



Economic Recovery as a Transformative Opportunity

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COALITION FOR A LIVABLE FUTURE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

1000 Friends of Oregon
AARP Oregon
African American Health Coalition
Amallegory Productions
American Institute of Architects, Portland Chapter
American Society of Landscape Architects, OR Chapter
AORTA
Audubon Society of Portland
Better People
Bicycle Transportation Alliance
Bike Gallery
Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
Clackamas Community Land Trust collaboration
Columbia Group Sierra Club
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
Community Action Organization
Community Alliance of Tenants
Community Health Partnership
Community Housing Fund
Community Partners for Affordable Housing, Inc.
Dana L. Brown Consulting
Ecotrust
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Elders In Action
Enterprise Community Partners
Environmental Commission of the Episcopal Diocese
Fair Housing Council of Oregon
Fans of Fanno Creek
fmyi
Food Front Co-op
Forest Park Conservancy
Fregonese Associates
Friends of Clark County
Friends of Goal Five
Friends of Marquam Nature Park
Friends of Portland Community Gardens
Friends of Rock, Bronson & Willow Creeks
Friends of Smith & Bybee Lakes
Friends of Tryon Creek State Park
Gales Creek Insurance
Gerding Edlen Development
Growing Gardens
Hillsdale Neighborhood Association
Hotlips Pizza
Humanists of Greater Portland
Johnson Creek Watershed Council
Kaiser Permanente
League of Women Voters of the Columbia River Region
Livable North Portland
Mercy Corps Northwest
Multnomah County Health Department
National Association of Social Workers, Oregon Chapter

Introduction

As our nation considers how to stimulate the economy, we need to make *smart* investments that solve *multiple* problems. We should prioritize investments that are economically viable, socially responsible, and environmentally sustainable.

The economic recovery package is an opportunity to create needed jobs while also strengthening our human infrastructure and the environment. It's an opportunity to ask how to reconstruct our economy to support a healthy, educated, well-housed population.

The administration has made clear that projects funded by the first recovery bill must be "shovel ready" to get people back to work as soon as possible. Shovel readiness will help create jobs quickly, but if it is not coupled with other criteria, the stimulus may fail to create good jobs for the long term while foregoing the opportunity to create equitable, sustainable communities that foster a decent quality of life for everyone.

As projects are chosen and subsequent infrastructure and economic investment bills roll out, government needs tools to evaluate projects they fund to ensure they meet our needs for the present and future.

The following criteria provide a starting point for evaluating projects.

- Support Community Needs
- Improve Public Health
- Strengthen Community Places
- Increase Social Inclusion
- Ensure Transparency and Accountability

These criteria are described in detail on pages five through seven.

National Charrette Institute
 Norm Thompson
 Northwest Housing Alternatives, Inc.
 Oregon Action
 Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited
 Oregon Environmental Council
 Oregon Food Bank
 Oregon Opportunity Network
 Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust
 OTAK
 PCRl
 People for Parks Oregon
 People's Food Co-op
 PGE
 Portfolio 21
 Portland Community Land Trust (PCLT)
 Portland Housing Center
 Portland Impact
 Portland Jobs With Justice
 PSU Community Development Student Group
 Rachel's Friends Breast Cancer Coalition
 REACH CDC
 Ride Connection Inc.
 ROSE CDC
 Russell Development Company, Inc.
 SEIU Local 49
 Sidney Lezak Project
 Sisters of the Road Cafe
 Social Services of Clackamas County, Inc.
 Sorin Garber Consulting Group
 Southeast Uplift
 St Ignatius Justice & Peace Commission
 Sunnyside Centenary United Methodist Church
 Tryon Life Community Farm
 Tualatin Riverkeepers
 Tualatin Valley Housing Partners
 Turtle Island Development LLC
 Urban Greenspaces Institute
 Urban League of Portland
 WaterWatch of Oregon
 WeAreAllTraffic
 Wells Fargo Bank
 Wetlands Conservancy
 Willamette Pedestrian Coalition
 Willamette Riverkeeper
 Williams & Dame Development
 Woodlawn Neighborhood Association
 Zimbabwe Artists Project
 Zipcar

This paper reflects Coalition for a Livable Future's position as approved by voting members participating in the January 2009 meeting, but does not necessarily reflect the position of any particular member organization.

Traditional public infrastructure investment is designed to solve one problem at a time. Roads are built to help traffic move faster or more safely; buildings are upgraded because they are out of compliance with local codes; sewer lines are rebuilt because they are in danger of failing. Funding streams and government agencies are siloed, which contributes to singularly focused solutions. This tunnel vision and uncoordinated action is short-sighted, and ignores far-reaching impacts on health, environmental, and social conditions in our communities.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines “infrastructure” broadly, as “the basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society....” In practice, however, infrastructure has been used more narrowly to describe physical facilities – roads, public buildings, sewer systems, etc. This use was crafted in the context of the 20th century industrial economy.

The creative economy of the 21st century requires different supports than the industrial economy. Today we recognize that our society relies on social and natural systems as well as built structures. Fostering social capital involves developing the tools for our population to thrive, both as individuals and as communities. Similarly, protecting our natural systems, or “greeninfrastructure” – watersheds, natural areas, parks and forests – provides the ecosystem services we depend upon for healthy places and a vibrant economy.

A smarter, 21st century approach to infrastructure investment will produce transformational results for individuals, communities, and systems. The investments designed to stimulate the economy will create desirable places for individuals and families to live, work, and play that are accessible to everyone, especially those who have historically been left behind. They will also help address the dangers of climate change, energy dependence, disappearing greenspace, and even obesity and chronic disease.



Four Principles for Investing

The following elements represent basic principles for sustainable development, and form the basis for the criteria for assessing projects.

Support Healthy, Equitable Communities:

Support people's health and well-being by fostering human capital, revitalizing distressed communities, and improving the lives of the people who live there.

Support a Sustainable, Clean Energy Economy:

Invest in "greeninfrastructure" and employ green, energy efficient, climate conscious design and construction and renovation practices.

Create Good Jobs and a Skilled Workforce:

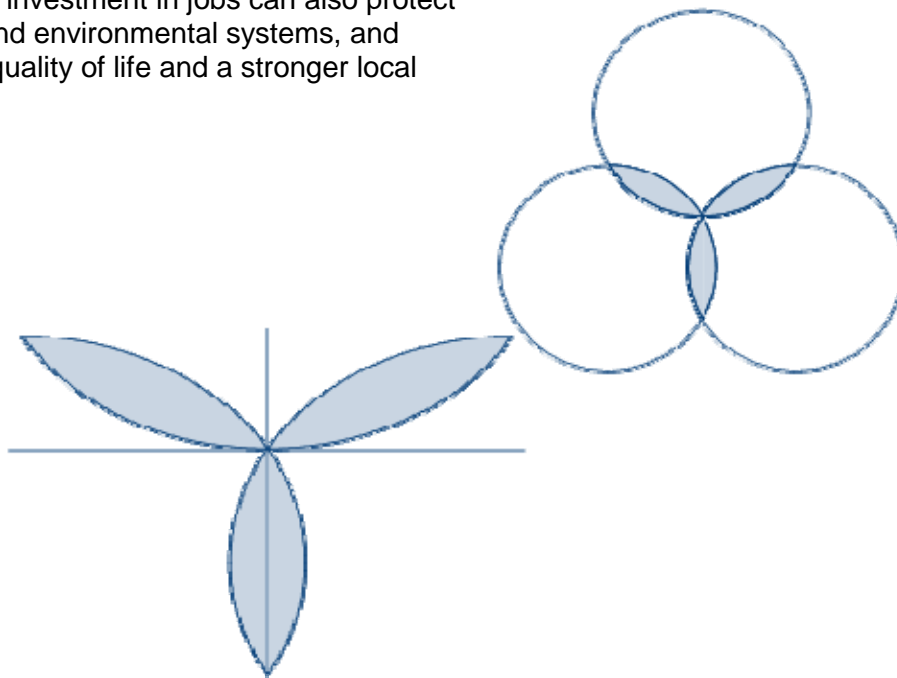
A truly strong economy means all people have long-term, well-paying jobs with benefits providing the foundation for a decent quality of life.

Ensure Transparency and Accountability:

Empower the community by creating a transparent process accountable to the goals and priorities established by the community.

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Criteria for Assessing Projects

The following framework, based on work done by Portland State University's Social Equity and Opportunity Forum*, provides guidance for evaluating investments based on the principles discussed above.

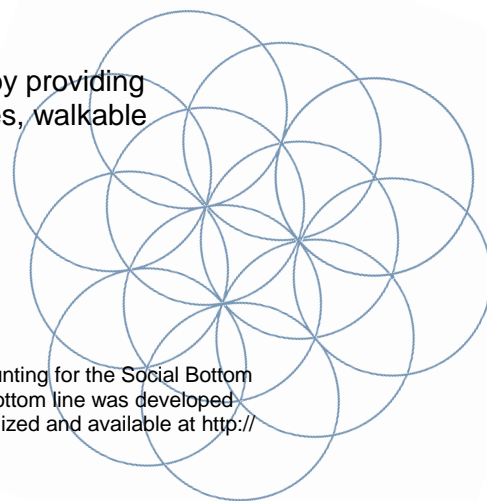
Supports Community Needs

- Contributes to economic stabilization of the community by providing “good” jobs with living wages and benefits and a health-promoting work environment to residents.
- Establishes measurable workforce targets, including for the following specific populations: veterans and past or present members of reserve components of the Armed Forces; the unemployed; the homeless; those with incomes at the federal poverty level; those who reside in census tracts where more than thirty percent of residents live in poverty; and formerly incarcerated, adjudicated non-violent offenders.
- Includes job training, apprenticeship programs, and business development opportunities for locally-owned businesses, focusing expressly on opening these opportunities to disadvantaged groups, positioning workers to advance and compete in the new, green economy.
- Stimulates additional local investment and/ or economic activity that provides good jobs and goods and services needed by the community.

Strengthens Community Places

- Enhances access to a variety of basic needs and resources for healthy living (health clinics, affordable housing, schools, childcare and youth programs, grocery stores and farmers markets, social services, parks, and nature)
- Creates vibrant public spaces that are safe, accessible and inviting to people of diverse ages, incomes, backgrounds, and abilities.
- Supports affordable and accessible, mixed-income communities by providing a range of affordable housing options in places with access to services, walkable destinations, extensive and frequent transit, and jobs.

* Portland State University Social Equity and Opportunity Forum, “Development That Adds Up: Accounting for the Social Bottom Line of Triple Bottom Line Investment.” This paper which outlines an assessment tool on the social bottom line was developed with input from community leaders and review of other key assessment strategies. It will soon be finalized and available at <http://www.pdx.edu/cupa/seof.html>.



Criteria, continued

- Increases choices for transportation, reducing the need to use one's car to get everywhere. To do this:
 - ◊ Repair, preserve and improve safety of existing roads and bridges, without expanding them and complete streets by adding bike/pedestrian accommodations and transit service.
 - ◊ Give states the flexibility to transfer funds to ready-to-go transit and rail initiatives, non-motorized initiatives, and projects that make it easier to walk and ride a bike.
 - ◊ Focus on projects that provide a net reduction in vehicle miles traveled over today's levels.
 - ◊ Replace aging buses with new clean energy vehicles, acquire new buses and rail cars to meet surging demand, and perform needed maintenance.
 - ◊ Include investment in transit service to preserve current jobs in transit and ensure that affordable travel options don't disappear for those who already rely on it.

Improves Public Health

- Restores and protects public parks, natural areas and watersheds.
- Protects local water supplies through efficiency and conservation projects.
- Reduces exposure to environmental pollutants.
- Contributes to the state's carbon reduction goals.
- Makes it easier to choose to walk, bike, or take transit.

Increases Social Inclusion

- Supports or offers programs designed to build leadership capacity (e.g. youth or senior service corps, education, and training).
- Allocates a portion of infrastructure funds or matching funds to support education and training programs, including apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs that will promote employment of members of disadvantaged groups. Priority should be given to entities that have experience identifying and recruiting members of the targeted populations.
- Provides profit-sharing opportunities so community members can accumulate the assets needed to increase financial security.



Criteria, continued

- Reduces and mitigates disproportionate impacts of development, ensuring that historically disadvantaged groups are not displaced or do not otherwise bear a disproportionate burden of development.

Ensures Transparency and Accountability

- Has broad support from the community and was designed in partnership with community members, with strong and diverse community involvement in design, implementation, and long-term evaluation.
- Includes project oversight plan, including coordination between projects to maximize benefits.
- Measures progress on critical social, economic, and environmental indicators, and includes adequate funding for data-collection, analysis, and reporting.

A Unique Opportunity

The infusion of hundreds of billions of dollars into the economy presents an unprecedented opportunity to invest in our working families, to strengthen local economies and support healthy communities.

The strategies laid out in this paper provide a template for determining the investments we need to create a future that's good for our communities, region, and country. They are intended as both a reference and as a starting point for determining how to allocate funds in the recovery package and beyond.

By focusing on community outcomes as key goals of investment, the economic stimulus will create jobs that create opportunities for all of us — not just the wealthy — to have good places to live and live healthy lives.

Thank you to Leslie Carlson, whose early drafts of this paper inspired its creation, Mara Gross, who drafted significant portions of the paper, and Emily Hicks, for creating the layout and design.