**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL**
**STUDY SESSION MINUTES**
**Monday, March 17, 2025**

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Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Council Present: Mayor Graham, Councilors Knauer, Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, and Kaplan. Hansen appeared via Zoom.
Council Absent: none
Staff Present:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sabrina Cotta | City Manager |
| Jordan Rooklyn | Deputy City Manager |
| Brandon Goldman | Community Development Director |
| Alissa Kolodzinski | City Recorder |
| Derek Severson | Planning Manager |

I. **Public Input -** None

## II. TLT Funds & Grants update and Recommendations for BN 25-27

Rooklyn provided a presentation on TLT utilization for the 2023-25 Biennium (BN) and staff proposal for the 2025-27 BN with the goal to increase tourism (presentation attached).

- Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) is a 10% tax on short-term lodging- roughly 70% of TLT goes into the general fund and roughly 30% is reinvested into supporting/growing tourism.
- Business Beautification Grant Program distributed $335,548 across 48 businesses.
- Event Partnership Grant distributed $99,050 across 22 events: the six events hosted so far served approximately 4,500 locals and 1,950 visitors with 241 room nights booked.
- $125,868 was spent on downtown beautification including solar-powered compactor trashcans, the historic medallion installation at Railroad Park, and the 'Walking Upstream' crosswalk installation near the entrance to Lithia Park.
- TLT funds also support Travel Ashland - the City's destination marketing organization.
- Staff recommendations for the next BN include a focus on major activities with measurable outcomes:
  - Data & Research – 5% / $50K
  - Destination Marketing – 45% / $450K
  - Events/Attractions – 35% / $350K
  - Infrastructure – 15% / $150K
- Discussion regarding the suggested allocations - proposed amounts are based on past allocations and future goals. The shift to an activity-based model is intended to help the City better measure impacts and inform future allocation decisions.
- Discussion about clarifying the Travel Ashland contract and accountability for how the contract funds are utilized - quarterly and annual reporting, a City seat on the Ashland Chamber of Commerce Board and Travel Ashland Advisory Committee.

- Further discussion on past TLT fund allocation decisions, economic development including tourism, and the City's role moving forward in promoting tourism in partnership with other organizations such as OSF, SOU, and Travel Ashland. Travel destination marketing and event support will be more clearly delineated
- Goal is to return in May to provide proposed budget options for TLT funds with travel destination marketing and event support more clearly delineated.
- Graham led the Council in an exercise exploring what events are searchable online for a hypothetical traveler coming from Seattle and deciding between Eugene, Ashland, and Salem; and councilors discussed how to foster a year-long calendar of events.

## III. Climate Friendly Areas Draft Ordinance

Elizabeth Decker from Jet Planning and Scott Fregonese from 3J Consulting, joined Goldman and Severson in discussing this topic (presentation in agenda packet).

- Goldman reviewed the City's response to State law for Climate Friendly Areas (CFA's) including community engagement efforts, committee involvement, and other steps taken to develop the draft code for review prior to public hearings.
- Goldman provided previously requested clarification from the Council:
    - The Railroad Property deed restrictions were found compatible with CFA's.
    - City's CFA requirements would still be met after removal of portions of the Transit Triangle as previously considered.
    - This code analysis will consider how to align downtown zoning with CFA requirements while largely maintaining historic preservation goals.
- Decker provided specific map and code update recommendations for the Railroad Property and Transit Triangle.
- Designation as a CFA was not recommended for the Croman Mill property or downtown. Downtown is largely already developed under existing code allowances that are similar to CFA requirements without conflicting with historic preservation standards. Goals for the Croman Mill property can be included in a master plan process with a CFA overlay as a potential option for future use.
- Recommendations included limiting large-scale storage uses in CFA's.
- Council was mixed in opinion regarding the minimum density for CFA's in zones C-1, E-1, and R-2: majority agreed with minimum densities of 25 for C-1 and 20 for E-1 and R-2.
- Site design standards for CFA's were discussed and supported by council:
    - Proposed solar setbacks were approved.
    - Proposed building height step backs were approved
- Expanding allowances outside of CFA's was discussed and supported by the council:
    - Removal of C-1 and E-1 maximum density citywide was approved.
    - Allowing multifamily dwellings in C-1-D with ground-floor commercial-ready standards and increasing minimum density to 30 - discussed and approved.
    - An Increase in maximum height for C-1-D to 50 ft. with option to increase to 60ft. with conditional use permit and remove maximum density was approved.

## IV. Manufactured Home Park Zone Update

Goldman introduced the item and Scott Fregonese from 3J Consulting provided a presentation (see presentation in agenda packet).

- This project came out of the housing production strategy and is intended to preserve existing manufactured home parks and comply with housing statues.
- Project timeline was discussed with goal for formal adoption by council in Fall of 2025. Discussions included how to make up an advisory committee to include park owners, mobile home residents and those familiar with land-use zoning code.

Public Input

Residents spoke in support of the ordinance, the benefits of manufactured homes, and the manufactured home park community, and in favor of affordable housing options for families. Expressed concern that future development could change the affordable housing options provided by these communities and that park owners might be unaware of the ordinance and legal implications if it were to pass.

Goldman clarified the ordinance is at the preliminary stage of discussion for code development, any proposed changes will include stakeholder engagement with property owners and will consider potential incentives.

## V. Adjournment of Study Session

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski

Mayor Tonya Graham

# II. TLT Funds & Grants Update/Recommendation

## Summary

The City imposes a 10% Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) on temporary or short-term lodging within Ashland city limits. Roughly 70% of that tax revenue goes into the City's General Fund to support services, and roughly 30% is reinvested into supporting and growing tourism.

This agenda item is an overview on:

a) how TLT funds were used to support tourism in BN25-27, and
b) how staff propose using TLT funds to support tourism in the future.

Better Together

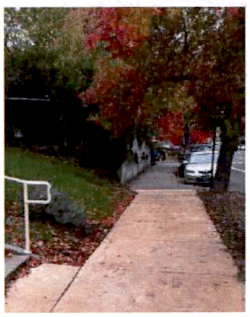


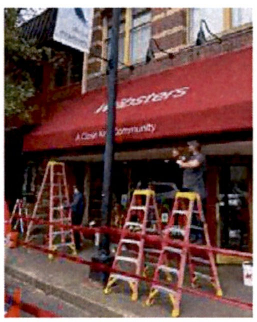
# II. How TLT Funds were Used (BN23-25)

## Beautification Grant Program

$335,548 distributed across 48 unique businesses.

Fresh coat of paint, signage and lighting at the Brickroom.


Repaired sidewalks at 450 Siskiyou.


A new awning at Websters.


Bike infrastructure, fencing, and landscaping.

Better Together

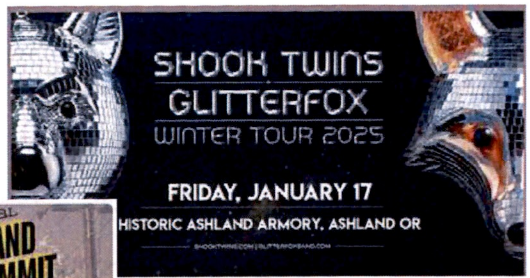
# II. How TLT Funds were Used (BN23-25)

## Event Partnership Grant Program

$99,050 distributed across 22 events.

Of the **6 events hosted** so far:

- approx. **4,500 locals served**
- approx. **1,950 visitors served**
- approx. **241 room nights booked**





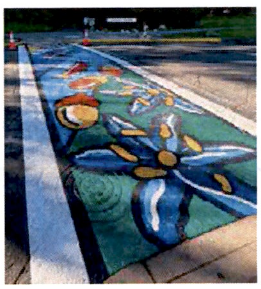



# II. How TLT Funds were Used (BN23-25)

## Downtown Beautification

$125,868 spent


Example of historic medallion project.



Walking upstream crosswalk.

Solar-powered trashcans.

New awnings!
Planter bed improvements!

# II. Proposal for using TLT Funds in the future (BN25-27)

## Budgeting & Distribution by Major Activity

### Data & Research
- Visitor data
- Economic Impact Analyses

### Destination Marketing
- Paid marketing
- Earned marketing
- Travel website
- Visitor's Guide
- Social media
- Coordination

### Events/Attractions
- Beautification programs
- Event sponsorship
- Event prospecting
- Accessibility programs

### Infrastructure
- Wayfinding signage
- Connectivity
- Parking infrastructure
- Bandshell Improvements

Better Together



# II. Proposal for using TLT Funds in the future (BN25-27)

## Budgeting & Distribution by Major Activity

| Activity | Recommended % Distribution | Est. Dollar Amount (~$1M in revenue) |
|---|---|---|
| Data & Research | 5% | $50,000 |
| Destination Marketing | 45% | $450,000 |
| Events/Attractions | 35% | $350,000 |
| Infrastructure | 15% | $150,000 |

Better Together