

# Project Assessment Worksheet

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## A Community Decision Making Tool

Developed by Michael Kinsley, RMI; Bruce Boggs, Center for Compatible Economic Development; and Jill Simmons, Northwest Area Foundation to respond to a specific regional community in Central Oregon.

This workbook encourages better-informed decisions and better project design. Use it to:

- ✓ clarify a proposed project
- ✓ determine project strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ discover aspects of the project that might otherwise be missed
- ✓ explore creative changes that may make the project more compatible with the community, its economy, and the environment
- ✓ decide whether to pursue or support the project

The questions in the workbook are intended help you think through and improve project ideas. Not all questions, or even categories, will apply to every project. Sometimes, however, questions that seem not to apply may expand thinking about what is possible with a project.

When using this workbook to assess their own project, some people may gloss over potential problems and concerns hoping their idea will win support. Since the goal of most community development is to create the most practical and effective projects to strengthen your community, try to assess all projects as fairly and impartially as possible. If you find that a project has problems, be up-front about them. It's best to face problems early, before significant time and money are spent and while the project idea can be changed more easily. Remember that the overarching goal is not to justify a particular project, but to strengthen the community by the best means possible.

Please answer all questions as thoughtfully as possible. You may answer workbook questions based on what you know today or, you may want to do some research before answering questions. The results of this assessment will be used to compare projects and to determine which ones are most beneficial to the community.

### Using the Workbook

Answer each question by circling one of the seven symbols:

- (++) if you think the proposed project will have a highly positive effect,
- (+) for a positive effect,
- (0) for no effect,
- (-) for a negative effect,
- (--) for a highly negative effect,
- (n/a) if the factor does not apply to project idea you are evaluating, or
- (?) if you don't have enough information to estimate the effect (you may wish to obtain more information before proceeding with a decision)

Under each topic (for example, *Preserving Rural Character*) the workbook asks for an "overall rating" of the project. Record each "overall rating" on the summary sheet (the last page).

## *Project Description*

*Intended Direct Outcome(s):*

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*Principal Activities Proposed to Produce Outcome(s):*

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## *Project Assessment*

### 1. **Building social capital**

Would the project increase trust and neighborliness?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would it strengthen the community's networks of relationships?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project enhance the ability of people to work together?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

**Overall rating on *Building Social Capital*:**

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

How could the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Building Social Capital*?

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**2. Enhancing Equity:**

Would the project reduce poverty in the region?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project enable people to better meet their basic needs—especially across income, geographic, age, ethnic and disability populations?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would it create positive economic, social, or environmental effects for less fortunate members of the community?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project reduce barriers to participation for those traditionally excluded?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project's costs and benefits be distributed fairly across the community?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project cause effects somewhere other than the place where the activities will take place (for example, next door, blocks away, in the next community, downstream or downwind)?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

**Overall rating on *Enhancing Equity*:**

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

How could the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Enhancing Equity*?

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**3. Providing Quality Education**

Would the project increase educational opportunities throughout the region and across communities?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project provide job or career training?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project break down or overcome barriers to education?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project provide learning opportunities for adults and children?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project encourage developmentally appropriate learning?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

**Overall rating on *Providing Quality Education*:**

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

How could the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Providing Quality Education*?

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#### 4. Strengthening the Economic System

Would the project increase incomes of low-wage workers?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would any jobs created pay a wage sufficient to live comfortably in Central Oregon?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would any jobs created provide family benefits?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project make the local economy less dependent on a few types of business activities?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project make the community more self-reliant?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would it make the community less vulnerable to outside influences (e.g. global trade, severe weather, economic downturns, and outside corporate or governmental decisions)?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project create a product marketable outside the region?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project enable residents and businesses to buy locally?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project increase resource efficiency?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project increase or stabilize local ownership of business?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project add value to local products?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project put waste to work?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

**Overall rating on Strengthening the Economic System:**

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

How could the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Strengthening the Economic System*?

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## 5. Strengthening Environmental Systems

Would the project change the environment?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project promote ecological learning?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project create value worth the resources consumed?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would it use resources at a rate at which they can be replenished?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project enhance the size or condition of critical habitat, or of populations of critical species?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Are sound environmental practices evident in the project?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project produce harmful waste?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project reduce, reuse or recycle waste?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

**Overall rating on *Strengthening Environmental Systems*:**

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

How can the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Strengthening Environmental Systems*?

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**6. Honoring and Uplifting Cultural Diversity**

Would this project take into account cultural differences?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project involve diverse groups in its development?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would this project reduce or eliminate barriers to participation?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would all persons be aware of the opportunities associated with this project?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the activities of the project benefit specific groups?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project promote diverse participation?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project teach Central Oregon residents about their neighbors?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

**Overall rating on *Honoring and Uplifting Cultural Diversity*:**

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

How can this project be adapted to improve its rating on *Honoring and Uplifting Cultural Diversity*?

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## 7. Preserving Rural Character

Would the project improve the ability of agricultural operators to produce?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would it reduce the size of a farm or ranch?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project encourage development outside an urban growth boundary?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would it better define the edge between urban and rural areas?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project involve agricultural operators or Federal/State land managers in its development?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project make the community better, not just bigger?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

If it would make the community bigger, would those benefiting from the project pay the costs of the expansion?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project's design be compatible with existing community systems and design?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would the project account for increased demands on the economic, social, and environmental systems associated with growth (i.e. increased transportation, housing, social service needs)?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

**Overall rating on *Preserving Rural Character*:**

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?



How can the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Preserving Rural Character*?

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**8. Promoting Regional Thinking**

Would the project promote collaboration among the region's communities?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would it remove traditional regional barriers?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would it ensure equal involvement of all communities?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

**Overall rating on *Promoting Regional Thinking*:**

How could the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Promoting Regional Thinking*?

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**9. Long-Term Effects**

Would the effect of this project be beneficial in 5, 10, 20 years?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

Would the project benefit future generations in some important way?

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

**Overall rating on *Long Term Effects*:**

--      -      0      +      ++      n/a      ?

How could the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Long-Term Effects*?

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### 10. Feasibility

Is the project likely to be broadly supported?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Can the funds and other resources needed by the project be readily obtained within the region?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

Would an existing organization or coalition of organizations be responsible for implementing the project?

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

**Overall rating on *Feasibility*:**

--   -   0   +   ++   n/a   ?

How could the project be adapted to improve its rating on *Feasibility*?

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## Project Assessment Summary

1. Overall rating on **building social capital** in Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
2. Overall rating on **enhancing equity** in Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
3. Overall rating on **providing quality education** in Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
4. Overall rating on **strengthening the economic system** in Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
5. Overall rating on **strengthening environmental systems** in Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
6. Overall rating on **uplifting and honoring cultural diversity** of Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
7. Overall rating on **preserving the rural character** of Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
8. Overall rating on **promoting regional thinking** in Central Oregon:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
9. Overall rating on **long-term effects**:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
10. Overall rating on **feasibility**:  
--    -    0    +    ++    n/a    ?
11. Are there important questions about the project that need further examination? If so, what are they?  
Could answering these questions be made into a project itself?

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