



Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce

2022 Legislative and Local Priorities

Economic Growth | Inclusivity | Collaboration | Fiscal Responsibility | Transparency

The Beaverton Chamber urges the Oregon State Legislature, Metro, Washington County, City of Beaverton and each Washington County-area Chamber of Commerce to consider our guiding principles and engage our members in policy conversations and decisions in the 2022 Legislative Session.

WHO WE ARE

The Beaverton Chamber is the independent, significant voice of the Beaverton area's growing business community, which is considered a significant part of the economic engine of Oregon. We are a member-driven organization, proud to represent and serve more than 6,000 small businesses, large employers and nonprofits operating in the Beaverton area, ranging from local restaurants and auto repair shops to the world leader of sports apparel. The businesses we represent are make Beaverton an economically prosperous, safe, healthy, inclusive and innovative place to live, work and play. We have been an active partner with the City of Beaverton and Washington County throughout the COVID pandemic to provide necessary training, education, grants, PPE and more to businesses in the greater Beaverton Area.

OUR LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FOCUS

This year, our focus continues on business relief and support through the ongoing impacts of the pandemics including effects such as labor shortages, supply chain impacts, revenue/customer loss and ARPA and other continued funding opportunities. We ask the Oregon State Legislature to **do no harm**. We are asking the Legislature and other elected officials to contemplate very seriously any action, be it regulatory enactment or fee increases, and to view any action through the lens of a Main Street business owner who has for nearly two years has been battling to keep their doors open, to keep their employees, to maintain strict adherence to the state's health guidance, all the while keeping their customers and employees safe. Any additional burden on our beleaguered businesses will result in a catastrophic loss of businesses throughout our communities, who will be unable to continue absorbing additional costs with reduced capacity and severe curtailment in their customer base. During this ongoing pandemic our businesses have yet to absorb all of the new taxes already passed so we would respectfully ask for a pause on new taxes and fees while we all collectively recover.

OUR VALUES

Our mission is to promote business prosperity and a healthy, equitable, inclusive and diverse community in greater Beaverton area by providing information, services and advocacy for our members.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Economic Health	Promote policies that enable businesses of all sizes to thrive and grow.
Inclusivity	Engage and listen to business stakeholders on policies that impact how employers operate.
Collaboration	Develop policies collaboratively with a willingness to consider alternative paths and compromise agreements.
Fiscal Responsibility	Prioritize State and local spending based on intended outcomes and results to create a more balanced, stable budget.
Transparency	Encourage frank, open and transparent communication between all stakeholders to create an environment of trust and collaboration in working toward the common good of our community.

CONTACT

Please contact us for context to our legislative positions and to engage the Chamber and our members in policy discussions.

Alicia Bermes, President/CEO

e-mail | Alicia@Beaverton.org

phone | 503-350-2006

Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce 2022 Legislative and Local Priorities

Economic Growth | Inclusivity | Collaboration | Fiscal Responsibility | Transparency

Small Business Support

Many small businesses have received support through local grant programs due to COVID-19, but many have not and are struggling under the imposition of state and jurisdictional requirements. While many have survived and some have thrived, certain sectors and many small businesses are burning through savings and reserves that would keep them viable.

Support	Support and assist with ongoing ARPA funding/distributions and tax relief for small businesses receiving local and/or state grants.
----------------	---

Liability Protections for Businesses

Businesses need temporary and targeted COVID-19 liability relief to prevent further financial jeopardy as Oregon starts to reopen.

Support	Businesses progressing through the pandemic-related closures and changes will be making a good-faith effort to implement safety measures as required by the State of Oregon and should be protected from unwarranted or opportunistic litigation from employees claiming to have contracted Covid-19 on the job. Employers need to know that by taking steps to implement guidance from state and federal public health officials, they will be protected from potentially predatory legal action.
----------------	--

Tax Relief for Property Owners

While there have been appropriate actions impacting residential and commercial property tenants in the form of eviction protections, property owners' interest have not received the same level of consideration. Many small property owners depend on income for their own income and retirement.

Support	Allow property owners to waive debt accrued via missed rent payments and make said debt tax-deductible for the extent of the, set to fully expire on June 30, 2022.
----------------	---

Commercial Activities Tax

Monitor	Pandemic impacts and relief on implementation of Commercial Activities Tax with additional recovery time at least equal to overall time of closure. Consider supporting repeal.
----------------	---

Local Funding Flexibility

Support	Providing local jurisdictions temporary flexibility with non-discretionary funds.
----------------	---

Transparent Accountability

Support	Open and transparent accountability of the fair, efficient and effective use of all tax dollars levied on businesses and the employees they employ.
Oppose	Funded programs not being delivered effectively, efficiently and timely for those services and programs the voters have agreed to fund.

Tax Policies and Economic Development

Tax policies must consider research, data and the voices of the business community and show a direct result in Oregon's recovery. Economic development tools, tax increases and tax credits have a direct impact on employers - their ability to stay in business, hire new employees and expand.

Priority	Any tax increase, added burdens, or adjustments to an economic development incentive must be developed in <u>collaboration and in consensus</u> with a broad-based business community.
Support	Legislation that preserves and supports state and local tools to help businesses expand and hire new employees, including the strategic investment program, urban renewal and enterprise zones.
Oppose	Any changes to economic development tools, such as the SIP or enterprise zones that are not developed in consensus with a broad base of the business community.

Transportation and Infrastructure Investments

Ensure the business voice is represented in decision making around strategic investments in transportation and vital infrastructure to spur job and economic development growth throughout Oregon. It is imperative that we prioritize projects in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Priority	Oregon legislators and policymakers should seek out opportunities to fund transportation system upgrades, maintenance and roadway project development, including improvements planned for the I-5 interstate bridge and Highway 217. Funding vital infrastructure projects will infuse Oregon communities with badly needed investments resulting in an increase in local spending and through federal infrastructure investments, including the potential Build Back Better funding package.
Oppose	Transportation infrastructure upgrades that do not contemplate future needs including adequate flow for overburdened roads that will need to accommodate mass transit, cars (electric powered and otherwise), bicycles, pedestrians, and other forms of transportation. Goods and services must be able to be delivered while ensuring consumers and employees must have adequate access to work and movement.

City of Beaverton Specific Focus for 2022

Priority	To effectively support the city manager and Council and support and enhance our partnership with the City of Beaverton, including City policy priorities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing for comprehensive property tax reform to ensure fairness• Supporting equitable strategies for funding locally needed improvements• Ensuring housing stability and removing barriers to housing needs for disadvantaged persons• Support work that is climate effective and seeks to decrease energy consumption• Increased funding for behavioral health services and access• Opposing reductions to tax-exempt programs that impact job creation and housing production
Priority	To collaborate with city leaders and staff to provide support to the economic engine of our local economy, local business owners and their employees so that we can continue to afford the investments in improving our community.

Washington County Specific Focus for 2022

Priority	Work with Washington County and other governmental entities to support the effective business development priorities of the County, including ongoing work as a Business Recovery Center. To ensure community leaders and policymakers understand there are 9 Chambers of Commerce in the county.
Review and/or Activate	To effectively monitor/review and, as deemed appropriate, respond to current/potential Washington County proposals that may impact Beaverton businesses and residents. Field requests from BACC members and/or external parties and review.

Metro Specific Focus for 2022

Priority	Work with Metro to encourage transparency and accountability for projects proposed and already funded. Including but not limited to services for those experiencing homelessness, transportation and other Metro services that support our local businesses and citizenry.
Review and/or Activate	To effectively monitor/review and, as deemed appropriate, respond to current/potential Metro proposals that may impact Washington County and Beaverton businesses and residents.

Federal and Regional Activation

Review and/or Activate	To effectively monitor/review and, as deemed appropriate, respond to current/potential congressional proposals that may impact Washington County and Beaverton businesses and residents. Field requests from BACC members and/or external parties and review.
-------------------------------	---