Relations. To ensure the success of high priority local economic and community development projects, the five regional coordinators work with local government partners to clarify issues. They also convene state agencies, as well as federal agency representatives as appropriate, to facilitate issue resolution and identify how public resources can be used to address local issues.

The state agency directors help achieve the ERT mission by coordinating policies and programs, streamlining permitting processes, and focusing state resources toward activities that improve Oregon's economy, livability and state agency service delivery. The following state agencies are part of the ERT's multi-agency approach to economic and community development:

- Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECD)
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS)
- Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Department of State Lands (DSL)

- Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
- Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS)

To implement the ERT approach to economic and community development statewide, the state agency directors have organized state agency field staff into ten multi-agency regional teams. These multi-agency teams work with the ERT coordinators on providing coordinated assistance, resources and activities to local government and businesses.

These agencies are asked to participate in the ERT under their current budgets. "We're asking agencies to do what they already do, but differently," explains Gabrielle Schiffer, the ERT's special projects coordinator. The ERT has a bi-annual budget of \$1.2 million, which pays for five regional coordinators stationed around the State, an administrative assistant, and a special projects coordinator.

The ERT established four goals to accomplish between 2005 and 2007:

1. Increase the state's immediate and long-term industrial land supply;
2. Improve state agency coordination among state agency staff and programs on economic and community development;
3. Expedite and streamline state permitting processes; and
4. Enhance coordination on economic and community development between state and local government.

Application Examples

- **Lincoln City – Taft District Redevelopment Project**

The Willamette Valley/Mid-Coast Regional ERT, with ODOT in the lead, assisted the Lincoln City Urban Renewal Agency with its comprehensive downtown redevelopment plan for the Taft District. The goal of this flagship redevelopment project was to capitalize on the unique aspects of the Taft District, tying together the Siletz Bay front and the Highway 101 business district in a way that promotes Taft's historic charm.

This project is the first step toward the completion of the "String of Pearls" program, featuring restoration of six neighborhood business districts of Lincoln City. The Urban Renewal Agency budgeted \$5 million on a variety of redevelopment projects for the area, including infrastructure, street and streetscape improvements; park improvements; burying utility lines; and zero interest rehabilitation loans for property and business owners. The city's improvements to 51st Street were coordinated with significant streetscape improvements made to Highway 101 by ODOT. Development of a village gateway and town plaza, as well as placement of public art, invite pedestrians to explore the Taft District's shops and restaurants. Lincoln City recently began work on the second historic district in its "String of Pearls" program, the Ocean Lake District.

- **"Project ready" Industrial Site Certification Program**

The Industrial Site Certification Program is the centerpiece of Governor Kulongoski's "shovel ready" Initiative. Site certification means that construction can begin on a site within 180 days (six months) or less after being chosen for development (i.e., "project ready"). In order to be certified, a site undergoes a rigorous evaluation process that identifies and removes barriers to site development. Removing barriers and readying a site for certification requires multi-agency, state/local collaboration. Certification assembles all the documentation needed by businesses considering the purchase or lease of a site and characterizes important site attributes such as zoning, transportation access, sewer/water system capacity, and environmental issues.

Oregon is one of only three states with an industrial site certification program. As of January 2006, 38 sites, totaling more than 2,700 acres, were certified statewide. Ten of the certified sites are pending development. Certification improves both the marketability of a particular site and the state's competitive advantage in the global marketplace.

The real estate manager for Lowe's made the following comment,

"You cannot put a dollar value on having that work done in advance. Don't let anyone ever tell you that it was not money well spent...the work you provided gave our engineers a big head start on evaluating the site and really helped move this site forward in our process."

Successes and Lessons Learned

The ERT sees cooperation and coordination among State and local agencies as the key to better planning, whether for livability or economic development. A coordinated state approach to economic and community development recognizes that

the problems faced by local communities are complex and interconnected. The effort is worth it, however, because in the end coordination not only saves state money, it produces a better product.

In Schiffer's words, "That 's why it's important that state agencies are at the table early on in the project development process. Working on a multi-agency basis encourages state agency staff to think outside their own agency and how the actions of other agencies impact might impact them so that sewer pipes are replaced *before* the road above them is repaved."

For Further Information

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More information on the ERT is available at: www.ert.oregon.gov

Information on industrial site certification is available at: <http://www.econ.state.or.us/IC.htm>