



OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE

A Final Transition Team Report
for Mayor Lauren McLean

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INTRODUCTION

What makes Boise ... Boise? It is important to thoroughly understand what is specifically Boise's unique collection of customs and qualities. What is our cultural, natural and social identity? This understanding can help the city understand which economic development opportunities complement Boise's distinctiveness and where there are risks to eroding it.

Community distinctiveness plays a key role in economic development by attracting capital, employers and an educated workforce – people who want to invest here, live here and start businesses. Building on our core strengths and identity serves both new and existing residents and businesses, by encouraging compatible industry and providing opportunities for all Boise residents to obtain meaningful and sustainable employment.

*The soul of a city is a competitive differentiator
in economic development.*

As we seek to understand our character and identity, it is important that we recognize this is an evolving concept. Each Boise resident—whether here for 30 years or 30 days—now belongs to our community, contributes to the city's culture and deserves meaningful economic and employment opportunities.

The City of Boise has existing strategic objectives and initiatives for economic development, which are summarized in the following "City Briefing" section. The recommendations in this report are not intended to replace existing city objectives, but rather to identify certain goals and actions that this committee believes could help improve access to economic opportunities for everyone, with a focus on connecting workers of all levels to meaningful jobs.

INTRODUCTION

This committee focuses on three goals with supportive actions: (1) develop an educated work force, (2) create jobs for all skill levels and (3) facilitate access to employment for all. Additional planning and collaboration with partners is needed; the actions provide a framework for further planning and implementation in the short term (100 days), medium term (first year) and longer term (first term/4 years).

Education is key to Boise's economic success and to providing opportunities for everyone. From pre-k through post-graduation career training, at every level, we are building the skills of our future business owners and workforce. Employers of all sizes and workers at all levels benefit from education and training/retraining opportunities that produce skills to meet existing and emerging jobs needs.

Job creation also is fundamental to providing economic opportunities for everyone. This includes support for business start-ups and expansion, as well as attraction of businesses that reflect Boise character, complement existing businesses and meet employee needs. In particular, we identify the need for additional capital sources to serve small businesses. Boise has an entrepreneurial culture, with specialized niches including technology and food industries.

The committee's third goal, access to employment, recognizes that even where education and jobs are available, other hurdles may preclude access to employment for some, including lack of childcare, lack of housing near employment and lack of transportation to employer locations.

With each action and goal, the City of Boise must be intentional about inclusivity and equality. The city's economic development programs and policies should be carefully reviewed and structured to ensure they do not overlook or shortchange residents who are people of color, immigrants or low-income residents. We need employers of all sizes and workforce with skills at all levels. Providing a platform for all residents to succeed will result in a more robust economy.

CITY BRIEFING

Currently, strategic direction for economic development at the City of Boise is guided by the Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Framework. The Strategic Framework includes eight goal areas, one of which is a “Strong, Diverse Local Economy.” Strategic objectives for a “Strong, Diverse Local Economy” include the following:

- Create an environment in which local business can thrive.
- Pursue and attract new businesses and create jobs.
- Promote employability and workforce development.
- Provide and plan for sustainable infrastructure to support economic growth.
- Attract and support visitors and tourism.
- Contribute to a vibrant downtown and other economic activity centers.
- Facilitate access to people, knowledge and resources to foster entrepreneurship.

*Intentional inclusivity
and equitably is a business
imperative.*

Most economic development activity at the City of Boise can be categorized under four general objectives, outlined below:

1. Business attraction – Collaborate with local, regional and state partners to further the city’s goal of a strong, diverse economy.

KEY PARTNERS: Boise Valley Economic Partnership, Idaho Department of Commerce, Boise Convention & Visitors Bureau

2. Business retention and expansion – Foster a culture of cooperation, transparency and proactive engagement to enhance the city’s business climate.

KEY PARTNERS: Area businesses, Downtown Boise Association, Boise Chamber of Commerce

3. Workforce development and entrepreneurship – Form and maintain mutually-beneficial relationships with trusted community partners.

KEY PARTNERS: Higher education institutions, career and technical education institutions, Trailhead, Idaho SBDC Business Accelerator, Jannus

4. Agile economic development and innovation – Engage community to discover creative ways to build a sustainable, complete economy.

KEY PARTNERS: Local entrepreneurs, creative/arts community, thought leaders, Boise Startup Week, Treefort

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

GOALS

- Develop an educated work force.
- Increase access to early education.
- Increase training and retraining opportunities so that workers can continually gain skills needed to pursue available higher wage jobs.
- Cultivate student interest in career technical education opportunities.
- Create jobs for all skill levels.
- Support attraction and expansion of employers that reflect Boise character, complement existing businesses and meet employee needs.
- Increase equitable access to capital and resources for a broad range of businesses.
- Facilitate access to employment for all.
- Increase affordable childcare options.
- Increase housing near employment centers.
- Expand transportation alternatives for employees to reach employer locations.

FIRST 100 DAYS

GENERAL

- Begin work on economic development plan for city, building on recommendations in this report.
- Identify existing internal and external resources and partners to support the recommendations in this report.
- Evaluate need to expand budget and resources for the city’s Economic Development Office.
- With every identified action, consider opportunities to expand inclusivity and equitability.

DEVELOP AN EDUCATED WORK FORCE

- Increase access to early education.
- Work with partners to establish priorities and strategies for early education.
- Renew support for pre-K pilot program.
- Increase access to workforce training/retraining opportunities.
- Identify primary workforce needs (e.g. computer programmers).
- Identify existing workforce training opportunities and gaps.
- Cultivate student interest in career technical education opportunities.
- Identify and promote career technical education opportunities (e.g. mayor visit to Dennis Technical Education Center).

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – ACTIONS

CREATE JOBS FOR ALL SKILL LEVELS

- Attract/expand employers that reflect Boise character, complement existing businesses and meet employee needs.
- Evaluate potential target industries based on supply chain needs for existing businesses, national trends, Boise character and workforce needs.
- Develop “Ready Team” to provide quick response and full-service regarding business location decisions.
- Identify hurdles to business attraction/expansion (e.g., lack of infrastructure, unpredictable regulatory process, insufficient workforce).
- Provide resources and capital for new and existing businesses in Boise.
- Work with partners to develop plan for year-round physical marketplace (e.g., to serve farmer’s market vendors, fresh food and food packaging startups and related industries).
- Collect feedback on how to improve city website to provide tools for business start-up and operation.
- Identify and document existing and potential capital sources for businesses.
- Explore opportunities for Community Investment Fund for micro-lending.

FACILITATE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

- Evaluate barriers to childcare availability.
- Work with partners to identify appropriate sites for housing near employment centers.
- Work with partners to identify transportation hurdles and opportunities for employees to reach employer locations.

FIRST YEAR

GENERAL

- Complete and begin implementation of first year of economic development plan.
- Meet with internal and external partners to share resources and ideas to meet goals.
- Implement increased budget/resources for the City of Boise’s Economic Development Office.
- With every identified action, take deliberate steps to expand inclusivity and equitability.

DEVELOP AN EDUCATED WORK FORCE

- Increase access to early education
- Work with partners to implement priorities and strategies for early education.
- Expand support for pre-K pilot program.
- Increase access to workforce training/retraining opportunities.
- Work with partners to develop workforce training that meets employer and worker needs, with a focus on connecting workers to specific training needed to pursue available higher wage jobs.
- Cultivate student interest in career technical education opportunities.
- Develop and implement plan for outreach to K-12 students about career technical opportunities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – ACTIONS

CREATE JOBS FOR ALL SKILL LEVELS

- Attract/expand employers that reflect Boise character, complement existing businesses and meet employee needs.
- Pursue target industries including with sales missions by mayor and economic development director.
- Work to eliminate hurdles for business attraction/expansion.
- Provide resources and capital for business start-ups.
- Work with partners to implement plan for year-round physical marketplace.
- Improve city website to provide information and tools for businesses.
- Pursue capital sources for business startups of all sizes including with sales missions by mayor and economic development director.
- Implement plan for Community Investment Fund for micro-lending.

FACILITATE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

- Develop and implement plan to reduce barriers to childcare availability.
- Involve Economic Development Office in city decisions regarding housing (e.g., to expand housing near employment centers).
- Involve Economic Development Office in city decisions regarding transportation (e.g., to expand alternatives for employees to reach employer locations).

FIRST TERM

- Implement first four years of economic development plan.
- Assess progress toward goals and identify further actions.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Economic development departments in cities throughout Boise valley
- Boise School District, Boise State University, College of Western Idaho and other educational institutions in Boise valley
- Idaho Department of Commerce
- Boise Valley Economic Partnership
- Jannus

EDUCATION

- Idaho Business for Education
- RISE, Treasure Valley's Education Partnership (formerly TVEP)
- Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC)
- United Way
- Workforce Development:
- Idaho Department of Labor
- College of Western Idaho
- Boise State University
- Trades in high schools, including charters

SUGGESTED RESOURCES AND PARTNERS

CAPITAL

- Banking institutions
- Venture capital groups
- Boise-based social impact investing funds

BUSINESS START-UP

- Zion's Business Center
- Hispanic Chamber
- Women's Business Center
- Entrepreneurs Organization – Idaho (EO)
- Women in Tech
- Trailhead
- Treasure Valley Food Coalition (for marketplace)

CHILDCARE:

- Refugee Childcare Business Development Project at EO
- Idaho Department of Health & Welfare's Idaho Child Care Program



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