



# Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce 2021 Legislative and Local Priorities

**Economic Growth | Inclusivity | Collaboration | Fiscal Responsibility | Transparency**

The Beaverton Chamber urges the Oregon State Legislature, Metro, Washington County and the City of Beaverton to consider our Guiding Principles and engage our members in policy conversations and decisions in the 2021 Legislative Session.

## WHO WE ARE

The Beaverton Chamber is the independent, significant voice of the Beaverton area's business community, which is considered a significant part of the economic engine of Oregon. We are a member-driven organization, proud to represent 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 integral to making the Beaverton area an economically prosperous, safe, healthy, inclusive and innovative place to live, work and play.

## OUR LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FOCUS

This year, our focus is on firmly on how the pandemic has ravaged our small business community and the actions the Legislature will be taking to support and assist our businesses. We are simply asking 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 a year been battling to keep their doors open, to keep their employees, to maintain strict adherence to the Governor's guidance, all the while keeping their customers and employees safe. CARES funding has run out and no new Federal funding package has been approved. Grant funding is no longer available, and no new sources of support has been forthcoming. 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 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

<b>Economic Health</b>	Promote policies that enable businesses of all sizes to thrive and grow.
<b>Inclusivity</b>	Engage and listen to business stakeholders on policies that impact how employers operate.
<b>Collaboration</b>	Develop policies collaboratively with a willingness to consider alternative paths and compromise agreements.
<b>Fiscal Responsibility</b>	Prioritize State and local spending based on intended outcomes and results to create a more balanced, stable budget.
<b>Transparency</b>	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.

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<b>Small Business Support</b>	
Many small businesses have received support through local grant programs due to COVID-19, but many have not and are struggling with requirements imposed by Oregon’s Governor.	
<b>Support:</b>	Providing tax relief for small businesses receiving local and/or state grants. Providing for tax relief for grant income would be appropriate under the circumstances.
<b>Liability Protections for Businesses</b>	
Businesses need temporary and targeted COVID-19 liability relief to prevent further financial jeopardy as Oregon starts to reopen.	
<b>Support:</b>	Businesses progressing through the re-opening stages will be making a good-faith effort to implement safety measures as suggested 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.
<b>Tax Relief for Property Owners</b>	
While there have been appropriate actions impacting residential and commercial property tenants in the form of eviction protections, property owners have not received any relief.	
<b>Support:</b>	Allow property owners to waive debt accrued via missed rent payments and make said debt tax-deductible for the extent of the State of Emergency Executive Order and for a period after for at least as long as the State of Emergency was in place.
<b>Commercial Activities Tax</b>	
<b>Support</b>	Relief on implementation of Commercial Activities Tax for the duration of the State of Emergency with additional recovery time at least equal to overall time of closure.
<b>Local Government Flexibility</b>	
<b>Support:</b>	Providing local jurisdictions temporary flexibility with non-discretionary funds.
<b>Tax Policies and Economic Development</b>	
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.	
<b>Priority:</b>	Any tax increase, added burdens, or adjustments to an economic development incentive must be developed in <u>collaboration</u> , and in <u>consensus</u> with, a broad-based business community.
<b>Support:</b>	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.
<b>Oppose:</b>	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.
<b>Transportation and Infrastructure Investments</b>	
Strategic investments in transportation and vital infrastructure will spur job and economic development growth throughout Oregon. It is imperative that we prioritize projects in the most effective and efficient way possible.	
<b>Priority:</b>	The State Legislators should seek out opportunities to fund transportation system upgrades, maintenance and roadway project development. Funding vital infrastructure projects will infuse Oregon communities with badly needed investments resulting in an increase in local spending.
<b>City of Beaverton Specific focus for 2021</b>	
<b>Priority:</b>	To effectively support the transition to our new form of City Government and support and enhance our partnership with the City of Beaverton.

<b>Priority:</b>	To collaborate with the new Interim and then Permanent City Manager, Mayor, City Council and City 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.
<b>Washington County Specific Focus for 2021</b>	
<b>Priority</b>	Work with Washington County and other governmental entities to support the effective business development priorities of the County. BRC is an example.
<b>Review and/or Activate:</b>	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.
<b>Metro Specific Focus for 2021</b>	
<b>Priority</b>	Work with METRO to encourage transparency, transparency and accountability for projects proposed and already funded. Including but not limited to Homeless Services, Transportation and other METRO Services that support our businesses and citizens.
<b>Review and/or Activate:</b>	To effectively monitor/review and, as deemed appropriate, respond to current/potential METRO proposals that may impact Washington County and Beaverton businesses and residents
<b>Federal and Regional Activation</b>	
<b>Review and/or Activate:</b>	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.