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Clackamas County
www.clackamas.us

2026 C4 Economic Development Survey

Summary Report (July 2026)

Executive Summary

In advance of the 2026 Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (C4) Retreat, thirteen communities responded to a countywide Economic Development Survey. The survey provides insight into how communities understand their economic identities, the sectors they prioritize, and the challenges they face in advancing business and employment growth. Overall, jurisdictions report:

- **Strong interest in growing industrial/manufacturing and tourism/hospitality sectors.**
- **Significant barriers** related to utility and road infrastructure, affordable housing, land availability, and regulatory complexity.
- **Common strategies** such as urban renewal, tax increment financing, local partnerships, business retention and expansion, and enterprise zones.
- **Threats** associated with inconsistent or evolving state requirements, limited state support, and cumulative regulatory impacts.
- **Possible Opportunities** including process efficiencies, fiscal reforms, improved state coordination, and targeted policy adjustments to enhance land readiness.

The outcomes of this survey should not be regarded as scientific findings. Rather, outcomes reflect the perceptions and preferences of a focus group at a specific point in time. Participants included elected officials, as well as senior-level and technical staff; individual responses may not represent the official position of a particular jurisdiction.

Findings from this survey informed **Session 3 of the 2026 C4 Retreat**, which centered on defining Clackamas County's economic identity, understanding how the county is viewed externally, and identifying pathways to strengthen economic development.

Within the discussion, participants reflected on infrastructure constraints, while honoring the county's reputation for being pro-growth and getting to "yes". Participants expressed a desire to be known for livable communities, strong home rule, successful logging/forest management, and business-friendly sustainable practices.

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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared for the Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (C4) by the Department of Public & Government Affairs. We would like to extend sincere gratitude to the Department of Transportation and Development for co-developing the survey and providing valuable technical expertise.

Questions

For additional information about the 2026 C4 Retreat and the Economic Development Survey, please email C4@clackamas.us.

Survey Participants and Organization Process Assets

All C4 member agencies were invited to participate in the 2026 Economic Development Survey. Responses were received from 13 communities, including Boring CPO and the cities of Canby, Estacada, Gladstone, Happy Valley, Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, Molalla, Oregon City, Sandy, Tualatin, West Linn, and Wilsonville. Clackamas County, as the survey host, did not contribute a survey.

Although economic development is an emerging policy area for C4, several participating agencies have adopted economic development policies, plans, and strategies. These artifacts, or organizational process assets (OPAs), are listed below to support best practices and peer-to-peer learning.

In addition to existing OPAs, the City of Estacada has an economic development strategy in development, and Canby is expected to begin developing one in the next 12-18 months, alongside an Urban Growth Boundary Concept Plan.

Figure 1 Toolbox of Organization Process Assets

Organization	Document
Canby	• Economic Opportunities Analysis (2023)
Gladstone	• 2025-2027 Economic Development Council Goal
Happy Valley	• Economic Opportunities Analysis (2011)
Lake Oswego	• Economic Development Strategy and Resource Plan (2022)
Milwaukie	• 2025-2027 Economic Development Goal Tracker (2026) • Milwaukie Urban Renewal Plan (2016)
Molalla	• Economic Opportunities Analysis Findings (2025)
Sandy	• Economic Development Strategic Plan (2023) • Economic Opportunities Analysis (2024)
Tualatin	• Tualatin Economic Development Strategy (2025) • Tualatin Economic Opportunities Analysis (2019)
West Linn	• Economic Opportunities Analysis (2016)
Wilsonville	• Economic Development Strategy (2026) • Economic Opportunities Analysis (2026)

“Simply put, an economic development strategic plan is a tool to articulate and realize your community's economic vision and take control of your economic future.” Sandy Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2023

Survey Findings

1. Identity: Which employment sector is your community best known for?

Survey respondents were asked to identify the single employment sector that best characterizes their community. Agriculture, industrial/manufacturing, and retail emerged as the most frequently selected sectors, while hospitality/tourism and medical uses were identified less often.

Responses also revealed a distinct geographic pattern. Communities located closer to the Portland metropolitan core were more likely to identify retail and personal or professional services as their defining employment sectors. Jurisdictions along the urban periphery more commonly identified industrial and manufacturing uses, while communities located farther from the urban core and closer to the wildland-urban interface were more likely to identify agriculture, timber, forest products, and tourism as central components of their local economies.

Figure 2 Economic Identity Chart

 RETAIL	 Gladstone	 Happy Valley	 Milwaukie
 AGRICULTURE / TIMBER / FOREST PRODUCTS	 Boring	 Canby	 Molalla
 PERSONAL / PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	 Lake Oswego	 West Linn	
 INDUSTRIAL / MANUFACTURING	 Estacada	 Tualatin	 Wilsonville
 MEDICAL	 Oregon City		
 HOSPITALITY / TOURISM	 Sandy		

Because respondents were limited to selecting a single sector, these results should be viewed as indicative rather than comprehensive. Many communities possess diverse economies with strong secondary or emerging sectors. For example, while Happy Valley identified retail as its primary economic identity, the city also hosts a significant medical employment hub. Similarly, Oregon City's medical sector currently plays a defining role in its economy, but tourism is expected to grow substantially as redevelopment of the Willamette Falls area progresses.

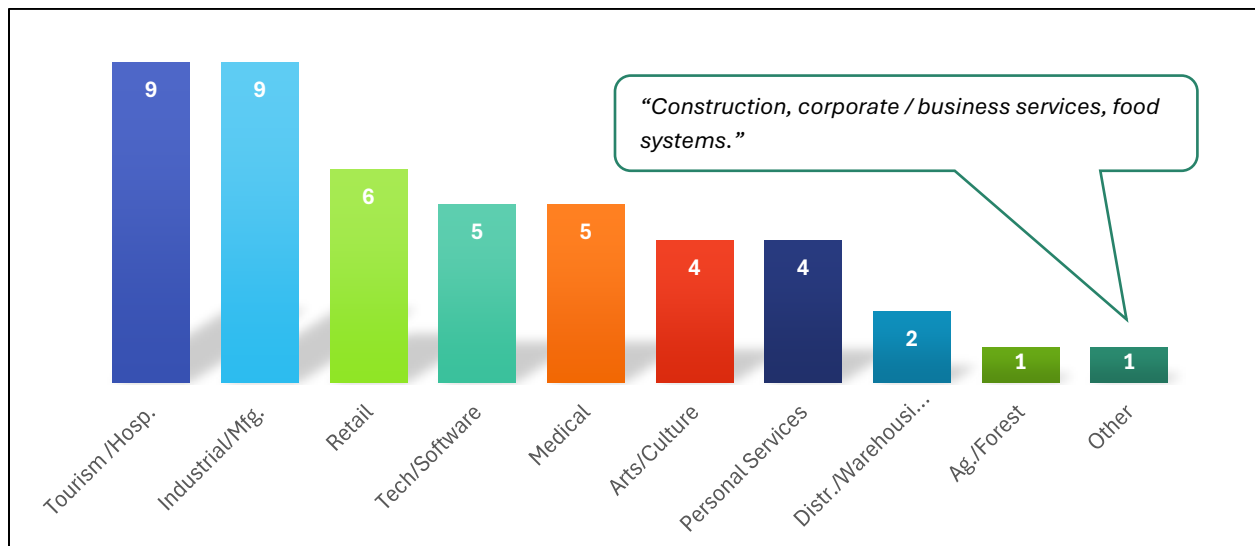
2. Vision: Do you have an employment sector you are working to grow?

When asked which employment sectors they are actively seeking to grow, respondents demonstrated notable alignment around two priorities: industrial/manufacturing and tourism/hospitality. Each sector was identified by nine communities, making them the most commonly selected growth targets.

Although these sectors appear distinct, they may reflect different approaches to a similar challenge: maximizing economic opportunity within increasingly constrained land supplies. Industrial and manufacturing uses often generate comparatively high-wage employment while utilizing land efficiently, making them attractive in communities with limited developable acreage. Conversely, tourism and hospitality strategies enable communities to attract visitor spending and generate economic activity from outside the host community. As communities continue to evaluate growth opportunities, both approaches represent strategies for increasing economic output and local revenues.

Conversely, sectors such as distribution and warehousing, agriculture and forestry, construction, corporate and business services, and food services were rarely reported. These specialized sectors may provide communities with opportunities to differentiate themselves and build competitive advantages based on local assets and market conditions.

Figure 3 Do you have an employment sector you are working to grow? Select all that apply.



3. Challenges: Barriers to employment and business growth

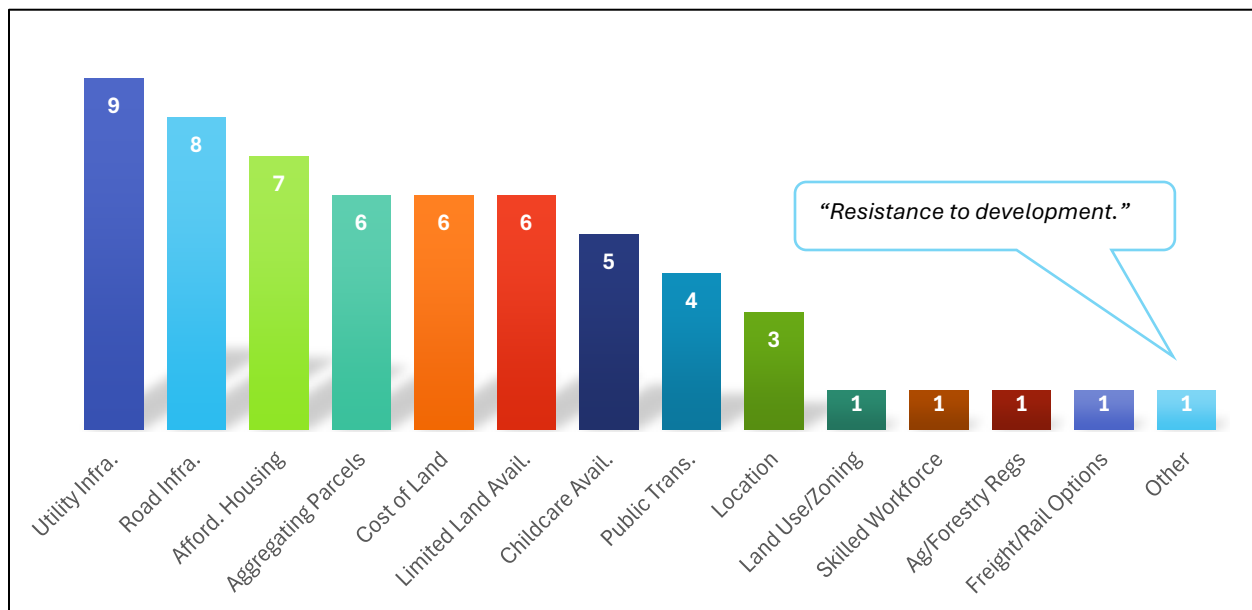
Respondents identified a broad range of barriers that limit business and employment growth. Utility infrastructure emerged as the most frequently cited challenge, followed closely by road infrastructure and affordable housing. Land-related constraints—parcel aggregation, land costs, and limited land availability—were also consistently identified.

Childcare availability, public transportation, and geographic location were identified as moderately common issues. Open-ended responses also acknowledged community resistance to development as an added challenge.

Interestingly, disaster recovery, public safety, and climate-related hazards were not identified as barriers to economic growth. Recognizing the disruptions caused by recent wildfires, severe weather events, and public health emergencies, this finding may reflect both community resilience and the progress made in recovery and preparedness efforts.

Collectively, these findings suggest that infrastructure capacity and land readiness remain among the most significant economic development challenges facing Clackamas County communities. Perhaps most remarkably, utility infrastructure was cited even more frequently than transportation infrastructure and affordable housing, underscoring concerns about water, wastewater, and other essential systems needed to support development. Without sufficient infrastructure capacity, communities may struggle to attract or retain employers regardless of available land supply.

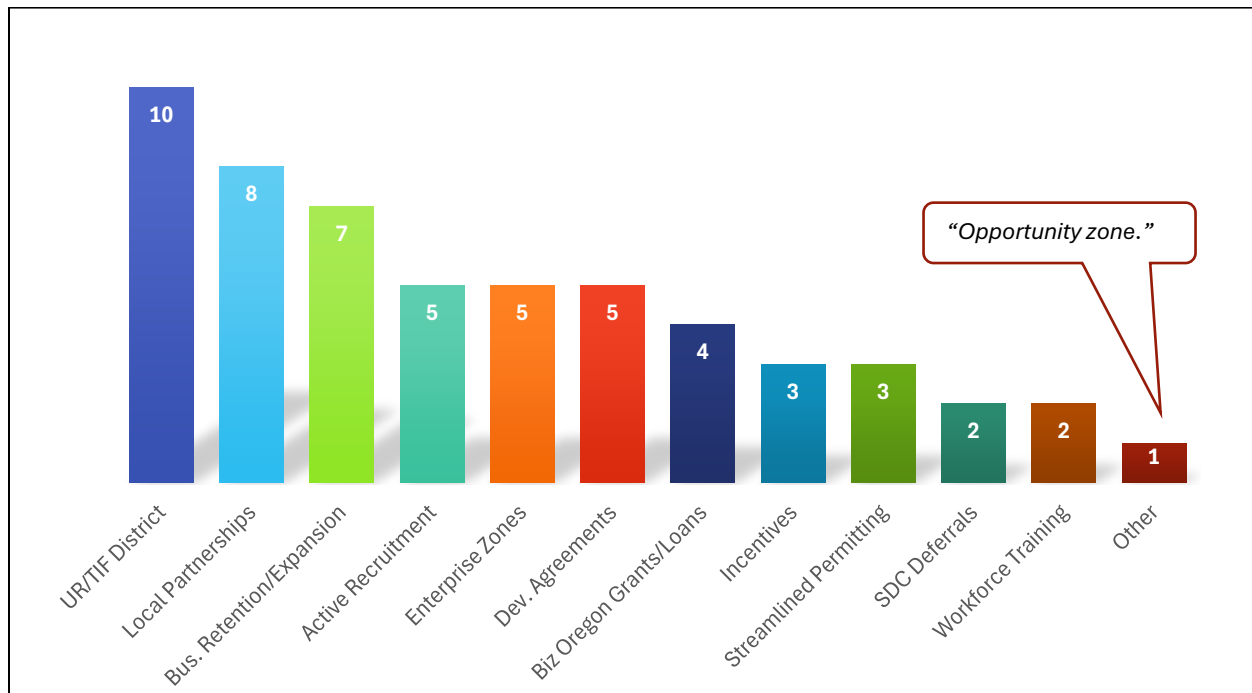
Figure 4 What barriers do you face in realizing employment growth? Select all that apply



4. Tools: Strategies used to support growth

Communities reported using a wide variety of strategies to support business and employment growth. By a margin, urban renewal and tax increment financing (TIF) districts emerged as the most commonly used economic development tool, followed by local partnerships and business retention and expansion programs.

Figure 5 What strategies does your agency/ jurisdiction use to support business and employment growth? Select all that apply.



The prevalence of urban renewal and partnership-based strategies suggests that communities favor tools that leverage collaboration, catalyze private investment, or forego future revenues. Enterprise zones, development agreements, and active business recruitment efforts were also commonly utilized.

Conversely, strategies such as streamlined permitting, direct incentives, and system development charge (SDC) deferrals were used less frequently. These tools typically require jurisdictions to redirect existing resources, reduce fee revenues, or assume additional financial risk at a time when many communities are experiencing fiscal constraints.

Local context is an important consideration in the development and deployment of tools. For example, the City of Estacada participates in a Rural Renewable Energy Development (RRED) Zone, which provides targeted tax incentives to encourage renewable energy

investment in rural areas. Alternatively, Oregon City's BIZ POD program provides technical assistance, peer networking, and professional coaching to entrepreneurs and emerging businesses, strengthening the local small business ecosystem while fostering long-term business resilience.

These examples illustrate that while communities share common goals, successful economic development strategies are often highly place-based and responsive to local opportunities.

5. Possible threats and opportunities

Survey respondents were asked to identify recent or potential policy changes that could either hinder or advance economic growth within their communities. The responses summarized in Figures 6 and 7 represent individual perspectives and lived experiences. This feedback, however, should not be interpreted as consensus policy positions or endorsements by any particular jurisdiction.

Despite the diversity of responses, several common themes emerged. Respondents expressed concern about the cumulative impact of regulatory requirements, particularly in land use, housing, and permitting. Other participants cited concerns about inadequate state partnership and systemic issues resulting in higher costs without comparable revenues.

Perceived opportunities generally clustered around four themes: improving process efficiency and transparency, implementing fiscal reforms, specific policy changes to address the functionality of existing policies and statutes, and state partnerships to improve land readiness.

Land readiness and policy modernization were among the most frequently identified opportunities, suggesting a strong interest in creative development solutions that accelerate development while maintaining local flexibility. Overall, respondent feedback seems to suggest that greater predictability, improved coordination, and strategic investments in infrastructure could enhance local economic development efforts.

Figure 6 Perceived policy threats

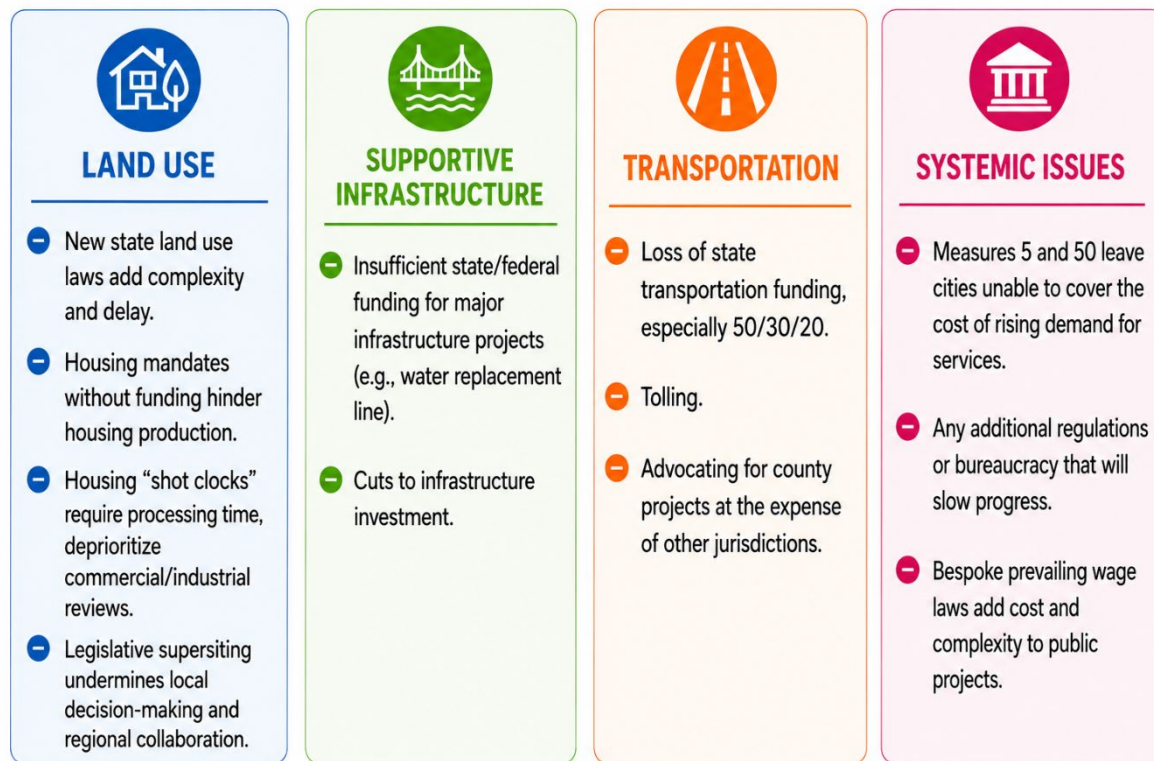
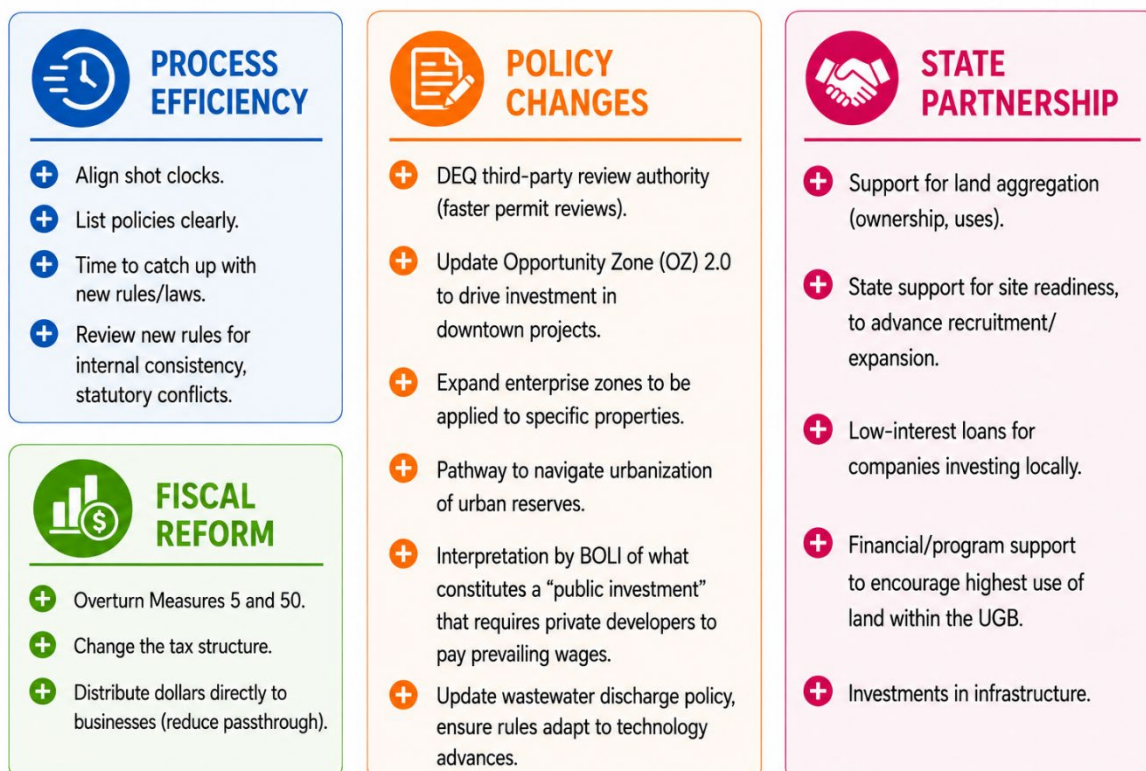


Figure 7 Perceived policy opportunities



6. Local investment priorities

Respondents were invited to identify their top two infrastructure needs to attract or retain businesses, providing a project name, address, or coordinates to assist county staff in mapping needs. Whereas most respondents provided such investments, it is important to remember that the responses of individual respondents may not represent the official view of a particular agency.

Figure 8 Infrastructure needs to attract business

City	Investment Needs
Canby	Canby has constraints as it relates to our power supply. Canby Utility oversees electricity in Canby, and purchases power from Bonneville Power Administration. Portland General Electric runs the transmission lines, bringing power to Canby. The constraints - and future impacts/constraints - are a major concern as Canby works to expand its urban growth boundary.
Estacada	Natural Gas to our Industrial Campus Regional Transportation - OR224 through Carver Curves is difficult.
Boring CPO	Safe roads for commercial as well as private vehicles to commute / do business in our area.
Gladstone	N / A
Happy Valley	Sunrise Corridor & Rock Creek and Clackamas Interceptor
Lake Oswego	We are in the planning stages of expanding our mixed-use urban core east into what is called the Foothills district, located between downtown Lake Oswego and the Willamette River. Barriers to development: 1) Creating a 2nd entrance into the area, which requires crossing a railroad and intersecting with a state highway. One of the top options also includes sensitive lands and needs for an updated culvert. 2) A large amount of fill will be required to bring the land out of the floodplain.
Milwaukie	Public transit and safe multi-modal infrastructure is essential to connect people to jobs and commercial zones as congestion increases and road capacity gets maxed out. Resilient electrical infrastructure is going to be key as severe weather becomes more common.
Molalla	1) Improvement and redirection of Molalla Forest Road from Mathias to OR-213 is a major cost barrier to industrial development. 2) Upgrading power, and installing water, sewer, storm infrastructure in Molalla Forest Road from Mathias to OR-213.

City	Investment Needs
Oregon City	Highway 213 corridor (ODOT) and county road (Redland) intersections to the state facility. Water, sewer, and street improvements down Beaver Creek Road past CCC and OCHS.
Sandy	Sandy's biggest infrastructure need is additional capacity in our wastewater system. The city currently has a moratorium on new development. Our current wastewater infrastructure costs, including both reinvestment in aged assets and the construction of new assets, is estimated at \$188 million. Utility rates and system development charges have been increased significantly, which puts pressure on both current residents and business owners, as well as future developers.
Tualatin	In 2021, the city established the Southwest and Basalt Creek Urban Renewal District in the newly annexed south end of the city. Infrastructure needs include sanitary sewer, water, and stormwater improvements. There is also a need for upgrades to the roads/transportation system and frequent and reliable public transit in this area to help spur industrial development.
West Linn	Land availability. Aging water infrastructure. Disinvestment in State Hwy 43. Potential for tolling I-205 is a risk factor.
Wilsonville	1) Boone Bridge: carries 126,000 vehicles, including 17,000 trucks, daily—more freight traffic than the Interstate Bridge. Backups ripple throughout the metro area, causing tangible financial impact to businesses. Safety, seismic, and capacity improvements are needed. 2) Parkway Ave: serves as an I-5 frontage road. From Burns Way to Xerox Ave it does not meet urban standards, including lack of ped/bike and shoulders. Improvements ensure new and existing businesses have safe, convenient access.

7. Connecting communities with resources

The final survey question invited respondents to request a range of support from the Clackamas County Economic Development team. Clackamas County's Economic Development team will follow up directly with interested jurisdictions to better understand local needs, identify opportunities for partnership, and determine appropriate next steps.

Figure 9 Are there areas where your organization would like support from the Clackamas County Economic Development team?

City	Introductions to Workforce Practitioners	Assistance with "BRE" Visits	Guidance on Incent. Programs / Grants	Other
Canby				Appreciation for existing partnership
Gladstone		Yes	Yes	
Happy Valley		Yes	Yes	
Lake Oswego	Yes		Yes	
Milwaukie	Yes	Yes		
Molalla		Yes		
Oregon City		Yes	Yes	
Tualatin			Yes	
West Linn			Yes	
Wilsonville				Continuation of county business development grants; technical assistance experience and knowledge about E-Zone administration

Connections to the C4 Retreat

Survey findings directly informed Session 3 dialogue about **economic identity**. After receiving an overview of survey findings, participants were invited to discuss our collective identity, how we are currently viewed by external partners, and how we'd like to be seen.

Within the discussion, participants articulated their love for living in Clackamas County. There is deep history, with regional destinations, and access to nature. Unlike Multnomah and Washington counties, Clackamas is not characterized by a large, central city; rather, Clackamas County contains many smaller and strong cities. Every community has a different flavor, but we are collaborative in our diversity.

In considering external reputation, participants noted frequent turnover on the county board, and sometimes we come across as contrarian. The county has insufficient utility/road infrastructure and connectivity, but we are also known for being pro-growth and getting to “yes”.

Looking towards the future, participants want to be known for livable communities, strong home rule, and successful logging/forest management and sustainable business practices.

Conclusions

The 2026 C4 Economic Development Survey highlights both the diversity and interconnectedness of Clackamas County communities. While each jurisdiction possesses a unique economic identity, respondents identified several shared opportunities and challenges that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. Collectively, the findings suggest that communities are increasingly aligned around common economic development priorities and are eager to strengthen collaboration, improve infrastructure readiness, and build a more resilient regional economy.

1. Shared Economic Priorities Are Emerging

Although communities differ in their existing economic identities, respondents demonstrated significant alignment regarding future growth priorities. Industrial/manufacturing and tourism/hospitality sectors emerged as the most frequently identified targets for future investment, reflecting opportunities to maximize economic opportunity, create family-wage jobs, and attract outside investment and visitor spending.

2. Infrastructure Remains the Binding Constraint

Across nearly every survey topic, infrastructure emerged as a central theme. Utility infrastructure, transportation systems, and affordable housing were consistently identified as barriers to economic growth. These findings suggest that infrastructure readiness remains one of the most significant determinants of future economic competitiveness in Clackamas County.

3. Land Readiness and Regulatory Predictability Matter

Survey respondents expressed concern regarding limited land availability, challenges associated with parcel aggregation, and the cumulative impacts of evolving regulatory requirements. At the same time, participants identified opportunities to improve process efficiency, modernize existing policies, and increase flexibility within state programs. Together, these findings underscore the importance of predictable, transparent, and coordinated regulatory systems that support both local decision-making and economic investment.

4. Economic Development is Increasingly Collaborative

Communities reported extensive use of partnership-based strategies, including urban renewal, business retention and expansion programs, and collaboration with local and regional organizations. Survey respondents also expressed interest in continued technical assistance and resource sharing through Clackamas County. These findings could suggest that economic development is viewed as a collaborative endeavor requiring coordinated action among local governments, regional partners, businesses, and state agencies.

5. There Is Opportunity for a Shared Regional Narrative

Survey findings and discussions during the 2026 C4 Retreat revealed a strong appreciation for Clackamas County's natural assets, diverse communities, and collaborative culture. Participants also expressed a desire to be known for livable communities, strong home rule, successful logging/forest management, and business-friendly sustainable practices. Developing and communicating a shared story about Clackamas County's strengths, values, and economic aspirations may help improve regional competitiveness, attract investment, and reinforce collaboration.

Ultimately, the survey findings suggest that while communities face significant challenges, there is also substantial opportunity. By investing in infrastructure, strengthening partnerships, improving regulatory clarity, and leveraging the unique strengths of individual communities, Clackamas County and its partners can continue building a resilient, prosperous, and regionally connected economy.

Appendix

2026 C4 Economic Development Survey

Raw Data Highlight

City	Known For	Trying to Grow	Barriers	Toolbox	Investment Needs
Canby	Agriculture / Timber / Forest Products	Arts / Culture; Industrial / Manufacturing Tech / Software Engineering; Hospitality and Tourism	Skilled Workforce; Aggregating Parcels for Urban Development; Utility Infrastructure; Affordable Housing; Road Infrastructure	Business Retention / Expansion Efforts; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Workforce Training; Active Recruitment; Partnerships with Local Biz. Agencies	Canby has constraints as it relates to our power supply. Canby Utility oversees electricity in Canby, and purchases power from Bonneville Power Administration. Portland General Electric runs the transmission lines, bringing power to Canby. The constraints - and future impacts/constraints - are a major concern as Canby works to expand its urban growth boundary.
Estacada	Industrial / Manuf.	Retail; Industrial / Manuf.; Hospitality/Tourism	Location; Utility Infra.; Affordable Housing; Road Infrastructure	Enterprise Zones; Biz. Oregon Grants/Loans; Biz. Retention / Expansion; Streamlined Permitting; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Active Recruitment; Partnerships w/ Local Biz. Agencies	Natural Gas to our Industrial Campus Regional Transportation - OR224 through Carver Curves is difficult.
Boring CPO	Agriculture / Timber / Forest Products	N / A	Road Infrastructure	N / A	Safe roads for commercial as well as private vehicles to commute / do business in our area.
Gladstone	Retail	Arts / Culture; Retail; Personal / Professional Services; Hospitality and Tourism	Availability of Childcare; Limited Land Availability; Public Transportation; Affordable Housing	Biz. Oregon Grants / Loans; Urban Renewal / TIF District	N / A

City	Known For	Trying to Grow	Barriers	Toolbox	Investment Needs
Happy Valley	Retail	Industrial / Manufacturing; Personal / Professional Services; Distribution / Warehousing; Medical	Aggregating Parcels for Urban Development; Cost of Land; Utility Infrastructure; Road Infrastructure	Enterprise Zones; SDC Deferrals; Streamlined or Accelerated Permitting; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Partnerships with Local Biz. Agencies	Sunrise Corridor & Rock Creek and Clackamas Interceptor
Lake Oswego	Personal / Professional Services	Retail; Personal / Professional Services; Hospitality and Tourism	Availability of Childcare; Location; Limited Land Availability; Cost of Land	Development Agreements; Business Retention / Expansion Efforts; Partnerships with Local Biz. Agencies	We are in the planning stages of expanding our mixed-use urban core east into what is called the Foothills district, located between downtown Lake Oswego and the Willamette River. Barriers to development: 1) Creating a 2nd entrance into the area, which requires crossing a railroad and intersecting with a state highway. One of the top options also includes sensitive lands and needs for an updated culvert. 2) A large amount of fill will be required to bring the land out of the floodplain.
Milwaukie	Retail	Arts / Culture; Retail; Industrial / Manufacturing; Hospitality and Tourism; Medical	Availability of Childcare; Limited Land Availability; Public Transportation; Cost of Land; Utility Infrastructure; Affordable Housing; Road Infrastructure	Incentives; SDC Deferrals Biz. Oregon Grants / Loans; Development Agreements; Business Retention / Expansion Efforts; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Partnerships with Local Biz. Agencies	Public transit and safe multi-modal infrastructure is essential to connect people to jobs and commercial zones as congestion increases and road capacity gets maxed out. Resilient electrical infrastructure is going to be key as severe weather becomes more common.
Molalla	Agriculture / Timber / Forest Products	Industrial / Manufacturing; Agriculture / Timber / Forest Products; Medical	Availability of Childcare; Location; Freight / Rail Options; Agriculture / Forestry Preservation and Regulations; Public Transportation; Utility Infrastructure; Road Infrastructure	Enterprise Zones; Development Agreements; Streamlined or Accelerated Permitting; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Partnerships with Local Biz. Agencies	1) Improvement and redirection of Molalla Forest Road from Mathias to OR-213 is a major cost barrier to industrial development. 2) Upgrading power, and installing water, sewer, storm infrastructure in Molalla Forest Road from Mathias to OR-213.

City	Known For	Trying to Grow	Barriers	Toolbox	Investment Needs
Oregon City	Medical	Industrial / Manufacturing; Hospitality and Tourism	Aggregating Parcels for Urban Development; Cost of Land; Utility Infrastructure; Road Infrastructure	Enterprise Zones; Business Retention / Expansion Efforts; Workforce Training; Active Recruitment	Highway 213 corridor (ODOT) and county road (Redland) intersections to the state facility. Water, sewer, and street improvements down Beavercreek Road past CCC and OCHS.
Sandy	Hospitality and Tourism	Retail; Industrial / Manufacturing; Tech / Software Engineering; Hospitality and Tourism	Utility Infrastructure	Incentives; Development Agreements; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Active Recruitment	Sandy's biggest infrastructure need is additional capacity in our wastewater system. The city currently has a moratorium on new development. Our current wastewater infrastructure costs, including both reinvestment in aged assets and the construction of new assets, is estimated at \$188 million. Utility rates and system development charges have been increased significantly, which puts pressure on both current residents and business owners, as well as future developers.
Tualatin	Industrial / Manuf.	Construction, Corporate / Business Services, Food Systems; Industrial / Manuf.; Distribution / Warehousing; Tech / Software; Engineering; Medical	Limited Land Availability; Public Transportation; Aggregating Parcels for Urban Development; Utility Infrastructure; Affordable Housing	Opportunity zone; Business Retention / Expansion Efforts; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Active Recruitment; Partnerships with Local Biz. Agencies	In 2021, the city established the Southwest and Basalt Creek Urban Renewal District in the newly annexed south end of the city. Infrastructure needs include sanitary sewer, water, and stormwater improvements. There is also a need for upgrades to the roads/transportation system and frequent and reliable public transit in this area to help spur industrial development.

City	Known For	Trying to Grow	Barriers	Toolbox	Investment Needs
West Linn	Personal / Professional Services	Personal / Professional Services; Tech / Software Engineering; Hospitality and Tourism; Medical	Resistance to development; Limited Land Availability; Land Use / Zoning; Aggregating Parcels for Urban Development; Cost of Land; Affordable Housing	Urban Renewal / TIF District	Land availability. Aging water infrastructure. Disinvestment in State Hwy 43. Potential for tolling I-205 is a risk factor.
Wilsonville	Industrial / Manuf.	Arts / Culture; Retail; Industrial / Manufacturing; Tech / Software Engineering; Hospitality and Tourism	Aggregating Parcels for Urban Development; Cost of Land; Utility Infra; Affordable Housing; Road Infrastructure	Biz Oregon Grants/Loans; Development Agreements; Business Retention / Expansion Efforts; Urban Renewal / TIF District; Partnerships with Local Biz. Agencies	1) Boone Bridge: carries 126,000 vehicles, including 17,000 trucks, daily—more freight traffic than the Interstate Bridge. Backups ripple throughout the metro area, causing tangible financial impact to businesses. Safety, seismic, and capacity improvements are needed. 2) Parkway Ave: serves as an I-5 frontage road. From Burns Way to Xerox Ave it does not meet urban standards, including lack of ped/bike and shoulders. Improvements ensure new and existing businesses have safe, convenient access.