

# Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA)

## Collaborative Working Group (CWG) Meeting #11

July 11, 2025

### Attendees

#### **CWG Members:**

- Benton Strong (Vigor/WWC)
- Heather King (Willamette Riverkeeper)
- Corky Collier (CCA)
- Sherrie Pendarvis (Yakima Nation),
- Micah Meskel (Bird Alliance of Oregon)
- Steph Routh (Planning Commission)
- Cassie Cohen (PHCC)

#### **Observers:**

- Susie Lahsene (WWC)
- Debbie Silva (Oregon Steel Mills)
- Julie Wolfe (League of Women Voters)

- Marnie Glickman (Tributary)
- Tom Boullion (Port of Portland)

#### **City Staff:**

- Tom Armstrong (BPS)
- Julia Michel (BPS)
- Kryn Sausedo (BPS)
- Marco Mejia (BPS)
- Jeff Caudill (BPS)
- Sam Brookham (BPS)
- Patricia Diefenderfer (BPS)
- Rani Boyle, Ethan Brown, Ludwig (BES)
- Kate Merrill (Prosper Portland);
- Emily Hebbbron (Office of Council President Pyrtle-Guinea)
- Eric Dean, Maria Sipin (Office of Councilor Mitch Green)

### Notes

#### Introduction

#### Meeting Purpose

- Provide feedback on the understandability and utility of information shared to date.
- Discuss tradeoffs and explore “win-win” options for *industrial area* strategies in this meeting.
- Focus on how to balance job growth, industrial land supply, and environmental responsibility.

- Frame options for the upcoming public discussion draft (late July) and long-term strategy development.
- Patricia contextualized the meeting. Previous meeting covered all employment geographies and strategies to focus jobs in these districts, this focuses on the industrial areas where there are some important policy considerations and a tight land supply we need to balance.
- Tom provided an overview of the schedule:
  - Public discussion draft in July.
  - Reconvene CWG in October, give feedback on what we learned, home in on a single proposed alternative that goes to Planning Commission, who make a recommendation to Council.
  - Spring 2026 will conclude the current phase of the work, the action plan and longer-term implementation phase will follow.
- Benton: asked clarification on whether the 29,600 new jobs in the industrial areas are industrial jobs or simply jobs in industrial areas?
  - Tom: these are jobs in the industrial areas – data shows industrial areas include jobs in office, retail, headquarter, etc. sectors

## Industrial Strategies

- **Industrial Area Strategies – Key Discussion Points**
  - **Jobs, Land Supply & Interdependencies**
    - Benton emphasized that *jobs per acre* should not be considered in isolation. Higher density job sites (e.g., Vigor) support dozens of smaller firms—e.g., a 3:1 job multiplier at the harbor.
    - He also suggested the City highlight interdependence between large and small businesses in both its metrics and narrative.
    - Strong support for a single point of contact model in permitting to reduce complexity and speed up processes.
  - **Permitting & Foreclosure Process**
    - Cassie asked whether permitting streamlining would reduce public comment opportunities. Staff clarified that it applies to building permits (not land use reviews) which already lack comment requirements.
    - Cassie and others raised concern over the current foreclosure auction system—described as antiquated and disincentivizing land reuse. There was strong interest in reform and value-capture mechanisms like those used at Montgomery Park.
  - **Environmental Constraints & Ezones**

- Sherrie asked for clarity on floodplain and BiOp overlays—staff committed to showing maps in future meetings.
- Staff outlined upcoming changes related to FEMA floodplains, riparian setbacks, and environmental overlays (ezones).
- Micah and Corky debated how expanded ezones would interact with industrial needs. Micah noted overlays remove outdated exemptions, while Corky emphasized a need to ground expectations in real-world constraints (e.g., paved sites needing investment for habitat conversion).
- Corky: clarify that strategies are examples; what we're talking about is developing a better culture and attitude... e.g., brownfield cleanup is good for everyone. Jobs/acre misleading. University job density is 8 jobs/acre.
- Benton asked how scenario modeling accounts for business behavior: Would a company like Vigor invest in solar carports if restrictions make it harder? Could direct incentives (e.g., PCEF funds) offset these challenges?
- **Workforce & Industry Reputation**
  - Kate (Prosper) and Benton flagged workforce system fragmentation as a barrier. Vigor hosts PCC on-site due to complexity in navigating training programs. There's a lack of small business capacity to support worker pipelines.
  - Participants called for reframing the reputation of industrial work, especially in clean, advanced manufacturing sectors like wind turbines.
- **Transportation & TSP Alignment**
  - Steph asked how the EOA aligns with the TSP. Staff shared that PBOT and BPS are working together; timelines are syncing and the EOA will inform priority freight and industrial investments.
  - Stakeholders from CWG are encouraged to engage in the TSP Community Advisory Committee process.
- **Tribal Engagement**
  - Cassie asked about tribal consultation. Staff confirmed letters were sent to urban and rural tribes regarding overlapping projects (e.g., CCIL, floodplain regs). A few have responded; more formal engagement is desired.

- Cassie highlighted tribal expertise in salmon restoration and reclamation, suggesting a stronger city role in facilitating land access and stewardship partnerships.

## Funding, Incentives & Regulatory Alignment

- Calls for better alignment of funding tools (e.g., PCEF, DLCD, federal grants) with regulatory changes like tree code and ezones.
  - Micah and Benton encouraged creative solutions that tie community benefits to financial support, and recommended exploring ways to extend timelines for programs (e.g., PCEF's 5-year window vs. industry's 10+ year planning cycles). Also targeting incentives on most dense job producing zoning, e.g., in the dispersed employment areas
- **Scenario Planning, Policy Framing & Accountability**
    - Cassie challenged the premise of an industrial land shortage in light of recent conversions by entities like the Port of Portland.
    - Tom responded that the EOA provides the accounting framework and boundary conditions for future land use decisions.
    - Ownership piece. Question was asked by Micah if City is considering things like absentee owners and land speculation?
    - Corky raised concern that environmental protections are likely to be implemented quickly, while economic strategies could take years—*“we need assurance the job strategies don’t get lost.”*

## Next Steps

- Discussion Draft to be released later in July 2025.
- Public outreach in August–September.
- CWG reconvenes in October to refine a preferred alternative.
- Planning Commission review to follow in late 2025–early 2026