Planning Commission Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, May 27, 2025

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

I. CALL TO ORDER

7:00 p.m., Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Staff Announcements
2. Advisory Committee Liaison Reports

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Note: To speak to an agenda item in person you must fill out a speaker request form at the meeting and will then be recognized by the Chair to provide your public testimony. Written testimony can be submitted in advance or in person at the meeting. If you wish to discuss an agenda item electronically, please contact PC-public-testimony@ashland.or.us by May 27, 2025 to register to participate via Zoom. If you are interested in watching the meeting via Zoom, please utilize the following link: https://zoom.us/j/93228874966

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Walkable Design Standards Draft Code
2. Transportation System Plan (TSP) Public Engagement Plan

V. LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING

Economic Opportunities Analysis Update Adoption

VI. OPEN DISCUSSION

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting Date: June 10, 2025

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Derek Severson at planning@ashlandoregon.gov or 541.488.5305 (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Walkable Design Standards Draft Code

CITY OF ASHLAND

Better Together

Memo

DATE: May 27, 2025
TO: Planning Commissioners
FROM: Derek Severson, *Planning Manager*
RE: Walkable Design Standards Draft Code Discussion
Code Update Discussion

Tonight's study session provides an opportunity for the Planning Commission to review the draft Walkable Design standards, which are required to be adopted under the Climate Friendly & Equitable Communities (CFEC) rules. In addition to identifying and re-zoning Climate Friendly Areas (CFAs), the CFEC rules mandate that cities adopt Walkable Design standards to be applied citywide. These standards must be adopted no later than the completion of the City's upcoming update to the Transportation System Plan (TSP), which is just getting underway.

The Ashland Comprehensive Plan includes specific policies which support the adoption of Walkable Design Standards, including 10.09.02.1 "*Provide zoning that allows for a mix of land uses and traditional neighborhood development, which promotes walking and bicycling*" and 10.09.02.4 "*Enhance the streetscape by code changes specifying placement of critical design elements such as, but not limited to, windows, doorways, signs and planting strips*."

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Cascadia Partners has worked with the Department of Land Conservation & Development (DLCD) to create a Walkable Design Standards Guidebook which includes a model code for cities to achieve compliance with the CFEC rules (OAR 660-012-0330 and OAR 660-012-0405). Cascadia Partners has also been enlisted by the City of Ashland, through a grant from DLCD, to complete a code audit of the Ashland Land Use Ordinance and recommend code changes necessary to comply with the walkable design standards requirement.

Walkable design helps connect people and places and prioritizes the experience and safety of people on foot, bicycle, or using a mobility device. Walkable design includes elements like how buildings are oriented; how easy it is for people to access and walk across a site; how streets are laid out to ensure direct and convenient routes; how pathways and trails complement the street system; and how facilities and amenities are provided to make it convenient to use transit.

Walkable Design Standards complement designated Climate Friendly Areas by ensuring all neighborhoods are safe, comfortable and engaging places to walk, bike, and use transit. By

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designating Climate-Friendly Areas and updating regulations on the type of development that can occur in those neighborhoods, the City is taking a key step to creating a more walkable community. However, all neighborhoods across the city should be walkable. The goal of the Walkable Design Standards project is to ensure that all new development across the city is more pedestrian-friendly. Walkable design goes beyond merely ensuring that sidewalks are provided, and looks at placemaking to create streetscapes that are inviting and engaging to pedestrians. This project will build on Ashland's work to reduce pollution and promote equitable housing and transportation choices.

Ashland's current regulations go a long way in promoting walkable design, but improvements are needed. The zoning code sets the rules for how land can be used and developed in support of the long-term goals of the community, and Ashland already has many regulations in place that promote walkable, pedestrian-friendly development.

- Design guidelines for Downtown Ashland preserve our historic Main Street.
- Street design standards promote a connected network of healthy, livable, safe streets for everyone.
- Land use regulations limit the total number of drive-up businesses permitted and prohibit them downtown.

As part of this project, the consultant team has audited land use regulations and evaluated those changes needed to comply with the new statewide rules based on guidance from the State's new Walkable Design Model Code. Here are some key things to know about the project:

- Ashland is required to make some specific changes to comply with state rules under the Climate-Friendly & Equitable Communities (CFEC) rules. Additional recommendations are provided for changes that may be of interest, but are not required under the CFEC rules. The consultant team is seeking Commission feedback on these items tonight.
- The project looks at regulations in all zones citywide, except those areas with industrial or rural character.
- The code updates will address a range of issues, including building orientation, building design, drive-up uses, and the treatment of garages.

By adopting walkable design standards, Ashland will be healthier, safer, and better connected.

Council Study Session May 19th

Cascadia's team presented their initial audit to the Planning Commission at a February study session, and the City Council held a study session on May 19th to consider the draft codes. Much of Council's discussion focused on the distinction between CFEC-mandated requirements and additional changes which may be of interest, but which are not required. As further detailed below, Councilors generally seemed concerned with imposing additional standards that were not required and which might increase development costs, and felt that any additional non-required standards would require more information on cost impacts before they could be considered.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Some key points to be aware of in the recommended code changes include:

- **Applying more design standards to single-family residences & duplexes.**
- **Reducing the visual prominence of garages in the streetscape.**
- **Limiting Driveway Widths.**
- **Requiring more windows and weather protection for commercial uses.**

Some areas where Planning Commission input would be particularly helpful in tonight's discussion include:

- **Residential Window Requirements** – To what degree should windows be required in the facades of residential buildings? *(Councilors indicated they were generally not interested in adding residential window requirements if these requirements are not mandated under the CFEC rules.)*
- **Garage Treatment** – Should garages be required to be setback from a building façade, even where a front porch is provided? Should third and fourth garage entries have additional setback requirements? *(CFEC rules require that the width of garages be limited and that garages be flush with or setback from the front façade. Councilors indicated they were generally not interested in adding additional standards to further reduce the visual impact of garages beyond the minimum requirements under the CFEC rules.)*
- **Treatment of Ground Floor Residential Entries –** With the adoption of Climate Friendly Areas, and changes in the commercial downtown regulations, single-use residential buildings in the form of townhomes or apartment buildings with no ground floor commercial component are possible in commercial and employment zones. Should these buildings be held to a more commercial-ready design standard in commercial zones? Should multi-family residential developments in residential zones be required to provide individual entries from the street to ground floor units? *(Councilors expressed some interest in looking further at the treatment of ground floor residential entries, but wanted further information on what these might look like and how much they might effect construction costs.)*
- **Commercial Windows & Weather Protection –** What transparency (i.e. window) percentage do Commissioners believe to be most appropriate for commercial facades? How much weather protection (i.e. awnings, recessed covered entries, etc.) do Commissioners believe is appropriate for a commercial streetscape? *(Councilors indicated that more information was needed on how these standards might affect development costs before they could consider adopting them.)*

NEXT STEPS

No action, beyond feedback on the proposed changes, is required tonight.

The consultant team has conducted meetings with stakeholders in the development and advocacy communities, held a Council study session and is now seeking Commission input. The combined input from these meetings will be incorporated into final ordinance form and brought back to Council for adoption this summer.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Atch 1: Consultant's Presentation
Atch2: Draft Code for Planning Commission Discussion

Walkable Design Standards Project Page
Walkable Design Standards Guidebook

February 25, 2025, Planning Commission Study Session Discussion of Code Audit

- Meeting Materials
- Minutes
- Video

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City of Ashland

Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities

Walkable Design Standards

Draft Ordinance Amendments

May 1, 2025

Online Resources

- Ashland Walkable Design Standards Project Page

  https://www.ashlandoregon.gov/walkabledesign

- Oregon Walkable Design Standards Guidebook

  https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/CL/Documents/CFECWalkableDesignStandards.pdf

18.2.3.100 Drive-Up Use

Where drive-up uses are allowed, they are subject to all of the following criteria.

A. Drive-up uses are allowed only in the C-1 zone, and they are limited to the area east of a line drawn perpendicular to Ashland Street at the intersection of Ashland Street and Siskiyou Boulevard. The number of drive- up uses shall not exceed the 12 in existence on July 1, 1984.

B. Drive-up uses are subject to the following standards:

1. The average waiting time in line for each vehicle shall not exceed five minutes. Failure to maintain this average waiting time may be grounds for revocation of the approval.

2. All facilities providing drive-up service shall provide a waiting area to accommodate at least two customer vehicles outside of the queue immediately beyond the service window or provide other satisfactory methods to allow customers requiring excessive waiting time to receive service.

3. A means of egress for vehicular customers who wish to leave the waiting line shall be provided.

4. The grade of the stacking area to the drive-up shall either be flat or downhill to eliminate excessive fuel consumption and exhaust during the wait in line.

5. The drive-up shall be designed to provide as much natural ventilation as possible to eliminate the buildup of exhaust gases.

6. **~~Stacking area shall be provided to ensure that public rights-of-way are not obstructed.~~. Stacking lanes shall be designed so that they do not prevent access to parking spaces or block the public right-of-way. The minimum length of stacking lanes shall be 160 feet for a single stacking lane and 80 feet per lane when there is more than one stacking lane. A stacking lane is measured between the lane entrance and the service area.**

7. **All driveway entrances, including stacking lane entrances, shall be at least 50 feet from any street intersection. If a drive-through facility has frontage on two streets, the drive-through facilities shall receive access from the street with the lower classification.**

8. **Service areas and stacking lanes shall not be located between the building and a street lot line.**

9. **Drive-up uses shall provide at least one walk-up pedestrian service area. Examples of a walk-up service area include an indoor service area directly accessible from a public street or an outdoor walk-up service window. Walk-up service areas shall be accessible by customers arriving on foot, using a mobility device, or by bicycle. Customers using walk-up service area shall have the same or better access to goods and services as customers using the drive-up service. If the walk-up service area is limited to an outdoor service window, it shall meet the following standards:**

    a. **The walk-up service area shall not also be used by vehicles. Walk-up service may be provided by facility staff or by automatic teller-style machines.**

b. **<u>Service access for pedestrians and bicycles shall be subject to Pedestrian and Access Circulation Standards in Chapter 18.4.3.090.</u>**

c. **<u>The walk-up service area shall be connected to the street by a walkway or a pedestrian plaza. Plazas and pedestrian areas may be counted as floor area for the purposes of meeting the minimum FAR as provided in AMC 18.4.2040.C.1.a.</u>**

~~7~~**<u>10</u>.** The sound level of communications systems shall not exceed 55 decibels at the property line and shall otherwise comply with the Ashland Municipal Code regarding sound levels.

~~8~~**<u>11</u>.** Drive-up uses may be transferred to another location in accord with all requirements of this section. The number of drive-up window stalls shall not exceed one per location, even if the transferred use had greater than one stall.

~~9~~**<u>12</u>.** A ministerial Drive-Up Transfer permit shall be obtained for the transfer of any drive-up uses when such transfer is not associated with a Site Design Review or Conditional Use Permit application in order to document transfer of the use.

~~10~~**<u>13</u>.** Drive-up uses discontinued without a Drive-Up Transfer permit shall be deemed to have expired after being unused for six months. Discontinuation of a drive-up use is considered to have occurred when the Staff Advisor documents the drive-up use as having ceased on site through a planning application review, or upon on-site verification.

~~11~~**<u>14</u>.** All components of a drive-up use shall be removed within 60 days of discontinuation of the use through abandonment, transfer, relocation, or redevelopment.

C. Drive-up uses are prohibited in the Historic District Overlay except that the four existing nonconforming financial institution drive-up uses in operation in the Historic District Overlay as of August 7, 2012 may redevelop or relocate within the C-1 and C-1-D zones in the Historic District Overlay subject to the following additional requirements:

1. Relocation or redevelopment of a drive-up use within the C-1 or C-1-D zones in the Historic District Overlay shall be subject to Site Design Review in chapter 18.5.2 through a Type II procedure in section 18.5.1.060.

2. Relocated or redeveloped drive-up uses shall be placed on a secondary building elevation, and accessed for an alley or driveway.

3. Driveways serving relocated or redeveloped drive-up uses shall not enter from or exit to a higher order street frontage or through a primary building elevation. Driveways or queuing lanes shall not be placed between a building and the right-of-way other than an alley.

4. No demolition of or exterior change to a building considered to be a historic resource shall be permitted to accommodate the relocation or redevelopment of a drive-up use.

5. Regardless of the number of drive-up windows/lanes in use in the current location, with a relocation or remodel the number of windows/lanes shall be reduced to one. (Ord. 3229 § 3, amended, 12/19/2023)

18.2.5.090 Standards for Single-Family Dwellings and Duplexes

A. The following standards apply to new single-family dwellings and duplexes constructed in the R-1, R-1-3.5, R-2, and R-3 zones; the standards do not apply to dwellings in the WR or RR zones.

B. Single-family dwellings and duplexes subject to this section shall utilize at least two of the following design features to provide visual relief along the front of the residence:

1. Dormers;
2. Gables;
3. Recessed entries;
4. Covered porch entries;
5. Cupolas;
6. Pillars or posts;
7. Bay window (min. 12" projection);
8. Eaves (min. 6" projection);
9. Off-sets in building face or roof (min. 16"). (Ord. 3199 § 11, amended, 06/15/2021)

C. **Entry Orientation. Single-family dwellings and duplexes located within 40 feet of a street lot line constructed in the R-1, R1-3.5, R-2, and R-3 zones shall provide at least one main entrance that meets the following standards. Any detached structure for which more than 50 percent of its street-facing façade is separated from the street property line by a dwelling is exempt from meeting these standards.**

1. **The entrance shall be within 8 feet of the longest street-facing façade of the building; and**
2. **The entrance shall either face the street; be at an angle of up to 45 degrees from the street; or open onto a covered porch that shall be no less than six feet in depth and eight feet in width - deep enough to allow a person to stand while the door is opening and large enough to allow at least one person to sit facing the street.**

D. **Transparency. A minimum of 15% of the ground-level wall area of any wall that is within 30 feet of a street lot line between 2 and 8 feet above sidewalk grade must be transparent. For the purposes of this standard, "transparent" means meeting a visible transmittance index (VTI) of a least 0.60. This standard shall apply to both street frontages on corner lots. For an area to be considered transparent, the following standards must be met.**

1. **Windows and/or clear glass within doors may be used to meet this standard.**
2. **Transparent areas shall be calculated based on transparent areas only, excluding any framing, interior grids, mullions, or sashes.**
3. **Required windows must be clear glass and not mirrored, frosted, reflective, or treated in**

such a way to block visibility into the building.

4. **Windows into storage areas, mechanical and utility areas, and garbage and recycling areas do not qualify. Windows into garages do qualify.**

E. Garages. The following standards apply to garages, carports, canopies, and other permanent and temporary structures used for parking or storing vehicles, including those parking and vehicle storage structures accessory to detached single-family dwellings. The standards are intended to balance residents' desire for a convenient, safe, and private vehicle access to their homes with the public interest in maintaining safe and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes. The standards therefore promote pedestrian safety and visibility of public ways, while addressing aesthetic concerns associated with street-facing garages. For the purpose of this subsection, a garage opening is considered to be facing a street where the opening is parallel to or within 45 degrees of the street right-of-way line.

1. **Alleys and Shared Drives. Where a lot abuts a rear or side alley, or a shared driveway, including flag drives, the garage or carport opening(s) for that dwelling shall orient to the alley or shared drive, as applicable, and not a street. Garages fronting or accessed from the alley shall have a minimum rear yard setback of four feet**

2. **Garage Setback. Where no alleys are present, garages shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from the street lot line. A garage entrance shall not be closer to the street lot line than a façade that encloses living area along the same street frontage, except the garage entrance may extend up to 6 feet in front of a façade that encloses living area if there is a covered front porch having dimensions of not less than 6 feet in depth and 8 feet in width and the garage entrance does not extend beyond the roof of the porch.**

3. **Width of Garage Opening. The maximum allowed width of a garage opening is 22 feet or 50% of the width of the street-facing façade, whichever is less.**

4. **Setback for Multiple Garage Openings. Where three or more contiguous garage entrances face the same street, the garage opening closet to a side property line shall be recessed at least 2 feet behind the adjacent opening(s). Side-loaded garages are exempt from this standard.**

18.4.2.030 Residential Development

A. Purpose and Intent. For new multifamily residential developments, careful design considerations must be made to assure that the development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. For example, the use of earth tone colors and wood siding will blend a development into an area rather than causing contrast through the use of overwhelming colors and concrete block walls.

1. Crime Prevention and Defensible Space.

    a. Parking Layout. Parking for residents should be located so that distances to dwellings are minimized. However, avoid designs where parking areas are immediately abutting dwelling units because there is little or no transition from public to private areas. Parking areas should be easily visible from adjacent areas and windows.

b. Orientation of Windows. Windows should be located so that vulnerable areas can be easily surveyed by residents.

c. Service and Laundry Areas. Service and laundry areas should be located so that they can be easily observed by others. Windows and lighting should be incorporated to assure surveillance opportunities. Mail boxes should not be located in dark alcoves out of sight. Barriers to police surveillance such as tall shrubs and fences should be avoided.

d. Hardware. Reliance solely upon security hardware in lieu of other alternatives is discouraged.

e. Lighting. Site development should utilize lighting prudently. More lighting does not necessarily mean better security. Lighting should be oriented so that areas vulnerable to crime are accented.

f. Landscaping. Plant materials such as high shrubs should be placed so that surveillance of semi- public and semi-private areas is not blocked. Thorny shrubs will discourage crime activity. Low shrubs and canopy trees will allow surveillance, hence, reduce the potential for crime.

B. **Applicability.** Except as otherwise required by an overlay zone or plan district, the following standards apply to residential development pursuant to section 18.5.2.020. See conceptual site plan of multifamily development in Figure 18.4.2.030.

C. **Building Orientation.** Residential buildings that are subject to the provisions of this chapter shall conform to all of the following standards. **Where the site is adjacent to two or more streets, these standards shall be met on the frontage of the higher order street. If both streets have the same classification, the applicant may choose on which street to meet the standard.** See also solar orientation standards in section 18.4.8.050.

1. Building Orientation to Street. Dwelling units shall have their primary orientation toward a street. Where residential buildings are located within 20 feet of a street, they **~~shall have a primary entrance opening toward the street and connected to the right-of-way via an approved walkway~~** **shall have at least one main entrance for each building that meets the following standards.**

    a. The entrance shall be within 8 feet of the longest street-facing façade of the building.

    b. The entrance shall either face the street; be at an angle of up to 45 degrees from the street; face a courtyard that abuts the street that shall be at least 15 feet in width; or open onto a covered porch that shall be at least 25 square feet in area.

    c. The entrance shall connect to the right of way via an approved walkway.

2. Limitation on Parking Between Primary Entrance and Street. Automobile circulation or off-street parking is not allowed between the building and the street. Parking areas shall be located behind buildings, or on one or both sides.

~~3. Build-to Line. Where a new building is proposed in a zone that requires a build-to line or maximum front setback yard, except as otherwise required for clear vision at~~

~~intersections, the building shall comply with the build-to line standard.~~

3. Ground Floor Dwellings. The following standard applies to residential developments with ground floor dwelling units that are 10 feet or closer to a street lot line. The intent of the standard is to create inviting and interesting ground floors that activate the street while providing an adequate level of privacy to the unit. Residential buildings subject to this to the provisions of this chapter shall meet the following standards:

    a. A minimum of 50% of dwelling units on the ground floor abutting a street lot line shall have a main entrance that is either accessed from a public sidewalk that faces the street; faces a courtyard that abuts the street that shall be at least 15 feet in width; or opens onto a covered porch that shall be at least 25 square feet in area.

    b. Where a building is located on a corner lot, the standard above shall be met on the frontage of the higher order street.

    c. Main entrances providing direct access to dwelling units shall be set back a minimum of 5 feet and a maximum of 10 feet from the street lot line and provide at least two of the following within the setback to provide a transition from the public realm to the private realm:

        i. A wall or fence that is 18 to 36 inches high with a gate or other opening that connects the approved walkway to the right of way;

        ii. Landscaping that meets the Landscaping and Screen Standards in Chapter 18.4.4.030 not exceeding 36 inches in height at full growth;

        iii. One small canopy tree between 1.5 and less than 6 inches in diameter per entrance; or

        iv. Individual private open space of at least 48 square feet designed so that a 4-foot by 6-foot dimension will fit entirely within it.

4. Transparency. The following standards apply to the wall area of the ground-level of any street-facing façades that are within 20 feet of a street lot line or a pedestrian amenity space. A minimum of 15% of the area of the ground-level, street-facing façade between 2 and 8 feet above sidewalk grade must be transparent. For the purposes of this standard, "transparent" means meeting a visible transmittance index (VTI) of a least 0.60. The following standards must be met for an area to be considered transparent:

    a. Windows and/or clear glass within doors may be used to meet this standard.

    b. Transparent areas shall be calculated based on transparent areas only, excluding any framing, interior grids, mullions, or sashes.

    c. Required windows must be clear glass and not mirrored, frosted, reflective, or treated in such a way to block visibility into the building.

    d. Windows into storage areas, mechanical and utility areas, and garbage and recycling areas do not qualify. Windows into garages do qualify.

D. **Garages.** The following standards apply to garages, carports, canopies, and other permanent and temporary structures used for parking or storing vehicles, including those parking and vehicle storage structures accessory to detached single-family dwellings. The standards are intended to balance residents' desire for a convenient, safe, and private vehicle access to their homes with the public interest in maintaining safe and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes. The standards therefore promote pedestrian safety and visibility of public ways, while addressing aesthetic concerns associated with street-facing garages. For the purpose of this subsection, a garage opening is considered to be facing a street where the opening is parallel to or within 45 degrees of the street right-of-way line.

1. Alleys and Shared Drives. Where a lot abuts a rear or side alley, or a shared driveway, including flag drives, the garage or carport opening(s) for that dwelling shall orient to the alley or shared drive, as applicable, and not a street. **Garages fronting and or accessed from the alley shall have a minimum rear yard setback of four feet**

2. Setback for Garage Opening Facing Street. The following standards do not apply to garages oriented to an alley. ~~**The minimum setback for a garage (or carport) opening facing a street is 20 feet. This provision does not apply to alleys.**~~

   a. **The minimum setback for a garage (or carport) opening facing a street is 20 feet.**

   b. **A garage entrance shall not be closer to the street lot line than a façade that encloses living area along the same street frontage, except the garage entrance may extend up to 6 feet in front of a façade that encloses living area if there is a covered front porch having dimensions of not less than six feet in depth and eight feet in width and the garage entrance does not extend beyond the roof of the porch**

3. **Width of Garage Openings. The combined width of garage openings facing the street must be less than 50% of the width of the street-facing building façade. This standard applies only to the street-facing façade on which the main entrance is located.**

E. **Building Materials.** Building materials and paint colors should be compatible with the surrounding area. Very bright primary or neon-type paint colors, which attract attention to the building or use, are unacceptable.

F. **Streetscape.** One street tree chosen from the street tree list shall be placed for each 30 feet of frontage for that portion of the development fronting the street pursuant to subsection 18.4.4.030.E.

G. **Landscaping and Recycle/Refuse Disposal Areas.** Landscaping and recycle/refuse disposal areas shall be provided pursuant to chapter 18.4.4.

H. **Open Space.** Common and/or private open space is required to be provided pursuant to section 18.4.4.070.

18.4.2.40 Non-Residential Development

[…]

B. Basic Site Review Standards. Except as otherwise required by an overlay zone or plan district, the following requirements apply to commercial, industrial, non-residential and mixed-use development pursuant to section 18.5.2.020. See conceptual site plan of basic site review development in Figure 18.4.2.040.B.6.

1. Orientation and Scale.

   a. Buildings shall have their primary orientation toward the street and not a parking area. Automobile circulation or off-street parking is not allowed between the building and the street. Parking areas shall be located behind buildings, or to one side. See Figure 18.4.2.040.B.1.

   b. A building façade or multiple building facades shall occupy a large majority of a project's street frontage as illustrated in Figure 18.4.2.040.B.6, and avoid site design that incorporates extensive gaps between building frontages created through a combination of driveway aprons, parking areas, or vehicle aisles. This can be addressed by, but not limited to, positioning the wider side of the building rather than the narrow side of the building toward the street. In the case of a corner lot, this standard applies to both street frontages. Spaces between buildings shall consist of landscaping and hard durable surface materials to highlight pedestrian areas.

   c. Building entrances shall be oriented toward the street and shall be accessed from a public sidewalk. The entrance shall be designed to be clearly visible, functional, and shall be open to the public during all business hours. See Figure 18.4.2.040.B.1.

   d. Building entrances shall be located within 20 feet of the public right-of-way to which they are required to be oriented. Exceptions may be granted for topographic constraints, lot configuration, designs where a greater setback results in an improved access or for sites with multiple buildings, such as shopping centers, where other buildings meet this standard.

   e. Where a building is located on a corner lot, its entrance shall be oriented toward the higher order street or to the lot corner at the intersection of the streets. The building shall be located as close to the intersection corner as practicable.

   f. Public sidewalks shall be provided adjacent to a public street along the street frontage.

   g. The standards in subsections 18.4.2.040.B.1.a through ~~d~~f, above, may be waived if the building is not accessed by pedestrians, such as warehouses and industrial buildings without attached offices, and automotive service stations.

2. **Transparency. A minimum of 40% of the area of the ground-level, street-facing façade between 2 and 8 feet above sidewalk grade shall be transparent. For the purposes of this section, "transparent" means a minimum visible transmittance of at least 0.60. The following standards must be met for an area to be considered transparent.**

a. **Windows and/or glass within doors may be used to meet this standard.**

b. **Transparent areas shall be calculated based on transparent areas only, excluding any framing, interior grids, mullions, or sashes.**

c. **Required windows shall not be mirrored, frosted, reflective, or treated in such a way to block visibility into the building.**

d. **Windows into storage areas, vehicle parking areas, mechanical and utility areas, and garbage and recycling areas do not qualify.**

3. **Weather Protection. Weather protection, such as permanent awnings, canopies, overhangs, or architectural features providing protection from the rain or shade during periods of hot weather, shall be provided along 50% of the length of the ground level façade that is within 5 feet of street, plaza, or other public or common open space.**

a. **The weather protection shall project out at least 5 feet from the adjoining wall.**

b. **Weather protection shall have a minimum clearance height above the sidewalk or ground surface of 8 feet, and may encroach into the street right-of-way.**

c. **Weather protection may be adjusted where necessary to accommodate street trees required in 18.4.4.030.E.**

~~2~~ **4.** Streetscape. One street tree chosen from the street tree list shall be placed for each 30 feet of frontage for that portion of the development fronting the street pursuant to subsection 18.4.4.030.E.

~~3~~ **5.** Landscaping.

a. Landscape areas at least ten feet in width shall buffer buildings adjacent to streets, except the buffer is not required in the Detail Site Review, Historic District, and Pedestrian Place overlays.

b. Landscaping and recycle/refuse disposal areas shall be provided pursuant to chapter 18.4.4.

~~4~~ **6.** Designated Creek Protection. Where a project is proposed adjacent to a designated creek protection area, the project shall incorporate the creek into the design while maintaining required setbacks and buffering, and complying with water quality protection standards. The developer shall plant native riparian plants in and adjacent to the creek protection zone.

~~5~~ **7.** Noise and Glare. Artificial lighting shall meet the requirements of section 18.4.4.050. Compliance with AMC 9.08.170.C related to noise is required.

~~6~~**8.** Expansion of Existing Sites and Buildings. For sites that do not conform to the standards of section18.4.2.040 (i.e., nonconforming developments), an equal percentage of the site must be made to comply with the standards of this section as the percentage of building expansion. For example, if a building area is expanded by 25 percent, then 25 percent of the site must be brought up to the standards required by this document.

C. **Detailed Site Review Standards.** Development that is within the Detail Site Review overlay shall, in addition to complying with the standards for Basic Site Review in subsection 18.4.2.040.B, above, conform to the following standards. See conceptual site plan of detail site review development in Figure 18.4.2.040.C.1 and maps of the Detail Site Review overlay in Figures 18.4.2.040.C.2 through 5.

1. Orientation and Scale.

   a. Developments shall have a minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.50. Where a site is one-half an acre or greater in size, the FAR requirement may be met through a phased development plan or a shadow plan that demonstrates how development may be intensified over time to meet the minimum FAR. See shadow plan example in Figure 18.4.2.040.C.1.a. Plazas and pedestrian areas shall count as floor area for the purposes of meeting the minimum FAR.

   b. Building frontages greater than 100 feet in length shall have offsets, jogs, or have other distinctive changes in the building façade.

   ~~**c. Any wall that is within 30 feet of the street, plaza, or other public or common open space shall contain at least 20 percent of the wall area facing the street in display areas, windows, or doorways. Windows must allow view into working areas, lobbies, pedestrian entrances, or display areas. Blank walls within 30 feet of the street are prohibited. Up to 40 percent of the length of the building perimeter can be exempted for this standard if oriented toward loading or service areas**~~

   ~~**d.**~~ **c.** Buildings shall incorporate lighting and changes in mass, surface or finish to give emphasis to entrances.

   ~~**e**~~ **d.** Infill or buildings, adjacent to public sidewalks, in existing parking lots is encouraged and desirable.

   ~~**f. Buildings shall incorporate arcades, roofs, alcoves, porticoes, and awnings that protect pedestrians from the rain and sun**~~

2. Transparency.

   a. Any wall that is within 30 feet of the street, plaza, or other public or common open space shall contain transparency of at least ~~20~~ 50% of the street-facing façade between 2 and 8 feet above sidewalk grade ~~wall area facing the street in display areas,~~ in the form of windows or doorways. ~~Windows must allow view into working areas, lobbies, pedestrian entrances, or display areas. Up to 40 percent of the length of the building perimeter can be exempted for this standard if oriented toward loading or service areas.~~ For the purposes of this section, "transparent" means a minimum visible transmittance of at least 0.60.

   b. Windows and/or glass within doors may be used to meet this standard. Transparent areas shall be calculated based on transparent areas only, excluding any framing, interior grids, mullions, or sashes.

   c. Required windows shall not be mirrored, frosted, reflective, or treated in such a way to block visibility into the building.

d. **Windows into storage areas, vehicle parking areas, mechanical and utility areas, and garbage and recycling areas do not qualify.**

3. Weather Protection. Weather protection (e.g., permanent awnings, canopies, overhangs, or architectural features providing protection from the rain or shade during periods of hot weather) shall be provided along 50% of the length of the ground level façade that is within 5 feet of a street, plaza, or other public or common open space.

a. The weather protection shall project out at least 5 feet from the adjoining wall.

b. Weather protection shall have a minimum clearance height above the sidewalk or ground surface of 8 feet, and may encroach into the street right-of-way.

c. Weather protection may be adjusted where necessary to accommodate street trees required in 18.4.4.030.E.

~~2.~~ **4.** Streetscape.

a. Hardscape (paving material) shall be utilized to designate “people” areas. Sample materials could be unit masonry, scored and colored concrete, grasscrete, or combinations of the above.

b. A building shall be set back not more than five feet from a public sidewalk unless the area is used for pedestrian activities such as plazas or outside eating areas, or for a required public utility easement. This standard shall apply to both street frontages on corner lots. If more than one structure is proposed for a site, at least 65 percent of the aggregate building frontage shall be within five feet of the sidewalk.

~~3.~~ **5.** Buffering and Screening.

a. Landscape buffers and screening shall be located between incompatible uses on an adjacent lot. Those buffers can consist of either plant material or building materials and must be compatible with proposed buildings.

b. Parking lots shall be buffered from the main street, cross streets, and screened from residentially zoned land.

~~4.~~ **6.** Building Materials.

a. Buildings shall include changes in relief such as cornices, bases, fenestration, and fluted masonry, for at least 15 percent of the exterior wall area.

b. Bright or neon paint colors used extensively to attract attention to the building or use are prohibited. Buildings may not incorporate glass as a majority of the building skin.

D. **Additional Standards for Large Scale Projects.** In the Detail Site Review overlay, developments that are greater than 10,000 square feet in gross floor area or contain more than 100 feet of building frontage shall, in addition to complying with the standards for Basic (subsection 18.4.2.040.B) and Detail (subsection 18.4.2.040.C) Site Review, above, conform to the following standards. See conceptual elevation of large scale development in Figure 18.4.2.040.D.1 and conceptual site plan of large scale development in Figure 18.4.2.040.D.2.

1. Orientation and Scale.

   a. Developments shall divide large building masses into heights and sizes that relate to human scale by incorporating changes in building masses or direction, sheltering roofs, a distinct pattern of divisions on surfaces, windows, trees, and small scale lighting.

   b. Outside of the Downtown Design Standards overlay, new buildings or expansions of existing buildings in the Detail Site Review overlay shall conform to the following standards:

      i. Buildings sharing a common wall or having walls touching at or above grade shall be considered as one building.

      ii. Buildings shall not exceed a building footprint area of 45,000 square feet as measured outside of the exterior walls and including all interior courtyards. For the purpose of this section an interior courtyard means a space bounded on three or more sides by walls but not a roof.

      iii. Buildings shall not exceed a gross floor area of 45,000 square feet, including all interior floor space, roof top parking, and outdoor retail and storage areas, with the following exception:

         Automobile parking areas located within the building footprint and in the basement shall not count toward the total gross floor area. For the purpose of this section, “basement” means any floor level below the first story in a building. “First story” shall have the same meaning as provided in the building code.

      iv. Buildings shall not exceed a combined contiguous building length of 300 feet.

   c. Inside the Downtown Design Standards overlay, new buildings or expansions of existing buildings shall not exceed a building footprint area of 45,000 square feet or a gross floor area of 45,000 square feet, including roof top parking, with the following exception:

      Automobile parking areas located within the building footprint and in the basement shall not count toward the total gross floor area. For the purpose of this section, “basement” means any floor level below the first story in a building. “First story” shall have the same meaning as provided in the building code.

2. Detail Site Review Plaza Space Standards.

   a. One square foot of plaza space shall be required for every ten square feet of gross floor area, except for the fourth gross floor area.

   b. Within the C-1-D zone, or Downtown Design Standards overlay, no plaza space shall be required.

   c. A plaza space shall incorporate at least four of the following elements:

      i. Sitting Space – at least one sitting space for each 500 square feet shall be included in the plaza. Seating shall be a minimum of 16 inches in height and 30 inches in width. Ledge benches shall have a minimum depth of 30 inches.

ii. A mixture of areas that provide both sunlight and shade.

iii. Protection from wind by screens and buildings.

iv. Trees – provided in proportion to the space at a minimum of one tree per 500 square feet, at least two inches in diameter at breast height.

v. Water features or public art.

vi. Outdoor eating areas or food vendors.

~~3. **Transit Amenities.** **Transit amenities, bus shelters, pullouts, and designated bike lanes shall be required in accordance with the Ashland Transportation Plan and guidelines established by the Rogue Valley Transportation District.**~~

18.4.3.80 Vehicle Area Design

[…]

A. **Vehicular Access and Circulation.** The intent of this subsection is to manage access to land uses and on-site circulation and maintain transportation system safety and operations. For transportation improvement requirements, refer to chapter 18.4.6, Public Facilities.

1. Applicability. This section applies to all public streets within the City and to all properties that abut these streets. The standards apply when developments are subject to a planning action (e.g., site design review, conditional use permit, land partition, performance standards subdivision).

2. Site Circulation. New development shall be required to provide a circulation system that accommodates expected traffic on the site. All on-site circulation systems shall incorporate street-like features as described in subsection 18.4.3.080.B.4. Pedestrian connections on the site, including connections through large sites, and connections between sites and adjacent sidewalks must conform to the provisions of section 18.4.3.090.

3. Intersection and Driveway Separation. The distance from a street intersection to a driveway, or from a driveway to another driveway, shall meet the minimum spacing requirements for the street's classification in the Ashland Transportation System Plan (TSP) as illustrated in Figures 18.4.3.080.C.3.a and 18.4.3.080.C.3.b.

    a. In no case shall driveways be closer than 24 feet as measured from the bottom of the existing or proposed apron wings of the driveway approach.

    b. Partitions and subdivisions of property located in an R-2, R-3, C-1, E-1, CM, or M-1 zone shall meet the controlled access standards set forth below. If applicable, cross access easements shall be required so that access to all properties created by the land division can be made from one or more points.

    c. Street and driveway access points in an R-2, R-3, C-1, E-1, CM, or M-1 zone shall be limited to the following:

        i. Distance between driveways

On boulevard streets:	100 feet
On collector streets:	75 feet
On neighborhood streets:	24 feet

        ii. Distance from intersections.

On boulevard streets:	100 feet
On collector streets:	50 feet
On neighborhood streets:	35 feet

    d. Access Requirements for Multifamily Developments. All multifamily developments which will have automobile trip generation in excess of 250 vehicle trips per day shall provide at least two driveway access points to the development. Trip generation shall be determined by the methods established by the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

4. Shared Use of Driveways and Curb Cuts.

   a. Plans submitted for developments subject to a planning action shall indicate how driveway intersections with streets have been minimized through the use of shared driveways and all necessary access easements. Where necessary from traffic safety and access management purposes, the City may require joint access and/or shared driveways in the following situations:

      i. For shared parking areas.

      ii. For adjacent developments, where access onto an arterial is limited.

      iii. For multifamily developments, and developments on multiple lots.

   b. Developments subject to a planning action shall remove all curb cuts and driveway approaches not shown to be necessary for existing improvements or the proposed development. Curb cuts and approaches shall be replaced with standard curb, gutter, sidewalk, and planter/furnishings strip as appropriate.

   c. If the site is served by a shared access or alley, access for motor vehicles must be from the shared access or alley and not from the street frontage.

5. Alley Access. Where a property has alley access, vehicle access shall be taken from the alley and driveway approaches and curb cuts onto adjacent streets are not permitted.

D. Driveways and Turn-Around Design. Driveways and turn-arounds providing access to parking areas shall conform to the following provisions:

~~1. **A driveway for a single-family dwelling or a duplex shall be a minimum of nine except that driveways over 50 feet in length or serving a flag lot shall meet the width and design requirements of section 18.5.3.060. Accessory residential units are exempt from the requirements of this subsection.**~~

1. Driveway Width. The following standards apply to the width of driveways. Driveway width shall be measured lengthwise along the property line, and such measurement shall not include the width of wings connecting the top of the curb to the lowered curb or apron.

   a. Driveways directly serving a single-width parking stall or garage shall be a minimum of 9 feet and a maximum of 12 feet in width.

   c. For a double-width vehicle parking area that is shared by two detached units, the maximum driveway width shall be 12 feet. For a double-width vehicle parking area that is shared by two attached units, driveways shall be shared using a taper with a maximum driveway width of 14 feet. There must be a recorded easement guaranteeing reciprocal access and maintenance for all affected properties.

c. **All other driveways serving parking areas with seven or fewer parking spaces shall be a minimum of 12 feet and a maximum of 24 feet in width.**

d. **Parking areas of more than seven parking spaces shall be served by a driveway constructed to: facilitate the flow of traffic on or off the site, with due regard to pedestrian and vehicle safety; be clearly and permanently marked and defined; provide adequate aisles or turn-around areas so that all vehicles may enter the street in a forward manner; and a driveway width as follows:**

i. **A driveway accommodating two-way vehicular circulation on site shall be 20 feet in width.**

ii. **A driveway configured for one-way vehicular circulation on site, which provides separated ingress and egress access onto the public street, may be reduced to 15 feet in width upon demonstration that adequate fire apparatus access is provided.**

e. **Driveways over 50 feet in length or serving a flag lot shall meet the width and design requirements of section 18.5.3.060.**

f. **Accessory residential units are exempt from the requirements of this subsection.**

~~2. Parking areas of seven or fewer spaces shall be served by a driveway of 12 feet, except for those driveways subject to subsection 18.4.3.080.D.1. Accessory residential units are exempt from the requirements of this subsection.~~

~~3. Parking areas of more than seven parking spaces shall be served by a driveway constructed to: facilitate the flow of traffic on or off the site, with due regard to pedestrian and vehicle safety; be clearly and permanently marked and defined; provide adequate aisles or turn-around areas so that all vehicles may enter the street in a forward manner; and a driveway width as follows:~~

~~b. A driveway accommodating two-way vehicular circulation on site shall be 20 feet in width.~~

~~c. A driveway configured for one-way vehicular circulation on site, which provides separated ingress and egress access onto the public street, may be reduced to 15 feet in width upon demonstration that adequate fire apparatus access is provided.~~

~~4~~ **2.** The width of driveways and curb cuts in the parkrow and sidewalk area shall be minimized.

~~5~~ **3.** For single-family lots and multifamily developments, the number of driveway approaches and curb cuts shall not exceed one approach/curb cut per street frontage. For large multifamily developments and other uses, the number of approaches and curb cuts shall be minimized where feasible to address traffic safety or operations concerns.

~~6~~ **4.** Vertical Clearances. Driveways, aisles, turn-around areas and ramps shall have a minimum vertical clearance of 13.5 feet for their entire length and width. Parking structures are exempt from this requirement.

~~7~~ **5.** Vision Clearance. No obstructions may be placed in the vision clearance area except as set forth in section 18.2.4.040.

~~8~~ 6. Grades for new driveways in all zones shall not exceed 20 percent for any portion of the driveway. If required by the City, the developer or owner shall provide certification of driveway grade by a licensed land surveyor.

~~9~~ 7. All driveways shall be installed pursuant to City standards prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for new construction.

~~10~~ 8. Driveways for lots created or modified through a land division or property line adjustment, including those for flag lots, shall conform to the requirements of chapter 18.5.3, Land Divisions and Property Line Adjustments.

[…]

18.4.6.060 Transit Facilities

A. Dedication of Public Use Areas. Where a proposed park, playground, trail, or other public use shown in a plan adopted by the City is located in whole or in part in a subdivision, the City may require the dedication of this area to the City, or the designation of this area on the final plat for future dedication to the City, provided that the impact of the development on the City park system is roughly proportional to the dedication, conforms to the requirements of this ordinance, and is consistent with applicable parks and trails master plans.

B. Projects that meet the following thresholds will be reviewed to determine if transit facilities are required to be provided:

1. Projects on development sites within 100 feet of an existing or planned transit stop or located on an existing or planned transit route.

2. Residential developments with more than 25 dwelling units. This includes any development application for any residential building type, including but not limited to, residential or mixed-use subdivisions and multifamily development.

C. Applicable projects may be required to provide additional transit facilities where substantial evidence of projected transit ridership or other transit impacts is presented by Rogue Valley Transit to conclude both that a nexus exists between the proposed development and public transit and that the degree of impact provides reasonable justification. The City may require the developer to grant a public easement or dedicate a portion of the lot for transit facilities.

D. If, upon review of an application for development meeting or exceeding the thresholds in 18.4.6.060.A. above, Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) recommends, based on the Ashland Transportation Plan, that a bus stop be constructed or that an easement or dedication be provided for a bus stop consistent with the TSP or an RVTD-approved plan at the time of development, the City may require such improvement. Requirements may include existing facilities that are in disrepair or in need of replacement.

18.6.1 Definitions

Driveway. The area that provides vehicular access to a site from a street or the area that provides vehicular circulation on a site.

Drive-Up Uses. Drive-up uses are defined as any establishment which by design, physical facilities, service, or by packaging procedures encourages or permits customers to receive services, obtain goods other than automobile fuel, or be entertained while remaining in their motor vehicles. The components of a drive-up use are regulated as part of such facility and include kiosks, canopies, or other structures; windows; stalls; and queuing lanes and associated driveways.

Garage. A covered permanent structure designed to provide shelter for vehicles, and which is accessory to a dwelling. Carports are considered garages.

Ground-Floor Dwelling Unit. A residential unit with the entrance, front or rear, that is within five feet of the finished grade. The distance to finished grade is measured vertically at a right angle from the doorsill to the finished grade.

Main Entrance. A main entrance is the entrance to a building that is designed to facilitate ingress and egress for the highest volume of building users. Generally, each building has one main entrance, but if design features do not make it possible to determine which entrance is the main entrance, all entrances providing the same capacity of ingress and egress shall be treated as main entrances.

Walk-Up Service Area. An area, either internal or external to a building, that is directly accessible from a public street by customers arriving on foot, by bicycle, or using a mobility device. Walk-up service may be provided by facility staff or by automatic teller machines and must offer the same or better access to goods and services to users as customers using drive-up service.

Ashland Walkable Design Standards Code Amendments

May 27, 2025 Ashland Planning Commission Presentation

OUR TEAM

CASCADIA PARTNERS

JAMIN KIMMELL

Principal in Charge

PAULINE RUEGG

Project Manager

A team of seasoned land use and urban design professionals working on zoning code updates across the State.

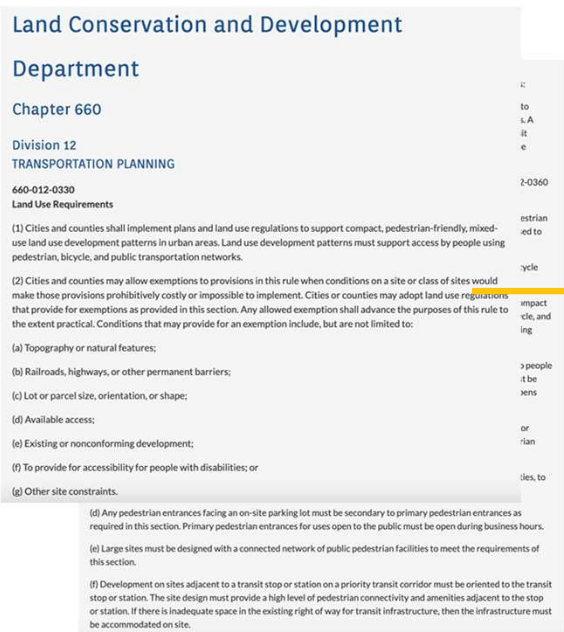
Authors and primary staff of the recent DLCD Model Code project.

AGENDA

1	**Project Overview and Objectives**	5 min
2	**What We Heard**	5 min
3	**Code Concepts**	15 min
4	**City Council Discussion**	3 min

WHAT IS CFEC?

CLIMATE-FRIENDLY AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES



Land Conservation and Development Department

Chapter 660

Division 12
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

660-012-0330
Land Use Requirements

(1) Cities and counties shall implement plans and land use regulations to support compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use land use development patterns in urban areas. Land use development patterns must support access by people using pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation networks.

(2) Cities and counties may allow exemptions to provisions in this rule when conditions on a site or class of sites would make those provisions prohibitively costly or impossible to implement. Cities or counties may adopt land use regulations that provide for exemptions as provided in this section. Any allowed exemption shall advance the purposes of this rule to the extent practical. Conditions that may provide for an exemption include, but are not limited to:

(a) Topography or natural features;

(b) Railroads, highways, or other permanent barriers;

(c) Lot or parcel size, orientation, or shape;

(d) Available access;

(e) Existing or nonconforming development;

(f) To provide for accessibility for people with disabilities; or

(g) Other site constraints.

(d) Any pedestrian entrances facing an on-site parking lot must be secondary to primary pedestrian entrances as required in this section. Primary pedestrian entrances for uses open to the public must be open during business hours.

(e) Large sites must be designed with a connected network of public pedestrian facilities to meet the requirements of this section.

(f) Development on sites adjacent to a transit stop or station on a priority transit corridor must be oriented to the transit stop or station. The site design must provide a high level of pedestrian connectivity and amenities adjacent to the stop or station. If there is inadequate space in the existing right of way for transit infrastructure, then the infrastructure must be accommodated on site.

A set of state rules seeking to coordinate land use and transportation planning to create healthier and more equitable communities across Oregon.

There are many different aspects of CFEC including parking reform, Transportation System Plans, Climate Friendly Areas, and walkable design.

PROJECT GOALS

OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULES


Land Conservation and Development Department

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This project is focused on auditing Ashland's zoning regulations for consistency with CFEC rules.

These rules require jurisdictions to regulate land use to **"support compact, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use land use development patterns".**

Ashland is required to comply on or before major updates to its TSP.

WHAT IS WALKABLE DESIGN?

Building Orientation

Compact Development

Connectivity

Parking Lots

Transit Orientation

Frontages

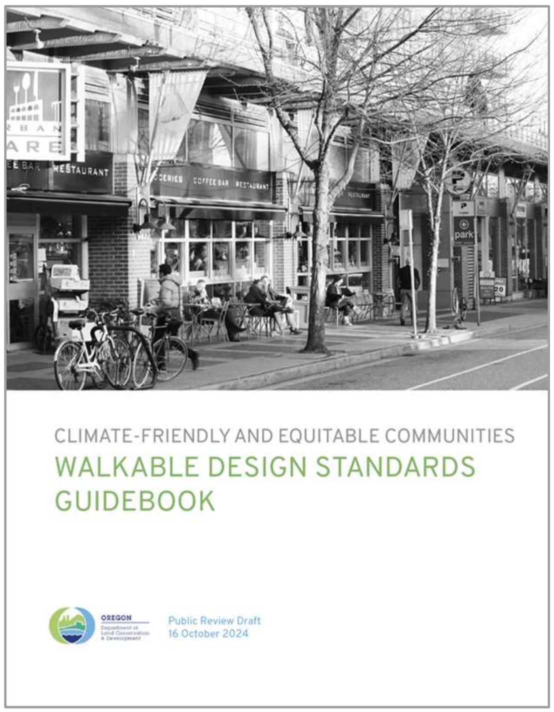
Access

Entrances

Alleys

WHAT IS WALKABLE DESIGN?

DLCD developed a **Walkable Design Standards Guidebook** and **Model Code** for cities to use as a benchmark for desired outcomes. Ashland's land use regulations should support these outcomes:

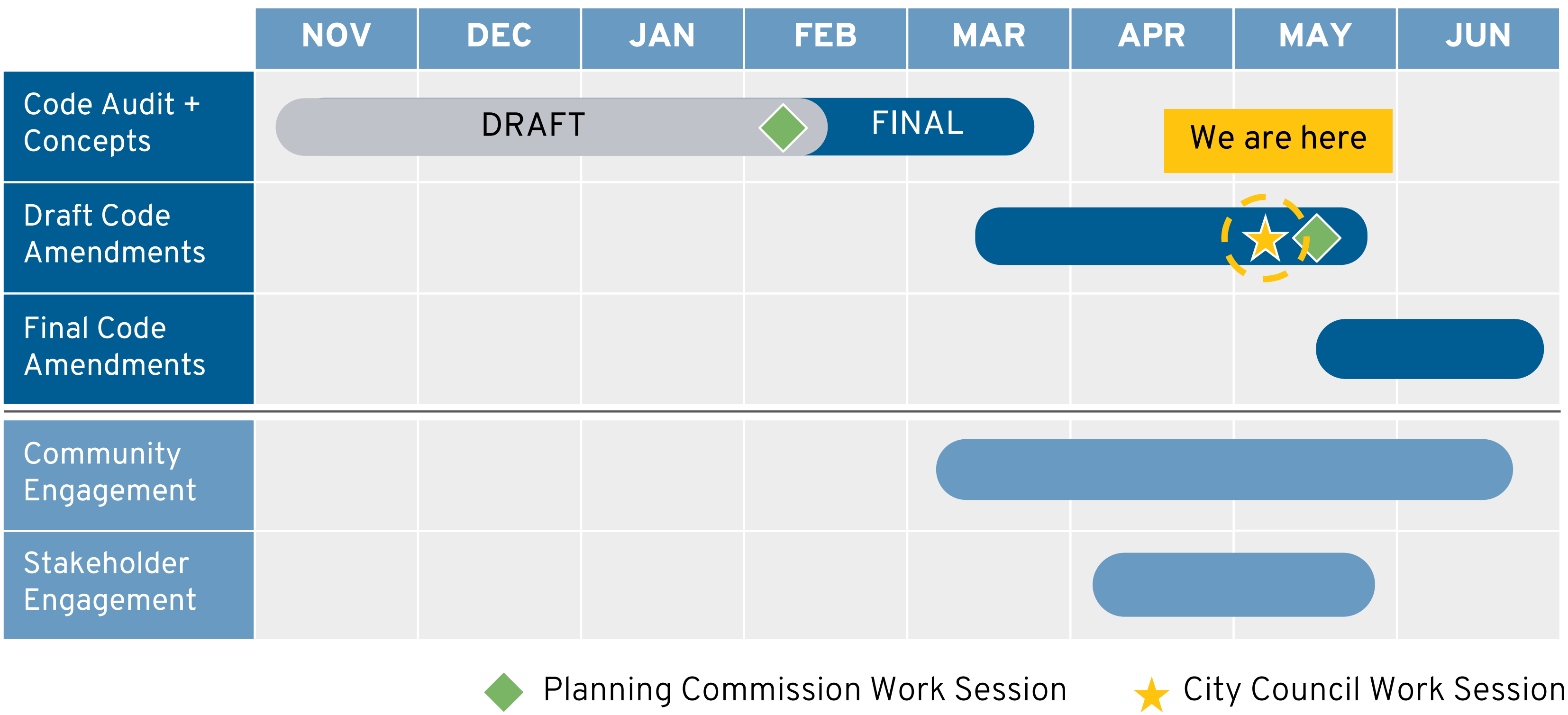


WHAT ARE OARS TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

- Comfortable, direct, and convenient for people to walk, bike, or take a bus instead of a car.
- Interesting and engaging built environment where people want to walk and stop to talk.
- Neighborhoods that are comfortable for all types of people (young and old).

The City can encourage these outcomes by amending the zoning code that sets the rules for how land can be developed

PROJECT SCHEDULE



Staff will finalize amendments for adoption after project's end

HOW DO THESE RULES APPLY?

HOW

Walkable Design Standards **only apply to the land use regulations**.

Although land use is highly interrelated with transportation, through this project the City is only addressing the private lot.

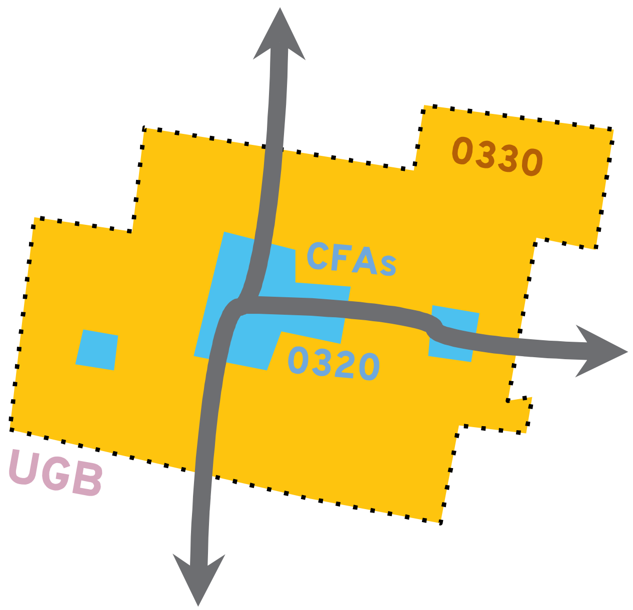
Private lot
The building and spaces surrounding it on the lot are regulated by the zoning code.

Public-Right-of-Way
(streets, sidewalks, etc)
regulated by TSP.

HOW DO THESE RULES APPLY?

WHERE

Applies to **entire urban growth boundary** - all zones, including within CFAs, except areas of industrial and rural-character



Relevant zones include:

- **Commercial Zones** (C-1, C-1-D, E-1)
- **Residential Zones** (R-1, R-1-3.5, R-2, R-3)
- **Special Districts** (Croman Mill, Normal Neighborhood, North Mountain)
- **Overlay Zones** (Downtown, Historic District, Pedestrian Place, CFAs, and Detailed Site Review)

WHAT WE HEARD | PLANNING COMMISSION

Strong support for identified areas of focus for walkable design.

Keep in mind cost considerations of applying new design standards, e.g., requiring more windows could be expensive or difficult for historic buildings..

Weather protection is a good idea but balance shade with sun that defines Ashland.

WHAT WE HEARD | STAKEHOLDERS

Local climate and transportation advocates support code amendments to advance walkable outcomes. Their most important priorities are:

> Ashland can and should do better to ensure the City is accessible for everyone.

> A key aspect of walkability is not building design but landscaping and trees.

> Still strong support for solar orientation code standards.

WHAT WE HEARD | STAKEHOLDERS

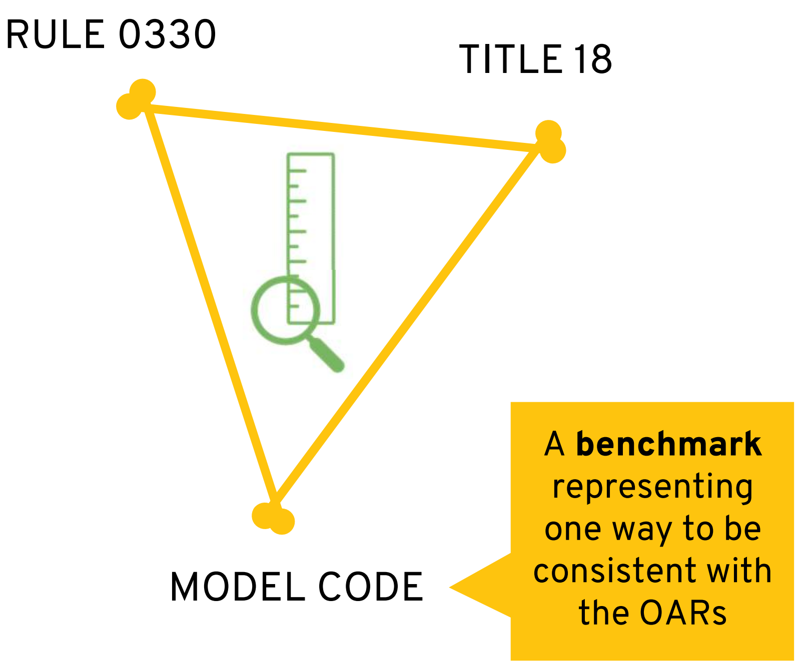
Local developers and builders support advancing walkable outcomes but raised concerns about the increase in cost and lack of flexibility additional rule changes may bring.

> Code continues to get more complicated, not more simple. Should be easy to understand.

> More rules make it harder to design and build the housing that the City needs.

> Amendments should build in more flexibility and exceptions to allow developers to respond to unique site conditions and constraints.

CODE AUDIT



Cascadia Partners reviewed all relevant land use regulations within Title 18 for consistency with the OARs and the Model Code.

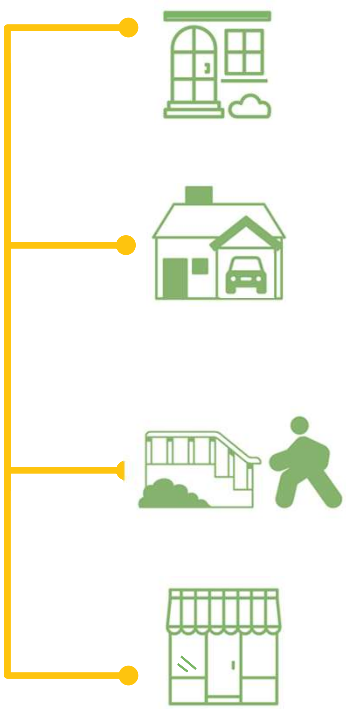
If a standard in Title 18 is **not consistent with Rule 0330**, then the City **must update** the standard.

If a standard in Title 18 is **not consistent with the Model Code**, then the City **may choose to update** the standard.

For every section of the code deemed not consistent, we proposed concepts.

WALKABLE DESIGN CODE CONCEPTS

To become more walkable and consistent with CFEC rules, the City of Ashland can consider several zoning code changes.



Apply more design standards to single family/duplex uses

Reduce visual prominence of garages

Require ground-floor residential uses to be pedestrian-oriented and activate sidewalk

Require more windows/weather protection for commercial uses

Concept 1: Apply more design standards to single family houses and duplexes

TODA
Y

- In R-1, R-1-3.5, R-2, and R-3 zones, apply additional design standards focused on "sociable development patterns"
- Code audit found Title 18 is missing standards requiring entrances that face or are oriented to the street.
- Additional transparency standards promote "eyes on the street" and engaging design.

Must Have

Nice to Have

Concept 1: Policy Choices

A minimum of 15% of the ground-level wall area of any wall that is within 30 feet of a street lot line must be transparent.

- 15% transparency is on the low end of this type of standard. Should the code require more?
- There may be cost impacts due to need for higher performance windows (due to more window area) or external shades for energy efficiency.
- Should the code require transparency standard on both sides of a corner lot?

Concept 2: Reduce visual prominence of garages

TODA
Y

- In R-1, R-1-3.5, R-2, and R-3 zones, apply design standards that emphasize living spaces over vehicle serving areas and improve pedestrian safety
- Code audit found Title 18 is missing standards a) limiting the width of garages as a proportion of the overall building façade and b) requiring garages to be setback from the front façade
- Additional standards require 3+ contiguous garage entrances to be setback.

Must Have

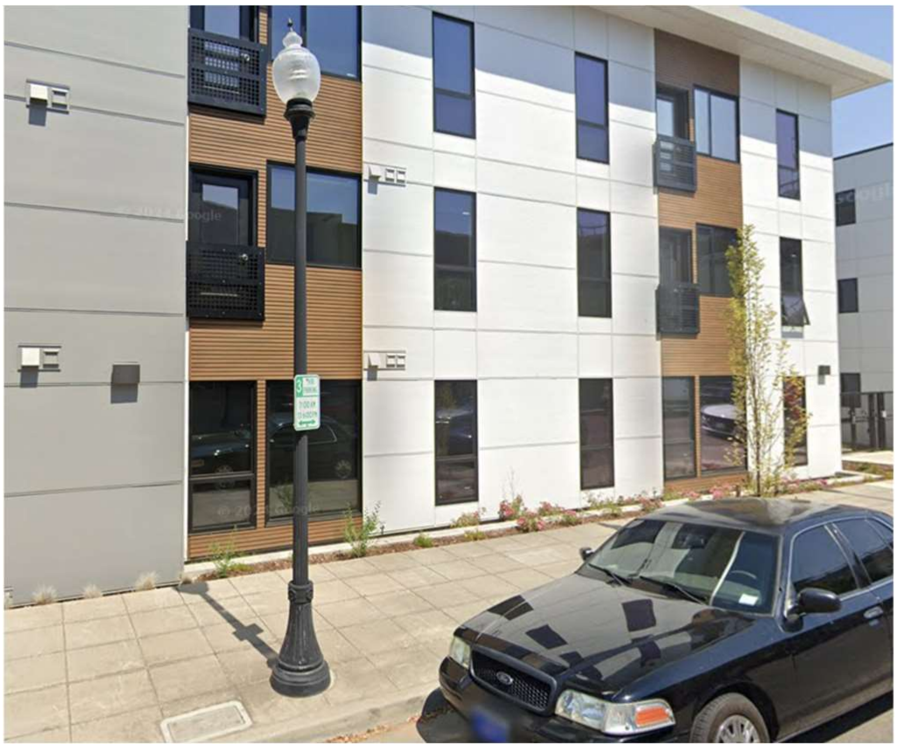
Nice to Have

Concept 2: Policy Choices

A garage entrance shall not be closer to the street lot line than the front façade. The maximum allowed width of a garage opening is 22 feet or 50% of the width of the street-facing façade, whichever is less.

- Should code go further to require the garage be recessed from the front façade, even when a porch is provided?
- Should code require an additional recess for the 3rd or 4th garage stall?

Concept 3: Require ground-floor residential uses to be pedestrian-oriented and activate sidewalk



TODA
Y

- Residential units on the ground floor that are close to the street can result in blank and uninteresting streetscapes.
- Code audit found the city can enhance Basic and/or Detailed Site Overlay standards.
- Require frequent entries, transparency, and transition from public to private realm.
- Exceptions for commercial-ready spaces in CFA overlay.

Nice to Have

Concept 3: Policy Choices

A minimum of 50% of dwelling units on the ground floor abutting a street lot line shall have a main entrance that is accessed from a public sidewalk, faces a courtyard, or opens onto a covered porch. Main entrances shall be set back a minimum of 5 feet and a maximum of 10 feet from the street lot line and provide at least two design treatments to provide a transition.

- Are the trade-offs involved in **requiring** individual entries too costly?
- What design treatments successfully mark the transition from public to private space?

Concept 4: Require more windows and weather protection for commercial uses

TODA
Y

- Code audit found that while Title 18 has transparency and weather protection standards, they could be enhanced.
- Increase requirements for non-residential uses in the Basic and/or Detailed Site Overlay to improve pedestrian-orientation.
- Amendments would increase requirements for commercial uses citywide.

Nice to Have

Concept 4: Policy Choices

A minimum of 40 - 50% of the area of the ground-level, street-facing façade between 2 and 8 feet above sidewalk grade shall be transparent. Weather protection providing shelter from the rain or sun, shall be provided along 50% of the length of the ground level façade.

- How much transparency to require? The current proposal of 40-50% (depending on location) is typical for a smaller city.
- How much weather protection to require? The current standard includes exceptions for street tree spacing.

NEXT STEPS

- We are presenting discussion draft code amendments to Planning Commission on May 27th.
- Staff continuing to review and solicit feedback across different relevant departments.
- CP to finalize adoption-ready code amendments following feedback. Staff will present for future adoption at a later date.

2. Transportation System Plan (TSP) Public Engagement plan

Memo

DATE: May 27, 2025
TO: Planning Commissioners
FROM: Derek Severson, *Planning Manager*
RE: Transportation System Plan (TSP)
DRAFT Public Engagement Plan Review

Ashland is about to kick-off the process of updating the Transportation System Plan (TSP) which serves as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan to guide both city transportation planning and transportation improvements that are required of individual development proposals. The TSP presents the opportunity to consider new street system needs such as accommodating Type III electric bikes, developing new street standards for protected bike lanes, and will help to address multi-modal connectivity within and between Ashland's newly identified Climate Friendly Areas, as required in the CFEC rules.

While the bulk of Ashland's TSP update will be funded through a state grant, available state funding does not support the required public engagement portion of the process. The city will be responsible for developing and implementing a public engagement plan, and while the selected consultant will attend the public engagement meetings and assist in preparing some materials, Public Works and Planning staff, the Transportation Advisory Committee and Planning Commission (*as the city's designed Citizen Involvement Commission*) will take the lead on the public engagement process.

The attached draft Public Engagement Plan was developed by staff based on a state template, the Public Engagement Plans used in Ashland's Climate Friendly Area adoption process, and a recent example from the City of Tualatin

<u>FEEDBACK FROM TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION</u>

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) considered the draft plan at their regular meeting on May 15th. Their input included:

- There needs to be focused involvement by the business community (Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners, Development Community, Realtors, Recology, etc.) generally, and by businesses served by freight specifically. There was also discussion that the freight representative on the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPOs) Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation (RV ACT) should be included as a stakeholder.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
51 Winburn Way
Ashland, Oregon 97520
ashlandoregon.gov
Tel: 541.488.5305
Fax: 541.552.2050
TTY: 800.735.2900

- It was also suggested that members of the Development Process Management Advisory Committee could be considered in this stakeholder group.
- There was discussion of including the regional emergency response community (state, county and cities, as well as private ambulance services) in stakeholder outreach.
- There was discussion of including the disabled community, noting that the local group Disabled United in Direct Empowerment (DUDE) should be an invited stakeholder.
- There was discussion of trying to involve younger people including not only Southern Oregon University but also the Ashland School District, Willow Wind and the Rogue Action Center.
- It was suggested that OHRA, Ashland Together, the Ashland Food Bank, the Senior Center Advisory Committee and BASE be added to the stakeholder list.
- It was also suggested that Ashland DEVO, Siskiyou Velo, the Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association, local bike shops and Rogue Valley Safe Routes to School be included in the stakeholder list.
- It was noted that there may be tabling opportunities on first Fridays, at the July 4th Parade, at the Bike Swap and potentially at pop-up events like the recent Streets for Everyone block party.

The draft plan attached incorporates the TAC recommendations discussed above.

NEXT STEPS

Once the input from the Planning Commission is incorporated into the Public Engagement Plan, staff will work with the selected consultant to incorporate the plan into the scope of work and schedule that will be made part of the consultant contract to guide the TSP adoption process.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Atch 1: DRAFT Public Engagement Plan

Adopted Transportation System Plan (2013)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
51 Winburn Way
Ashland, Oregon 97520
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DRAFT

City of Ashland – Transportation System Plan Update

Draft Public Engagement Plan (PEP)

Prepared: *Planning Commission Review Draft May 27, 2025*

Purpose

This Public Engagement Plan outlines the community outreach, advisory committee engagement, and public review process to guide the development of Ashland's updated Transportation System Plan (TSP). A TSP is a foundational element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, serving as a long-range blueprint for how people and goods will move within and through the city—by foot, bike, transit, and vehicle. It informs future capital improvements, development decisions, and funding priorities. Because transportation directly affects daily life and intersects with goals related to climate action, housing accessibility, and wildfire preparedness, the TSP is best shaped through robust public engagement. This process is designed to ensure inclusive and transparent community input, incorporate technical expertise, and reflect the values and priorities of Ashland residents.

Goals of the Public Engagement Process

- **Transparency:** Ensure the public understands the purpose, scope, and progress of the TSP update.
- **Inclusivity:** Actively engage community members, including underserved populations.
- **Integration:** Incorporate feedback from standing advisory committees, technical experts, and advocacy groups.
- **Education:** Provide stakeholders with accessible and relevant information about transportation planning.
- **Responsiveness:** Demonstrate how public and advisory committee input informs the TSP.

Key Stakeholders and Advisory Bodies

- **Public:** Residents including neighborhood groups, students and regional users.

- **Business Community:**
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Business Owners, particularly those served by freight
  - Development Community
  - Realtors
  - Recology
  - Local Bike Shops

- **City Council**

- **City Bodies:**
  - Planning Commission
  - Transportation Advisory Committee
  - Climate Policy Advisory Committee
  - Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee
  - Wildfire Safety Advisory Committee
  - Ashland Senior Advisory Committee
  - Development Process Management Advisory Committee

- **Regional and Agency Partners:**
  - Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RV MPO)
  - Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation (RV ACT)/Freight Representative
  - Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD)
  - Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
  - Jackson County
  - Ashland School District & Willow Wind
  - Southern Oregon University (SOU)
  - Emergency Response Services (State, County & Cities, as well as private ambulance services)

- **Regional Advocacy Groups:**
  - Rogue Valley Safe Routes to School (Commute Options)
  - Streets for Everyone (Ashland Climate Collaborative)
  - Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN)
  - Rogue Action Center
  - Disabled United in Direct Empowerment (DUDE)
  - Opportunities for Housing, Resources & Assistance (OHRA)
  - Black Alliance & Social Empowerment (BASE)

- Ashland Community Food Bank
- Ashland Together
- Ashland DEVO
- Siskiyou Velo
- Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association
- Others

Overview of Decision-Making and Advisory Bodies

Unlike jurisdictions that form temporary advisory bodies for planning initiatives, Ashland will rely on its existing standing advisory committees to guide the Transportation System Plan (TSP) update. These committees—established by ordinance and composed of appointed community members—each focus on specific policy areas such as transportation, climate, housing, and wildfire safety. Members are selected for their expertise, lived experience, or stakeholder representation relevant to the committee's scope. Leveraging these established bodies ensures continuity, subject matter knowledge, and alignment with ongoing city priorities. Each advisory committee will be engaged at key milestones to provide focused input, helping shape the TSP in a way that reflects the community's values and technical realities.

- **Planning Commission**
  As the City's designated land use review body, the Planning Commission serves as the primary reviewing authority for the TSP update. Because the Transportation System Plan is a required element of Ashland's Comprehensive Plan, any amendments to the TSP must undergo a public hearing process before the Planning Commission in accordance with state law and local ordinance. The Commission will hold formal public hearings and issue recommendations to the City Council regarding the adoption of the updated TSP. In addition to its legislative responsibilities, the Commission will participate in a joint kickoff meeting with the Transportation Advisory Committee and will review key milestones, including the draft and final plan, to ensure alignment with broader land use and policy goals.

- **Transportation Advisory Committee**
  This committee provides focused input on transportation policy, planning, and project prioritization. Composed of members with expertise in transportation, engineering, and mobility systems, the committee will guide the development of multimodal goals, review proposed projects, and help rank improvements to ensure the TSP advances a safe, efficient, and accessible transportation network.

- **Climate and Environment Policy Advisory Committee**
  Reviews proposed strategies for alignment with the City's adopted Climate and Energy Action Plan, with a focus on greenhouse gas reduction.

- **Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee**
  Provides input on transportation equity, accessibility, and how proposed investments may affect vulnerable populations.

- **Wildfire Safety Advisory Committee**
  Reviews evacuation modeling assumptions and provides feedback on proposed transportation improvements to support community resilience.

- **Social Equity and Racial Justice Advisory Committee**
  Provides input to ensure the TSP advances equity, access, and anti-displacement goals. Reviews how proposed transportation investments may impact underserved communities and supports strategies that promote transportation justice.

- **Ashland Senior Advisory Committee**
  Provides input to ensure the TSP advances equity, access, and anti-displacement goals specific to Ashland's seniors. Reviews how proposed transportation investments may impact seniors and address their specific needs.

- **Development Process Management Advisory Committee**
  An ad hoc management advisory committee formed to look specifically at the development process, DPMACs membership includes members of the development community who frequently interact with the city through the development/land use process and who will therefore be uniquely positioned to provide feedback on the TSP from the developer's perspective.

Regional Technical Input

Targeted stakeholder interviews will be conducted to gather issue-specific input and technical insight from key regional partners and institutional stakeholders. Participants may include:

- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD)
- Jackson County
- Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RV MPO) and Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation (RV ACT) Freight Representative
- Ashland School District & Willow Wind
- Southern Oregon University (SOU)
- Emergency Response Services (State, County & Cities, as well as private ambulance services)
- Local transportation advocacy groups such as Streets for Everyone and Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN)

Engagement Strategies and Activities

- Project Website Dedicated TSP Update page (ashlandoregon.gov/TSP)
- Online Surveys
- Social Media / Email Updates
- Pop-up Events/Tabling (Fourth of July, First Fridays, Bike Swap and pop-ups)
- Utility Bill Inserts (as needed)
- Public Hearings at the Transportation Advisory Committee, Planning Commission and City Council

Engagement Timeline and Activities

(18-Month Process: May 2025 – October 2026)

Phase 1: Project Initiation (Months 1–3)

- Launch project webpage and public communications.
- Joint Planning Commission & Transportation Advisory Committee Kickoff Meeting.

Phase 2: Data Gathering & Needs Assessment (Months 4–6)

- Conduct stakeholder interviews, including SOU and advocacy groups.
- Present to:
    - Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
    - Planning Commission
    - Climate and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (CEPAC)
    - Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee (HHSAC)
    - Wildfire Safety Advisory Committee (WSAC)
      Social Equity & Racial Justice Advisory Committee (SERJAC)
- Launch Community Survey #1.

Phase 3: Concepts & Alternatives (Months 7–9)

- Joint review by Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Focus groups (e.g., students, seniors, underserved populations).
- Topic-specific workshops with advisory committees.

Phase 4: Public Open House #1 – General (Months 10–12)

- In-person or online open house on draft needs, alternatives, and equity considerations.

Phase 5: Draft Plan Development (Months 13–15)

- Review draft plan with:
    - Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
    - Planning Commission
    - Climate and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (CEPAC)
    - Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee (HHSAC)
    - Wildfire Safety Advisory Committee (WSAC)
      Social Equity & Racial Justice Advisory Committee (SERJAC)

Phase 6: Public Open House #2 – Wildfire Evacuation Focus (Months 16–17)

- Present wildfire evacuation modeling and proposed street improvements.

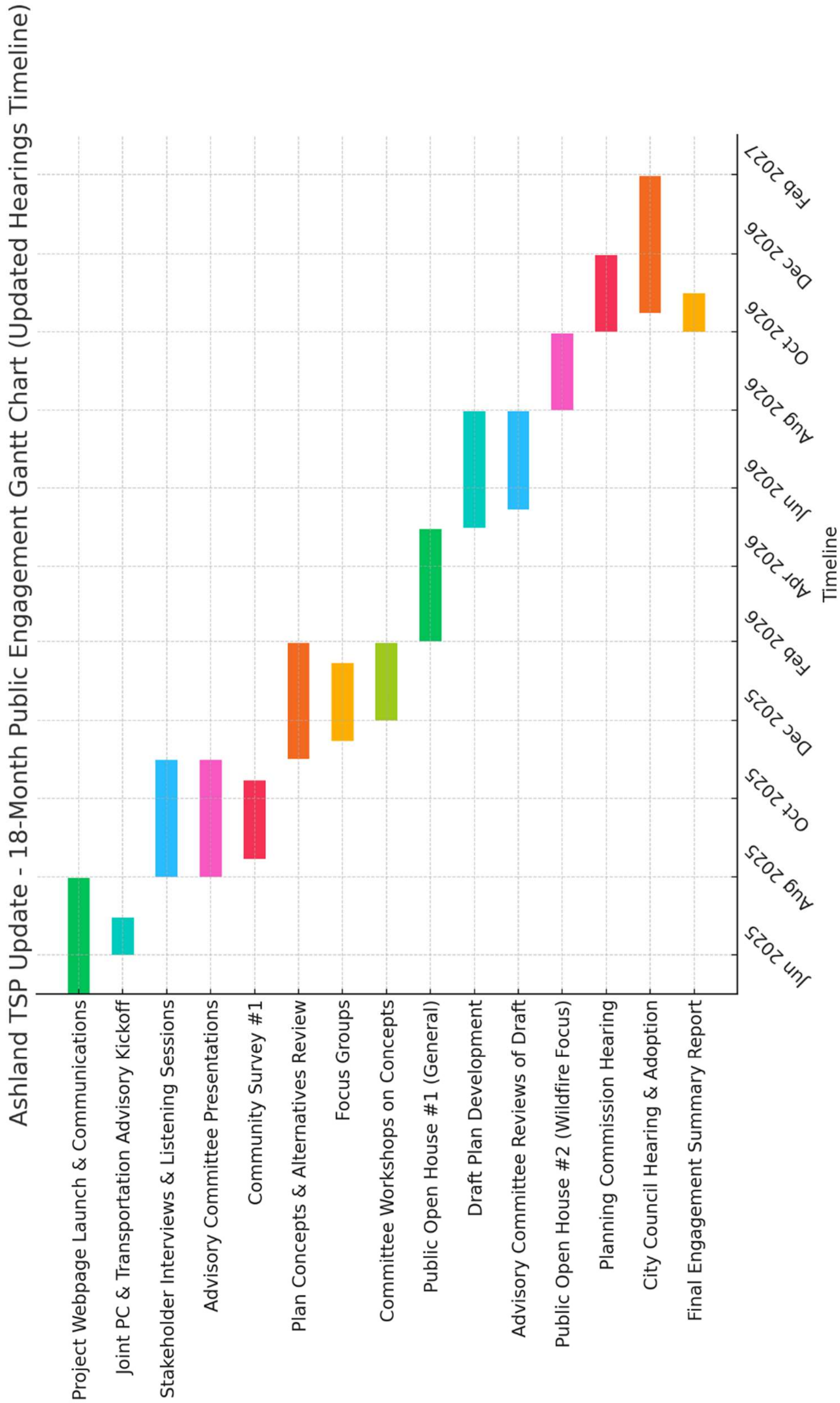
Phase 7: Final Review & Adoption (Month 18-24)

- Public hearings with Planning Commission and City Council.
- Final engagement summary and TSP adoption.

Documentation and Reporting

All advisory committee feedback (including public meeting minutes), survey responses, public comments, and stakeholder input will be compiled in a Final Engagement Summary Report. This standalone report will be presented alongside the draft Transportation System Plan during the Planning Commission and City Council adoption hearings, providing a clear record of how public input informed the plan's development.

General Timeline



LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING

Economic Opportunities Analysis Update Adoption

ASHLAND PLANNING DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT

Before the Planning Commission May 27, 2025

PLANNING ACTION:	PA-L-2025-00017	
APPLICANT:	City of Ashland	
LOCATION:	N/A - Legislative	
ZONE DESIGNATION:	N/A	
COMP. PLAN DESIGNATION:	N/A	
ORDINANCE REFERENCES:	660-009-0015,	Oregon Revised Statues- Economic Opportunity Analysis
	18.5.9	Comp Plan, Zoning & LUO Amendments
	18.6.1	Definitions
APPLICATION DATE:	April 21, 2025	
DLCD NOTICE:	April 21, 2025	
PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE:	April 30, 2025	
MEETING DATE:	May 27, 2025	
120-DAY DEADLINE:	N/A (*Type III applications are not subject to 120-day limits)	

PROPOSAL: A request to adopt the 2025 Economic Opportunities Analysis update prepared by Community Attributes Inc. (CAI) as a technical supporting document to the City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan.

I. Introduction

1) The current application

The City of Ashland has completed an updated Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) in accordance with Statewide Planning Goal 9 and OAR 660-009. The EOA is intended as a technical study and does not establish new policy, goals, or regulatory changes. Instead, it serves as a foundational resource to inform future strategic planning efforts, comprehensive plan amendments, and economic development initiatives by providing an updated factual basis for decision-making.

Prepared by the consulting firm Community Attributes Inc. (CAI), with grant support from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), this 2025 EOA replaces the City's previously adopted 2007 analysis. The document presents a comprehensive, data-driven evaluation of Ashland's economic trends, employment land needs, and development opportunities for the 2025–2045 planning horizon.

2) Background

Ashland's prior Economic Opportunities Analysis was prepared in 2007 and reflected the economic and land use conditions of that time. In the nearly two decades since, the city and region have experienced significant changes in employment patterns, demographic composition, real estate markets, and land development constraints. The 2008 recession, COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of remote work, inflationary pressures, and broader housing market dynamics have reshaped the economic landscape in ways that warrant a full reassessment of Ashland's land capacity to accommodate future employment growth.

In response to these changes and to remain in compliance with Statewide Planning Goal 9, the City initiated an update to its EOA in 2024. CAI was selected through a competitive process to complete the analysis, with financial assistance provided by a DLCD technical assistance grant. The analysis was completed in May 2025 and draws upon employment data from the Oregon Employment Department, land capacity estimates from the City's adopted 2024 Buildable Lands Inventory, stakeholder interviews, regional surveys, and extensive community engagement. The result is a current and locally tailored assessment of Ashland's economic base and the availability of land for commercial and industrial uses over the 20-year horizon.

II. Key Findings

The Economic Opportunities Analysis concludes that Ashland has a total of 181 net buildable acres of employment land, compared to a projected 20-year demand of approximately 76 acres. This indicates an overall surplus of employment land within the city and its urban growth boundary. However, while the overall supply exceeds forecasted demand, the analysis identifies specific deficiencies in the location, size, and type of available parcels—particularly a lack of small, centrally located commercial sites suited for visibility-dependent retail and tourism uses. In contrast, there is greater capacity in the Employment (E-1) and Industrial (M-1) zones, with larger sites available that may not align with the needs of small or service-oriented businesses.

Employment growth is projected to be concentrated in sectors such as Leisure and Hospitality, Health Care, and Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate. Total employment within Ashland's urban growth boundary is expected to increase from 8,644 in 2025 to 10,045 by 2045.

III. Ashland's Economic Character: Strengths and Constraints

The Economic Opportunities Analysis identifies that Ashland benefits from several distinctive assets that contribute to its economic potential. The presence of Southern Oregon University and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival anchor Ashland's identity as a regional center for arts, culture, and higher education. The city's highly educated population—62% of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher—offers a skilled labor pool that supports creative industries, professional services, and remote work. In addition, Ashland's walkable downtown, scenic surroundings, and quality-of-life amenities continue to attract visitors and new residents seeking a small-town environment with urban features and cultural amenities.

At the same time, the city faces structural constraints that limit economic expansion. The availability of affordable and workforce housing is one of the most frequently cited barriers to attracting and retaining employees. Employers in sectors such as education, health care, and food services report difficulty filling positions due to high housing costs and limited inventory. While the city has an adequate overall supply of employment land, challenges remain in assembling development-ready sites, especially in desirable locations like the historic downtown which is substantially developed. Key opportunity sites, such as the Croman Mill District and the Railroad Property, have long held promise for redevelopment but remain largely inactive due to ownership dynamics, infrastructure limitations, and environmental cleanup needs. In addition, feedback from local stakeholders indicates that perceptions of Ashland's regulatory environment—particularly regarding permitting and zoning and community opposition to development—continue to present obstacles to business expansion or relocation.

Together, these strengths and weaknesses underscore the need for deliberate, strategic economic planning. While the EOA does not prescribe policy, it provides critical baseline data to support future goal setting that builds on Ashland's strengths while addressing longstanding constraints.

IV. Regional and State Context

Within the broader Rogue Valley and state of Oregon, Ashland occupies a unique position. The city's population growth has been modest compared to nearby Medford and Jackson County as a whole. From 2010 to 2024, Ashland's compound annual growth rate was 0.5%, while Medford grew at 1.2% annually. Ashland also has an older median age—48.2 years in 2022—compared to 42 in Jackson County and 39.5 in Medford, a demographic profile that contributes to lower labor force participation and a greater demand for services oriented toward seniors.

Economically, the analysis shows Ashland diverges from its regional peers in several ways. The city has a higher share of jobs in the cultural, hospitality, education, and health care sectors, while Medford's economy includes a broader mix of industrial and service-sector employment. In terms of commuting, Ashland functions both as an employment center and a residential base for workers employed elsewhere. Only 37% of Ashland residents work within the city, and 69% of jobs in Ashland are filled by workers commuting from outside the city limits. These patterns reflect regional interdependence but also highlight the mismatch between local job opportunities and the housing available for the city's workforce.

Compared to the state overall, Ashland has a more educated and older population, higher median housing costs, and a tighter real estate market. Although Oregon has seen steady growth in employment and housing production, Ashland's constrained geography, high land costs , and urbanization strategy to maintain a compact urban form have moderated its growth and preserved its compact character. This unique profile reinforces the importance of planning tools like the EOA to ensure Ashland maintains an appropriate balance of livability, economic opportunity, and resource stewardship.

IV. Procedural – Approval Criteria

Plan Amendments and Zone Changes

AMC 18.5.9.020 provides the Applicability and Review Procedure for Plan Amendments and Zone Changes. Because the proposal is legislative in nature approval criteria are not required.

Applications for Plan Amendments and Zone Changes are as follows:

A. Type II. The Type II procedure is used for applications involving zoning map amendments consistent with the Comprehensive Plan map, and minor map amendments or corrections. Amendments under this section may be approved if in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and the application demonstrates one or more of the following:

1. The change implements a public need supported by the Comprehensive Plan.

2. A substantial change in circumstances has occurred since the existing zoning or Plan designation was proposed, necessitating the need to adjust to the changed circumstances.

3. Circumstances relating to the general public welfare exist that require such an action.

4. Proposed increases in residential zoning density resulting from a change from one zoning district to another zoning district will provide 25 percent of the proposed base density as affordable housing consistent with the approval standards set forth in section 18.5.8.050.G.

5. Increases in residential zoning density of four units or greater on commercial, employment, or industrial zoned lands (i.e., Residential Overlay) will not negatively impact the City's commercial and industrial land supply as required in the Comprehensive Plan, and will provide 25 percent of the proposed base density as affordable housing consistent with the approval standards set forth in section 18.5.8.050.G.

6. The total number of affordable units described in subsection 18.5.9.020.A.4 or 18.5.9.020.A.5, above, shall be determined by rounding down fractional answers to the nearest whole unit.

7. A deed restriction, or similar legal instrument, shall be used to guarantee compliance with affordable criteria for a period of not less than 60 years for units qualified as affordable rental housing, or 30 years for units qualified as affordable for-purchase housing. Subsections 18.5.9.020.A.4 and 18.5.9.020.A.5 do not apply to Council-initiated actions.

B. Type III. It may be necessary from time to time to make legislative amendments in order to conform with the Comprehensive Plan or to meet other changes in circumstances or conditions. The Type III procedure applies to the creation, revision, or large-scale implementation of public policy requiring City Council approval and enactment of an ordinance; this includes adoption of regulations, zone changes for large areas, zone changes requiring comprehensive plan amendment, comprehensive plan map or text amendment, annexations (see chapter 18.5.8 for annexation information), and urban growth boundary amendments. The following planning actions shall be subject to the Type III procedure.

1. Zone changes or amendments to the Zoning Map or other official maps, except where minor amendments or corrections may be processed through the Type II procedure pursuant to subsection 18.5.9.020.A, above.

2. Comprehensive Plan changes, including text and map changes or changes to other official maps.

3. Land Use Ordinance amendments.

4. Urban Growth Boundary amendments.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

Staff recommend that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council that they approve Planning Action PA-L-2025-00017, adopting the 2025 Economic Opportunities Analysis as a technical supporting document to the Ashland Comprehensive

The adoption of the updated 2025 Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) as a technical support document to the Economic Element of the City of Ashland Comprehensive Plan complies with Ashland Land Use Ordinance section AMC 18.5.9.010, which establishes the procedure for legislative amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. As required by this section, the EOA is adopted through a legislative process that includes public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.

Adoption will satisfy state planning requirements under Goal 9 and OAR 660-009-0015, and provide the factual foundation for future discussions about zoning, economic development strategy, and employment land use policy. This action does not establish new policies or regulations, but instead incorporates the EOA as a planning resource to guide future decision-making.

VII. Attachments

- Draft Ordinance 3265, EOA
- 2025 Economic Opportunities Analysis, Community Attributes Inc., dated May 20, 2025
- Outreach Summary of Public Engagement Process

ORDINANCE NO. 3265

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE 2025 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS AS A TECHNICAL SUPPORT DOCUMENT TO THE ECONOMIC ELEMENT OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Annotated to show deletions and additions to the Ashland Municipal Code sections being modified. Deletions are ~~**bold lined through**~~, and additions are **bold underlined.**

WHEREAS, Article 2. Section 1 of the Ashland City Charter provides:

> Powers of the City. The City shall have all powers which the constitutions, statutes, and common law of the United States and of this State expressly or impliedly grant or allow municipalities, as fully as though this Charter specifically enumerated each of those powers, as well as all powers not inconsistent with the foregoing; and, in addition thereto, shall possess all powers hereinafter specifically granted. All the authority thereof shall have perpetual succession.

WHEREAS, The City of Ashland is required under Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 9 (Economic Development) and Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 660-009 to provide an adequate factual basis for employment land needs in its Comprehensive Plan.

WHEREAS, The City of Ashland's most recent Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) was completed in 2007, and a technical update is necessary to reflect current economic trends, employment projections, and land capacity over the next 20-year planning period.

WHEREAS, The City, with technical assistance funding from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), retained Community Attributes Inc. (CAI) to prepare an updated Economic Opportunities Analysis. The final report, dated May 20, 2025, provides a comprehensive analysis of Ashland's employment land supply and demand and includes findings on demographic and economic trends, buildable lands capacity, and employment forecasts consistent with Goal 9 and OAR 660-009.

WHEREAS, The 2025 Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) does not establish new policies, zoning regulations, or land use designations. Rather, it is intended to serve as a technical support document to inform future amendments to the Ashland Comprehensive Plan and to support ongoing planning and policy development.

WHEREAS, The Ashland Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on May 27, 2025 reviewed the EOA, and recommended its adoption as a technical support document.

WHEREAS, The Ashland City Council conducted a public hearing on June 3, 2025 and concluded that the 2025 Economic Opportunities Analysis is consistent with the requirements of Statewide Planning Goal 9 and OAR 660-009 and supports the long-range economic development objectives of the City.

THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City of Ashland hereby adopts the 2025 Economic Opportunities Analysis, prepared by Community Attributes Inc. and dated May 20, 2025, as a technical support document to the Economic Element of the Ashland Comprehensive Plan, amending Chapter 7 – Economy, 7.08 Technical Reports as follows:

> The following reports are adopted by reference as part of the Economy Element of the Ashland Comprehensive Plan:
>
> 1. City of Ashland: Economic Opportunities Analysis. **~~(April 2007)~~ (June 2025)**

SECTION 2. The adopted EOA shall serve as the factual basis for future amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan and land use regulations relating to employment land needs, economic development, and Goal 9 implementation.

SECTION 3. **Severability.** Each section of this ordinance, and any part thereof, is severable, and if any part of this ordinance is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this ordinance shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 4. **Codification**. Provisions of this Ordinance shall be incorporated in the City Code and the word "ordinance" may be changed to "code", "article", "section", "chapter" or another word, and the sections of this Ordinance may be renumbered, or re-lettered, provided however that any Whereas clauses and boilerplate provisions (i.e. Sections 3-4) need not be codified and the City Recorder is authorized to correct any cross-references and any typographical errors.

The foregoing ordinance was first read by title only in accordance with Article X, Section 2(C) of the City Charter on the _______day of____________________, 2025, and duly PASSED and ADOPTED this _______day of____________________, 2025.

PASSED by the City Council this ________ day of _______________________, 2025.

ATTEST:

____
Alissa Kolodzinski, City Recorder

SIGNED and APPROVED this ________ day of __________________________, 2025.

____
Tonya Graham, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:

____
Johan Pietila, City Attorney

City of Ashland
Economic Opportunity Analysis

Discussion Draft

May 23, 2025

Prepared by:

COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES INC

Prepared for:

Better Together

Community Attributes Inc. tells data-rich stories about communities that are important to decision makers.

President and CEO:
Chris Mefford

Project Manager:
Elliot Weiss

Analysts:
Jolene Baldwin
Carly Bednarski
Kortney Cena
Dominic Roche
Carrianne Cusak

Community Attributes Inc.
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Seattle, WA 98101
www.communityattributes.com

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Ashland's Existing Conditions

- Ashland is a compact city of approximately 21,600 residents, characterized by its pleasant downtown, cultural amenities, and opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- The following sections bring forth key findings from this Economic Opportunity Assessment.

People and Housing

- Population growth has been relatively slow in Ashland, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 0.5% from 2010 to 2024—less than half of Medford's 1.2% CAGR.
- Compared to the region and its nearby peers, Ashland's population tends to be older, more educated, and more racially homogenous. Ashland's median age is 48.2 in 2022 compared to 42 in Jackson County and 39.5 in Medford.
- As of 2023, small households make up the majority of Ashland's community, with 78% of households consisting of one or two people.
- As of 2023, 45% of Ashland's households were homeowners and 44% were renters, while 11% of housing units were vacant or partially vacant—including those used as short-term rentals or second homes.
- Household income in Ashland (as well as in Medford and Jackson County) has seen a slight increase over time with Ashland increasing at a CAGR of 4% from 2010 to 2022.
- The proportion of households in Ashland experiencing cost burden (or spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs) decreased at a CAGR of -2% from 2010-2023.
- According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, housing units are categorized by the maximum rent or home price affordable to households earning 30%, 50%, and 80% of area median income (AMI). For HUD CHAS data, the term "affordable housing" means that a household spends no more than 30% of its gross income on housing costs. In 2021, 26% of Ashland's households earned less than 50% AMI, but only 12% of housing units were affordable at that income level.
- As of 2023, Ashland's housing inventory includes 11,499 units, 59% of which are single-family homes.
- The median home sale price Ashland peaked at $690,000 in September of 2024. It has since dropped to $470,000 (as of last recorded data in March 2025).
- Homes also sell quickly in Ashland; as of March 2025, 43% of new listings in Ashland were sold within two weeks.

Land Use and Climate

- Commercial land comprises about 4% of Ashland's land area, industrial land 1%, and employment-zoned land about 8%, with overlays and regulations limiting some development potential.
- The city faces multiple climate risks—wildfire, drought, and extreme heat were all rated as high-probability, high-vulnerability hazards in the 2024 hazard mitigation plan.

National and Regional Economic Trends

Macroeconomic Indicators

- National unemployment fell to 4.1% in 2024, returning to pre-pandemic lows, while labor force participation rebounded to 62.6%—still below early 2000s levels.
- Inflation rose sharply after 2020, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increasing 15% between 2020 and 2022; as of late 2024, CPI remained elevated at 175 (base 1999 = 100).
- The Federal Reserve's policy response led to a sharp increase in the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR), which peaked at 5.31% in 2023 before easing slightly to 4.8% in 2024.

Southern Oregon and the Rogue River Valley

- Oregon's overall population growth has been steady, but Jackson and Josephine Counties ranked mid-range among counties, with Medford growing faster than Ashland post-2020.
- The regional economy is service-oriented, with Services, Retail Trade, and Education and Health each accounting for about 21–24% of private jobs in the Jackson-Josephine region as of 2021. Private employment does not include public jobs like government or public school positions
- Since 2010, Jackson County added over 14,000 private jobs, growing at a CAGR of 1.5%, with the fastest growth in Construction (+5.4% CAGR), Education (+4.1%), and Resources (+4.0%). Private employment does not include public jobs like government or public school positions
- In Ashland, the share of total workers who report working from home grew from 13.3% in 2010 to 21.1% in 2023, maintaining a higher rate than Medford or the region.
- High-growth, specialized industries in Jackson County include Sporting Goods (LQ >10), Healthcare Services, and Food and Beverage establishments, with strong local employment and growth.

Local Economic Trends

Industry and Workforce

- Total employment in Ashland was 9,104 in 2022, with top sectors including Leisure and Hospitality, Retail, Education, and Health Care.
- The Employment Lands Sufficiency analysis uses private employment estimates and forecasts given by Oregon's Department of Economic Development. Private employment does not include public sector jobs such as government or public school positions. From 2013 to 2023, private sector job growth was modest—growing at a 0.6% CAGR—with the fastest growth in Construction and related sectors (+9.9%), while industries such as Education and Wholesale Trade declined.
- Ashland's private employment is forecast to grow from 8,644 in 2025 to 10,045 by 2045, with the most growth in Leisure and Hospitality (+654 jobs), Health Care (+422), and Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE) (+165).
- Ashland's workforce is highly educated: 62% of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 28% in Medford.
- Commuting patterns show regional interdependence—only 37% of Ashland residents work in the city, while 69% of local jobs are filled by commuters from outside.
- Ashland's jobs-to-housing unit ratio declined slightly from 0.78 in 2013 to 0.74 in 2023. This ratio is lower than the region's and is likely explained by a relatively high share of senior and retired residents.
- The regional laborshed is highly dynamic, with workers often traveling to other cities for work.
- In 2022, industries with the highest net labor inflow included Accommodation and Food Services (+638), Educational Services (+596), and Retail Trade (+354), reflecting Ashland's tourism and institutional economy.

Commercial Market

- Commercial real estate has seen uneven performance—retail lease rates fell from a 2018 peak of $29.73/sqft to $20.99 in 2024, while vacancy remains low at 2%.
- Downtown Ashland retail has rebounded post-COVID, with lease rates at $17.00/sqft in 2024 and vacancy down to 1.6%, after a spike to 11.3% in 2021.
- Industrial vacancy increased sharply to 26.7% in 2024, due to new supply outpacing demand, while lease rates declined to $10.47/sqft from a 2023 peak of $13.59.

Employment Lands Sufficiency

- Ashland's Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI), adopted in 2024, identified 181 net buildable acres of land designated for employment uses, including commercial, industrial, and employment zones.
- This analysis finds that, with a total net buildable supply of 181 acres of "employment lands" and only 76 total acres of demand projected for industrial and commercial uses, Ashland has a likely surplus of over 100 acres within the City and UGB urbanized area.
- However, there may be a shortage of small, centrally located commercial sites. While overall supply is sufficient, further analysis suggests a relative lack of small Downtown Commercial and mid-sized (1-5 ac) range commercial sites. Some of this demand could be absorbed by surplus E-1 employment lands; however, businesses that depend on visibility and foot traffic—such as those tied to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival—will continue to prefer prominent downtown locations. Improving pedestrian connectivity, signage, and branding between downtown and the northern E-1 node may help support business attraction in those areas.
- Ownership dynamics limit redevelopment of key opportunity sites. The Croman Mill and Railroad District properties represent the city's largest groupings of buildable land, but lack of proactive ownership and incentives to sell have historically stalled redevelopment efforts.
- There is capacity to accommodate stronger-than-forecasted employment growth. If employment growth is greater than forecasts indicate in coming years, there will likely be sufficient land in Ashland to accommodate it given the surplus employment land supply identified within the City / UGB. In particular, certain segments within industrial – such as outdoor recreation manufacturing or craft food and beverage – may be worth consideration for targeted economic development efforts by Ashland to synergize with its evolving economic base.

Community Economic Development Priorities

- This EOA was informed by widespread engagement of Ashland's community including; interviews, focus groups, public forums with Ashland's stakeholders and a regional survey which captured responses from residents and business interests in Ashland. Engagement covered a diverse range of perspectives including city leadership, developers, landowners, institutional partners, SOU students, and major employers in Ashland.

Downtown Revitalization

- Community members across stakeholder groups expressed strong interest in revitalizing Downtown Ashland as a vibrant hub for retail, culture, and civic life.
- Priorities included activating ground-floor spaces, supporting local businesses, improving public safety and perception, and investing in streetscape upgrades.
- Public-private partnerships and strategic use of city-owned land were identified as key tools to catalyze redevelopment.

Economic Diversification

- Stakeholders emphasized the need to expand beyond a tourism-centered economy by supporting growth in health care, education, professional services, and the creative sector.
- There is interest in pursuing year-round employment opportunities and encouraging emerging industries suited to Ashland's workforce and values.
- Participants highlighted the need for supportive infrastructure and available land to accommodate diverse business types.

Housing Affordability and Workforce Retention

- Employers, institutions, and residents consistently identified housing affordability as a top barrier to retaining and attracting talent.
- Workforce instability was seen as a growing concern for local businesses, particularly in service and health care sectors.
- There is strong alignment between economic and housing goals, with support for policies that increase attainable housing options.

Barriers to Development

- Developers and business owners noted challenges related to infrastructure readiness, zoning flexibility, and the permitting process.
- Stakeholders expressed concern that the city's existing land inventory does not include enough large or easily developable sites.
- Suggestions included streamlining permitting and incentivizing redevelopment in already urbanized areas.

Regional Coordination and Partnerships

- Participants across sectors called for improved coordination between the City, Southern Oregon University, Ashland School District, and regional economic partners.
- Students and young adults expressed a desire for stronger career pathways and a more inclusive role in civic life.

- Better alignment between local education, housing, and economic development efforts was seen as essential to long-term success.

Ashland's Strengths and Opportunities

Distinctive Assets and Identity

- Ashland's cultural institutions, especially the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Southern Oregon University, provide a unique identity and draw regional and national attention.
- The city's walkable downtown, access to parks and recreation, and small-town character are consistently cited as quality-of-life strengths.

Skilled and Engaged Workforce

- A highly educated population—62% with a bachelor's degree or higher—creates a strong talent base for knowledge-sector and creative economy jobs.
- Local institutions, including SOU, provide a foundation for growing partnerships around talent development and job pathways.

Economic Specialization and Tourism

- Strength in tourism, arts, and hospitality remains a key driver of local employment and business activity.
- Opportunities exist to build on creative economy assets and extend visitor spending into shoulder seasons or year-round models.

Health and Education Sectors

- Ashland's role as a hub for regional health care and education presents opportunities to grow jobs in these stable, high-value sectors.
- Investment in medical facilities and supportive services can further anchor the local economy.

Sustainable Growth and Redevelopment

- Compact urban form, transit access, and sustainability goals create a strong platform for infill development and adaptive reuse.
- Mixed-use zones and employment overlays provide a foundation for creative redevelopment and incremental land use change.

Regional Connectivity and Collaboration

- Ashland's location along I-5 and near Medford offers opportunities for cross-jurisdictional collaboration and regional market access.
- Stronger partnerships across public agencies, businesses, and institutions can align resources and expand economic opportunity.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose

The City of Ashland requires an Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) as intended and funded by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). A strategic planning document, the EOA ensures that there is enough available land and adequate public improvements to realize economic growth for the next 20-year horizon. This requirement originates from Oregon's Land Use program, established by Senate Bill 100 in 1973, which established the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and mandated that Statewide Planning Goals serve as the basis for local Comprehensive Plans. This EOA serves to meet the first key element required by State Planning Goal Nine, which requires local governments to ensure adequate land is zoned for industrial and commercial activities to support economic growth, sustain living wage jobs, and maintain quality of life within established urban growth boundaries.

As the second-largest city in Jackson County, Ashland plays a unique role in the regional economy of the Rogue Valley. Home to both the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Southern Oregon University, Ashland provides surrounding rural communities in Southern Oregon and Northern California with premier medical services, shopping centers, sports parks, access to two different airports, and a variety of tourism-based businesses. Through updating Ashland's EOA, the city works to align projected employment growth with land needs and availability based on current data and extensive community engagement.

Economic Opportunity Assessment Requirements

An Economic Opportunity Assessment (EOA), as outlined in OAR 660-009-0015, is a technical study that compares projected demand for land for industrial and other employment uses to the existing supply of such land. It helps communities implement their local economic development objectives and forms the basis for industrial and other employment development policies in the comprehensive plan.

This rule requires inclusion of the following four interrelated elements:

1. Review of national, state, regional, county and local trends.
2. Identification of required site types expected to be needed to accommodate the expected employment growth
3. Inventory of industrial and other employment lands
4. Assessment of community economic development potential

5. There is also an optional fifth item, which is a strong encouragement for the EOA process to include a public visioning process (or similar).

Each of these five items are covered throughout this EOA report, either as standalone sections or integrated across multiple sections.

Methods

This EOA integrates qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to meet the requirements outlined in OAR 660-009-0015. Qualitative findings are informed by community engagement feedback and activities, including:

- Interviews and focus groups of local civic leaders and businesses ;
- Public forums, including a student forum at Southern Oregon University;
- Committee meetings (including the City's Committee for Community Involvement, CCI, meetings with City Council and Planning Commission) and;
- A regional business and resident survey.

Quantitative analysis draws from publicly available data sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, Oregon Employment Department and many others; as well as private sector vendor sources such as Placer.ai, Esri and others. All data are sourced and referenced throughout the report.

Organization of Report

- **Overview of Existing Conditions in Ashland.** Describes the geographic setting of Ashland as well as outlines basic population, housing and land use information.
- **National, State, and Regional, Trends.** Describes contextual information on the larger economies affecting Ashland.
- **Local Characteristics and Trends.** Explores targeted employment, industry, workforce, and market data on Ashland and Jackson County.
- **Employment Lands Assessment.** Summarizes key findings and analysis based on Ashland's commercial and industrial buildable lands inventory.
- **Community Economic Development Priorities.** Distills findings from stakeholder engagement.
- **Competitive Outlook and Anticipated Demand for Land.** Details land needed to accommodate local expressions of economic development trends using employment forecasts and economic development potential
- **Strategic Themes and Implications for Policy.** Synthesizes strategic themes from data collection and analysis, and refreshes Ashland's goals and policies for economic development.

OVERVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS IN ASHLAND

This section introduces the City of Ashland including it's geographic setting, position and role in the Rogue Valley, and recent trends in community demographics, housing, land uses, and climate.

Geographic Setting

Ashland is located in the Rogue Valley of Southwestern Oregon. With approximately 21,600 residents, Ashland is the second largest city in Jackson County, behind Medford. Ashland is adjacent to Interstate-5, with other communities in the region including Medford, Phoenix, Talent, Central Point, and Grants Pass. Ashland is known regionally as a tourism hub—home to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and an array of cultural, recreational, and culinary attractions. The city serves as a gateway to the surrounding mountains, offering access to walking and biking trails, winter recreation, and 17 city parks, including the iconic Lithia Park. Covering 4,256 acres, Ashland's land use is predominantly residential, with a built environment characterized by single-family neighborhoods surrounding a compact, vibrant downtown that features specialty retail, fine dining, seasonal events, and Southern Oregon University.

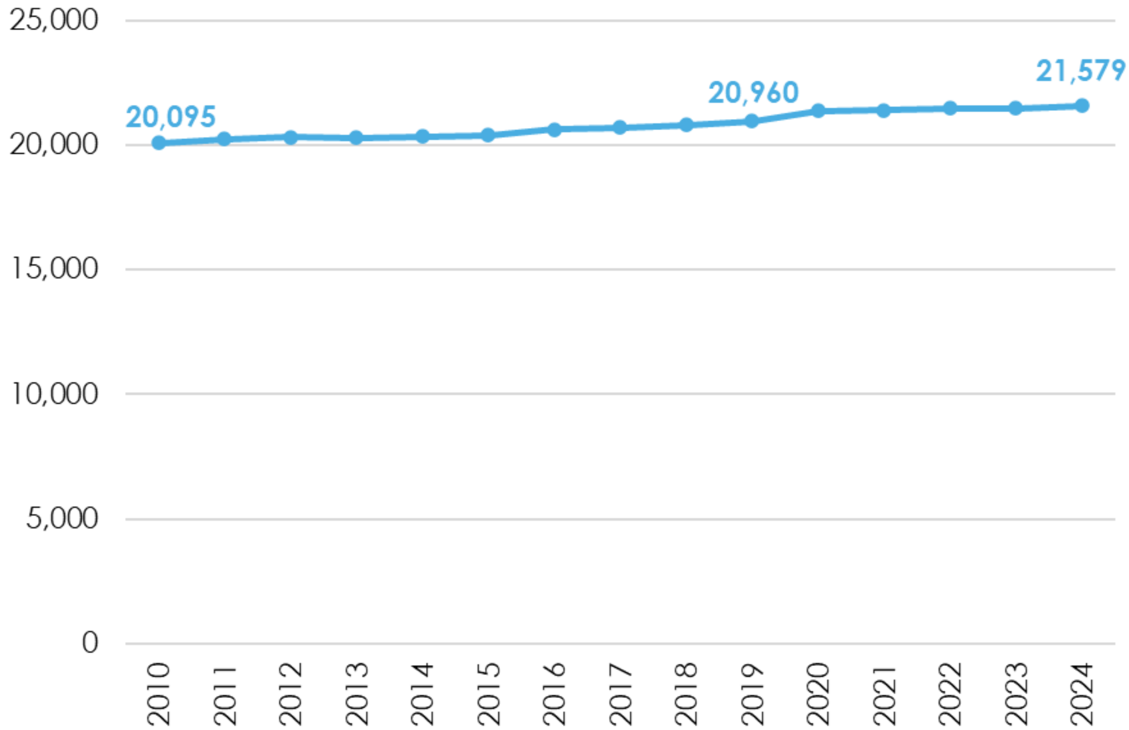
People and Housing

Community Demographics

Compared to the region and its nearby peers, Ashland's population tends to be older, more educated, and more racially homogenous. However, regional demographic shifts, seen in Jackson County, Medford and Ashland, include a growing population and a growing proportion of seniors. As of 2022, this aging trend is more pronounced in Ashland than in Medford, while Ashland population growth is less pronounced than Medford's.

According to the Population Research Center at Portland State University, Ashland's population grew from 20,095 in 2010 to 21,579 in 2024, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 0.5% (**Exhibit 1)**. Over the same timeframe, Medford saw a CAGR of 1.2%.

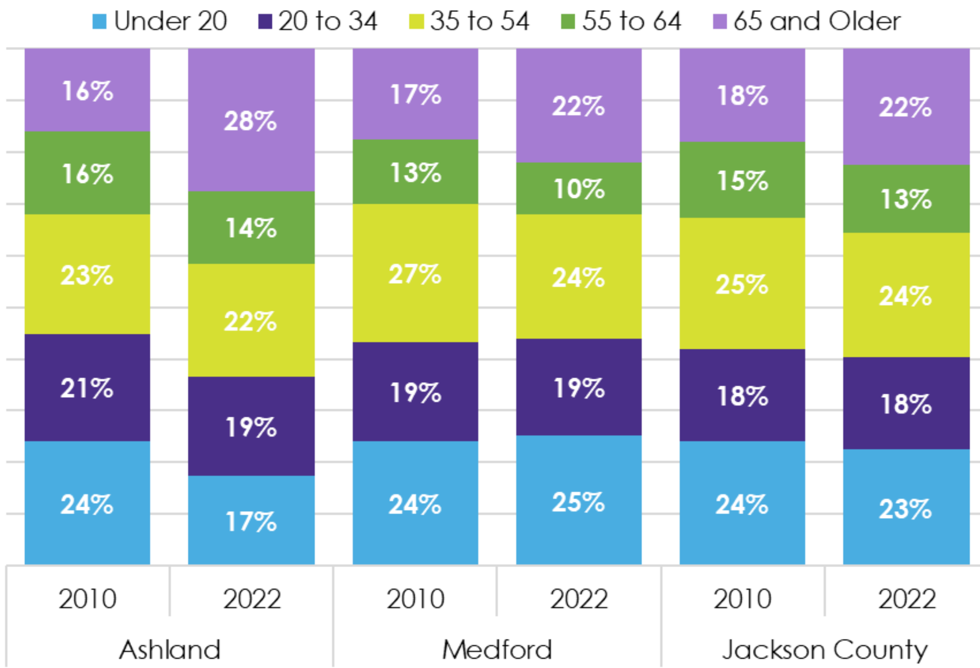
Exhibit 1. Historic Population, Ashland, 2010 – 2024



Sources: State of Oregon, Population Research Center at Portland State University, 2010-2023; CAI, 2025.

In 2022, Jackson County's median age was 42 years old, while Medford's was 39.5 and Ashland's was 48.2. Ashland saw the 65+ population grow from 16% of the population in 2010 to almost 28% in 2022 (**Exhibit 2)**. Over the same period, Ashland's working-age population decreased by about 6% and the population 19 and under dropped by about 8%.

Exhibit 2. Change in Age Distribution, Jackson County, Medford, and Ashland, 2010 and 2022



Sources: American Community Survey (ACS), 2010 & 2022, CAI 2024.[1]

Another demographic shift in Ashland's population is a slow increase in racial diversity in the population.

While 86% of Ashland's community identified as white only in 2010, this proportion decreased by 4% by 2022. Jackson County and Medford also both experienced an increase in racial diversity from 2010 to 2022 with Jackson County's white-only proportion decreasing by 6%, and Medford's by 9%. In all geographies the largest non-white racial cohort in 2022 identified as Hispanic and Latino, making up 18% of Medford's population and 10% of Ashland's.

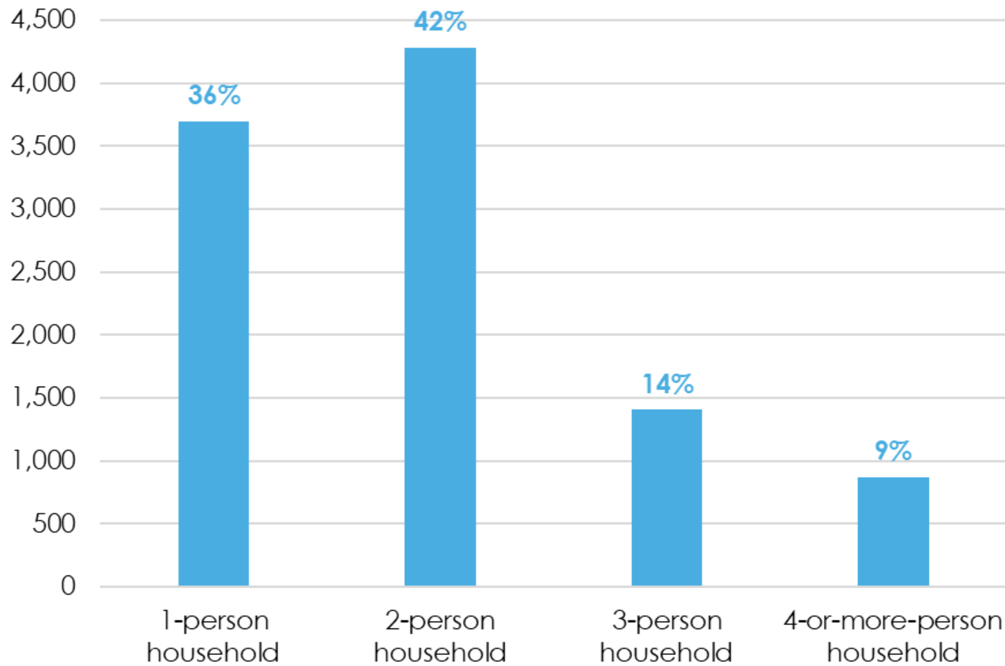
Characteristics of Ashland's Households

As of 2023, Ashland's households are largely small households, of 1-2 persons (78%) (**Exhibit 3**). The prevalence of small households suggests a higher

[1] The Census Bureau's ACS uses the "current residence" concept, meaning individuals are counted at the address where they live or stay most of the time. Following this, students are counted in these ways:
a) Students living on-campus (e.g., in dormitories or residence halls) are counted at their campus address. These facilities are classified as group quarters.
b) Students living off-campus (e.g., in rented apartments) are counted at their off-campus residence.
c) Students living at their parents' or guardians' home while attending college are counted at that home address.

demand for smaller housing typologies which accommodate small households as opposed to larger structures.

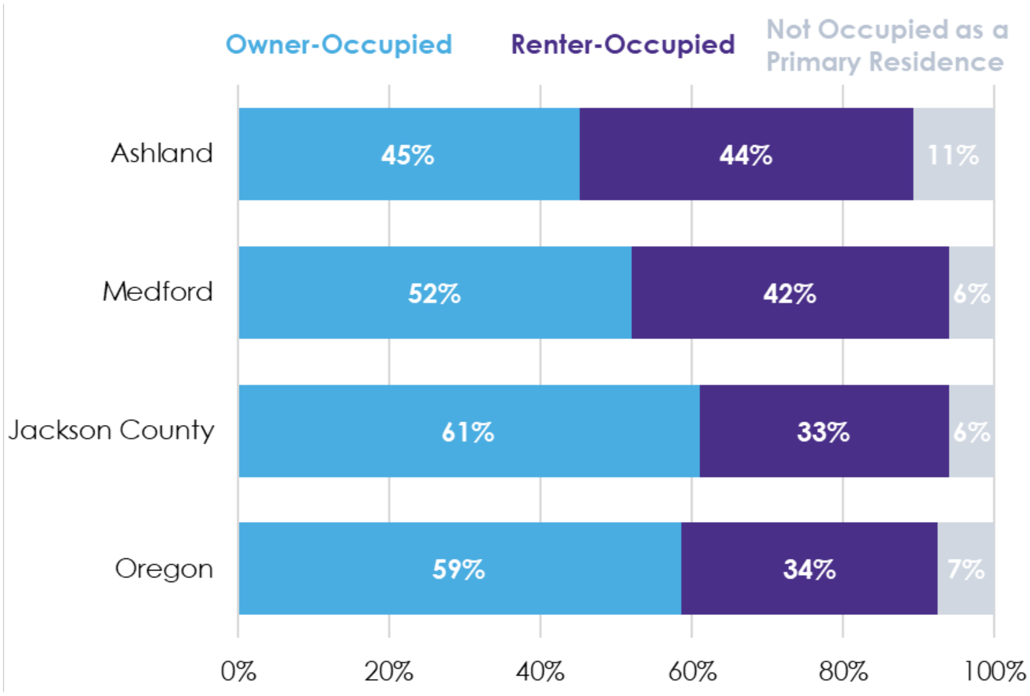
Exhibit 3. Households by Household Size, Ashland, 2023



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023; CAI, 2025.

The majority of households in Jackson County (61%) and the state of Oregon (59%) are owner-occupied in 2023 (**Exhibit 4)**. Ashland, however, shows a closer split between homeowners (45%) and renters (44%). The remaining 11% of units in Ashland are those which are not occupied as a primary residence, including second homes, short term rentals, or otherwise vacant properties. The higher proportion of units in Ashland which are not occupied as a primary residence, compared to other geographies, speaks to the impacts of short-term rentals and second homes in Ashland.

Exhibit 4. Housing Tenure, Oregon, Jackson County, Medford and Ashland, 2023

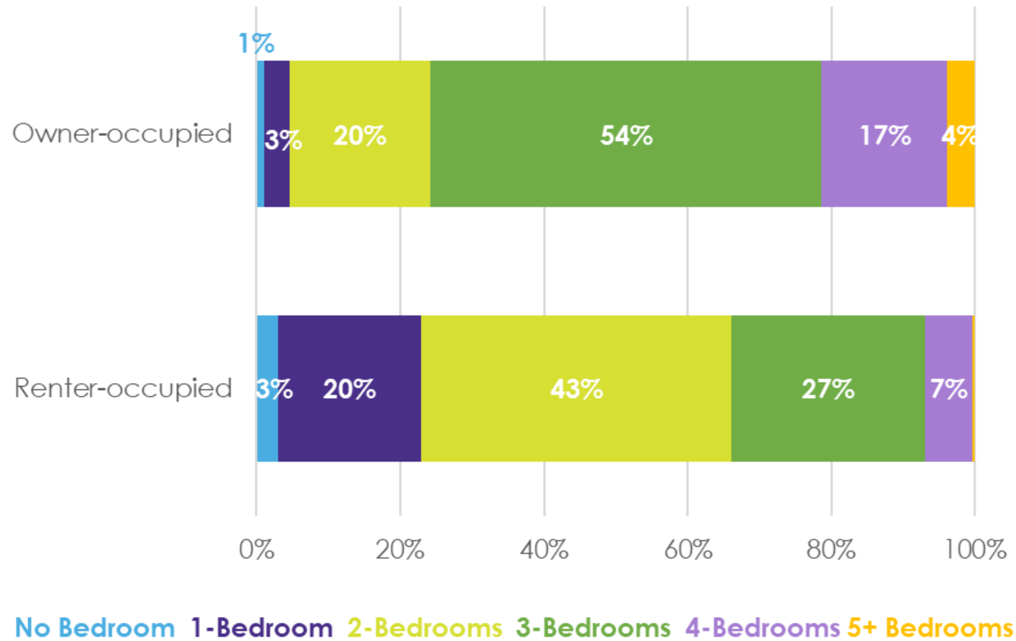


Sources: American Community Survey, 2023; CAI 2024.

The average household size for renters in Ashland was 2.22 people per household. For homeowning households, this value is higher at 2.56 people per household.

The size of housing units tends to be larger for owner-occupied housing units than for renter-occupied units (**Exhibit 5**). 75% of owner-occupied units in Jackson County have at least 3 bedrooms, compared to only 34% of renter-occupied housing units.

Exhibit 5. Housing Unit Size by Tenure, Jackson County, 2023



Sources: American Community Survey, 2023; CAI, 2025.

While Medford and Ashland's median household income is lower than that of the county or the state, median household income increased at similar rates for all four areas from 2010-2023. The median annual household income in Ashland was $71,800 in 2023. This is comparable to Jackson County's median income of $71,400, and lower than Oregon's median annual income of $80,400.

For HUD CHAS data, the term "affordable housing" means that a household spends no more than 30% of its gross income on housing costs. Housing costs include rent or mortgage payments plus utilities. The Area Median Income (AMI), a commonly accepted metric created by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) used for assessing housing affordability, is used to evaluate housing affordability and determine eligibility for subsidized housing. HUD sets income thresholds categorized as extremely low, very low, low, and median for households ranging from one to eight members. These income limits are specified only for particular metropolitan areas. **Exhibit 6** shows the 2021 and 2025 income limits by household size in the Medford Metro Area, which includes Ashland and most of Jackson County. These metrics are used to understand the affordability of the existing housing stock in Ashland. For 1 person in Jackson County, the AMI for 2021 is $51,150 while low income is designated as $38,300 or less. By 2025, the median income for 1 person in Jackson County is $64,700 while low income is designated as $51,750 or less.

Exhibit 6. HUD Household Income Limits, Jackson County, 2021 & 2025

HUD Household Income Limits, Jackson County, 2021

Income Level	Household Size (Persons in Family)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Extremely Low (30% AMI)	$14,350	$17,420	$21,960	$26,500	$31,040	$35,580	$40,120	$44,660
Very Low Income (50% AMI)	$23,950	$27,350	$30,750	$34,150	$36,900	$39,650	$42,350	$45,100
Low Income (80% AMI)	$38,300	$43,750	$49,200	$54,650	$59,050	$63,400	$67,800	$72,150
Median Income	**$51,150**	**$58,500**	**$65,800**	**$73,100**	**$78,950**	**$84,800**	**$90,650**	**$96,500**

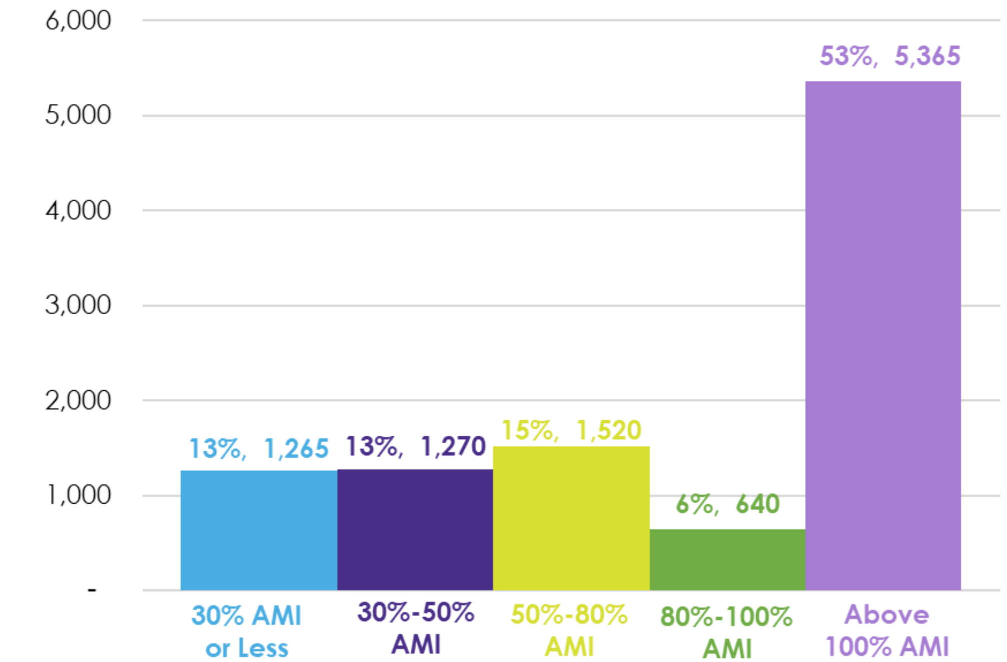
HUD Household Income Limits, Jackson County, 2025

Income Level	Household Size (Persons in Family)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Extremely Low (30% AMI)	$19,400	$22,200	$26,650	$32,150	$37,650	$43,150	$48,650	$54,150
Very Low Income (50% AMI)	$32,350	$37,000	$41,600	$46,200	$49,900	$53,600	$57,300	$61,000
Low Income (80% AMI)	$51,750	$59,150	$66,550	$73,900	$79,850	$85,750	$91,650	$97,550
Median Income	**$64,700**	**$73,900**	**$83,150**	**$92,400**	**$99,800**	**$107,200**	**$114,600**	**$121,950**

Sources: HUD, 2025; CAI, 2025.

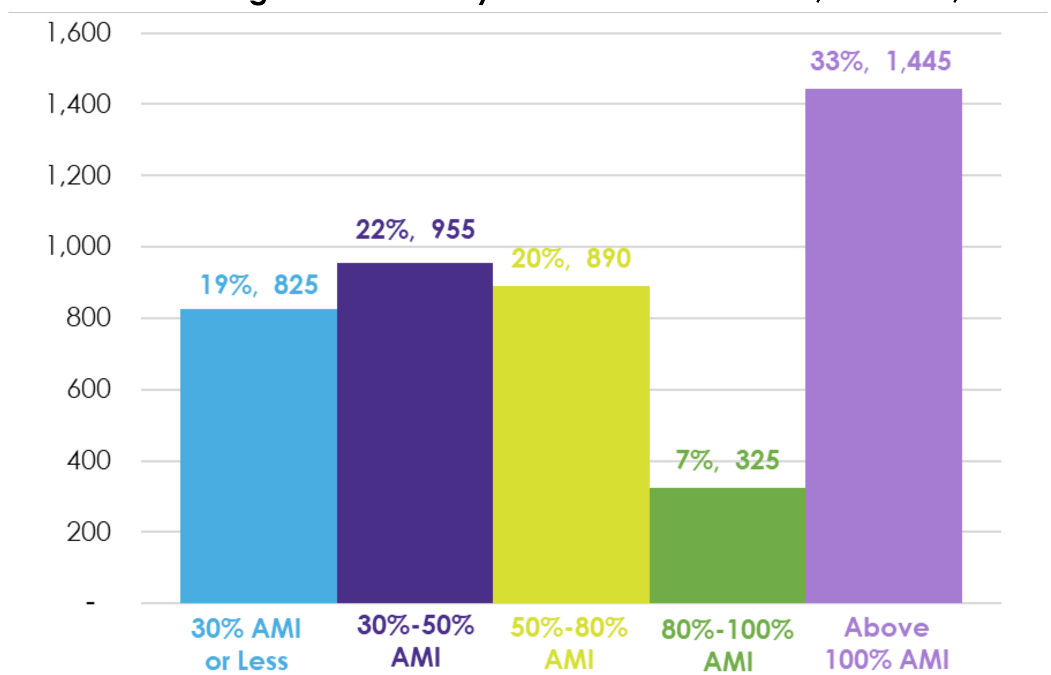
Exhibit 7 shows the proportion of households in Ashland by income segment in 2021. According to HUD, a slight majority of Ashland's households, (53%) in 2021 earned above 100% of Ashland's area median income (AMI) in 2021, which was $73,100 for a household size of four persons (**Exhibit 6**). 28% of Ashland's households fell into the low income or very low-income categories (earning between 30%-80% the AMI), and 13% of Ashland's households fell into the extremely low-income category, (earning 30% AMI or less). In 2021, more homeowners (70%) in Ashland make incomes at or higher than the AMI than renters (33%) (**Exhibit 8** & **Exhibit 9**)

Exhibit 7. Total Households by Area Median Income, Ashland, 2021



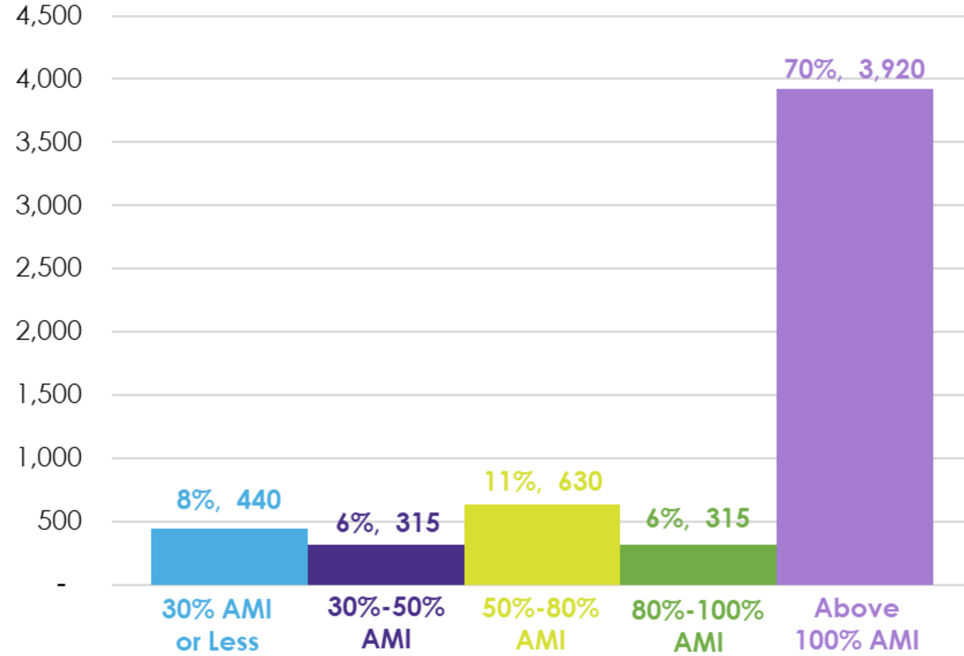
Source(s): CHAS 2017-2021; CAI 2025.

Exhibit 8. Renting Households by Area Median Income, Ashland, 2021



Source(s): CHAS 2017-2021; CAI 2025.

Exhibit 9. Homeowner Households by Area Median Income, Ashland, 2021



Source(s): CHAS 2017-2021; CAI 2025.

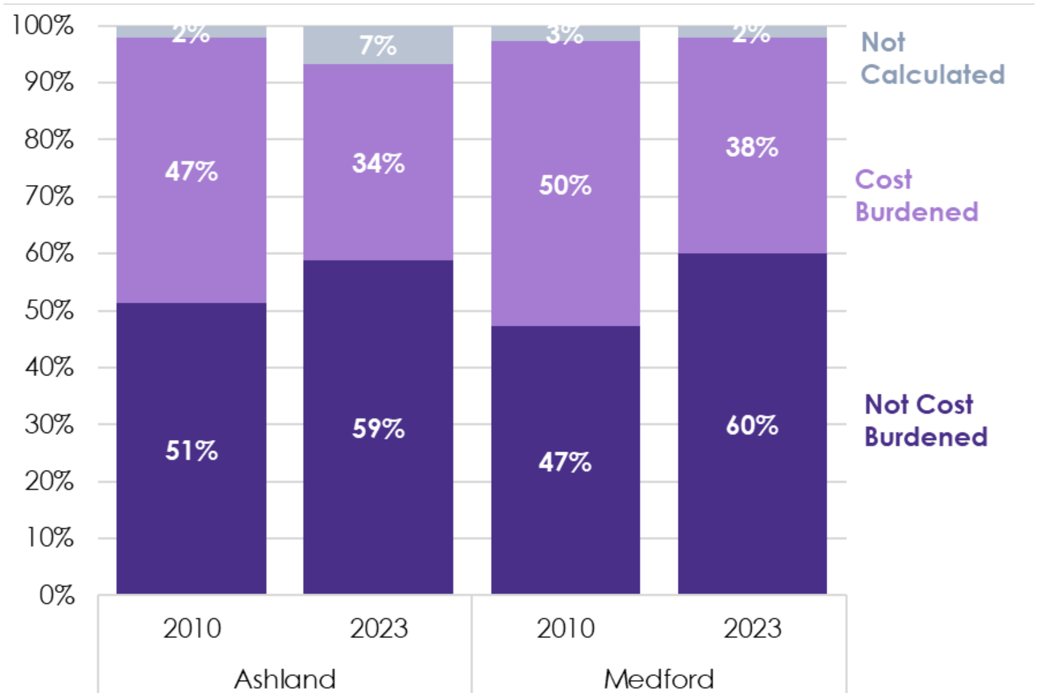
Cost burdened refers to a household that spends more than 30% of its income on housing costs, including rent or mortgage payments and utilities.

Since 2010, Oregon, Jackson County, Medford and Ashland have all seen household income increase while cost burden due to housing decreased. As of 2023, at least 34% of households in Ashland are experiencing cost burden due to housing (**Exhibit 10**). "Not calculated" means that the cost burden percentage could not be calculated for those housing units due to missing or unreliable income or housing cost data.[2] This value may be impacted by senior households who own their homes outright or report limited income by making affordability ratios difficult to calculate.

Renters face higher rates of cost burden than homeowners. As of 2023, 48% of renting households in Ashland experienced cost burden compared to 21% of households which own their home (**Exhibit 11**).[3]

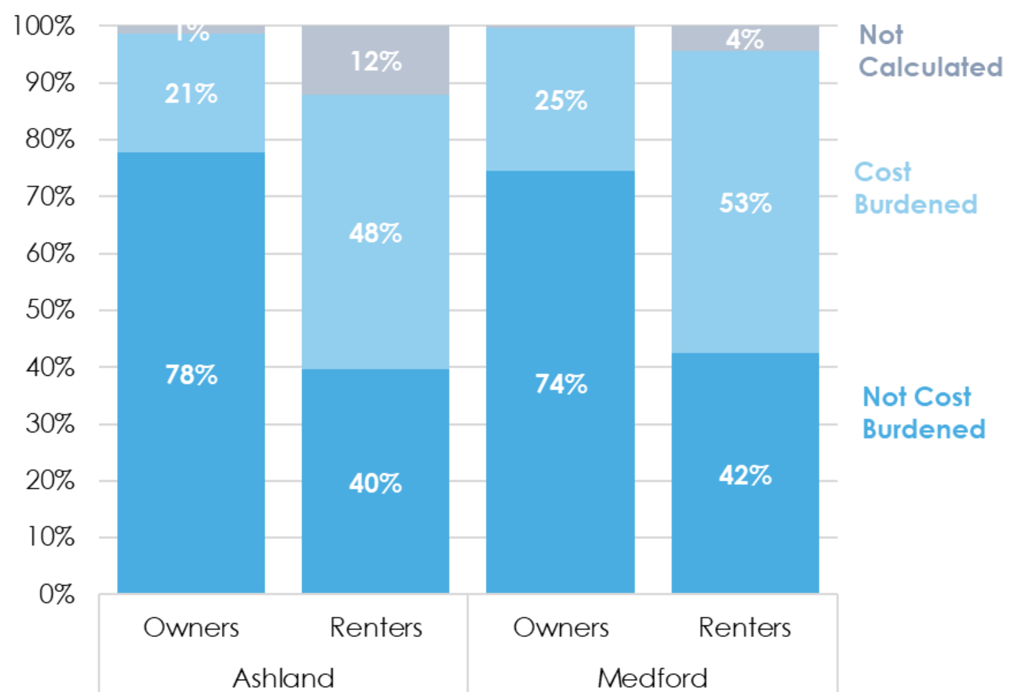
[2] "Not Calculated" category includes units where reported income was $0 (as this makes cost ratios unreliable), unusual or inconsistent values triggered data suppression to preserve accuracy, or the unit was occupied without payment of rent or mortgage.
[3] "Not computed" values are often higher among renters because: Income is more likely to be unreported, unstable, or very low, rent-free arrangements are more common, and housing and financial data may be less reliably reported

Exhibit 10. Housing Cost Burden, Ashland & Medford, 2010 & 2023



Sources: American Community Survey, 2010 & 2023; CAI 2024.

Exhibit 11. Housing Cost Burden by Tenure, Ashland & Medford, 2023



Sources: American Community Survey, 2010 & 2023; CAI 2024.

Housing in Ashland

Of Ashland's total housing stock (11,499 units in 2023), 10,264 or 89% are occupied. The remaining 1,235 units are classified as either vacant or partially vacant, which includes units for rent or sale that are not yet occupied at the time of the survey; units for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use (such as short-term rentals); and units intended for vacation or occasional use (such as second homes).

Single-family homes make up 59% of Ashland's total housing inventory (6,784 out of 11,499 units) (**Exhibit 12**). This is slightly lower than Oregon's proportion of single-family homes (62%). Multi-unit structures of five or more units make up approximately 17% of the housing stock.

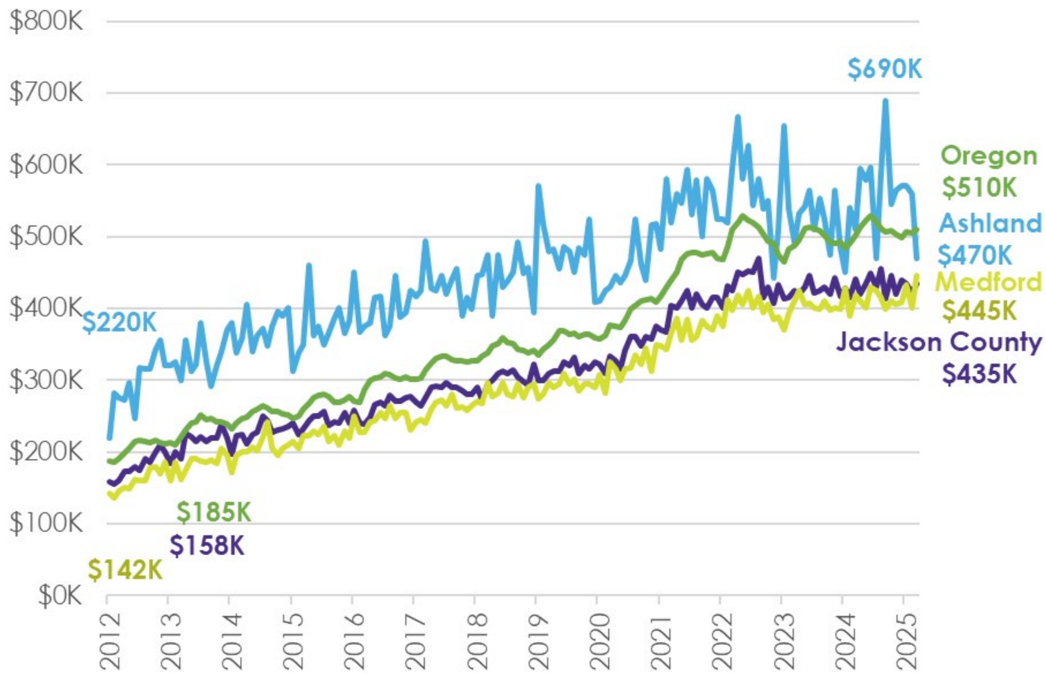
Exhibit 12. Housing Units by Structure Size, Ashland, 2023

Structure Size/Type	Count	% of Total
1 Detached Unit in Structure	6,784	59%
1 Attached Unit in Structure	1,521	13%
2 Units in Structure	499	4%
3 to 4 Units in Structure	706	6%
5 to 9 Units in Structure	545	5%
10 to 19 Units in Structure	309	3%
20 to 49 Units in Structure	443	4%
50 or More Units in Structure	516	4%
Mobile Homes	120	1%
Boat, RV, Van, Etc	56	0%
Total Units	**11,499**	

Sources: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023; CAI, 2024.

Median home sale prices have increased steadily in Medford, Ashland, Jackson County and Oregon since 2012 (**Exhibit 13**). Ashland's market, however, shows pronounced seasonal variation, with recurring peaks and troughs throughout the years. As of September 2024, Ashland reaches the highest median home sale price at approximately $690,000. Outside of some low troughs occasionally appearing after 2022, Ashland's home prices have consistently exceeded the averages for Medford as well as regional and state averages. As of March 2025 (the most recent data collected), Ashland's median home price was $470,000, compared to $510,000 in Oregon, $445,000 in Jackson County, and $435,000 in Medford.

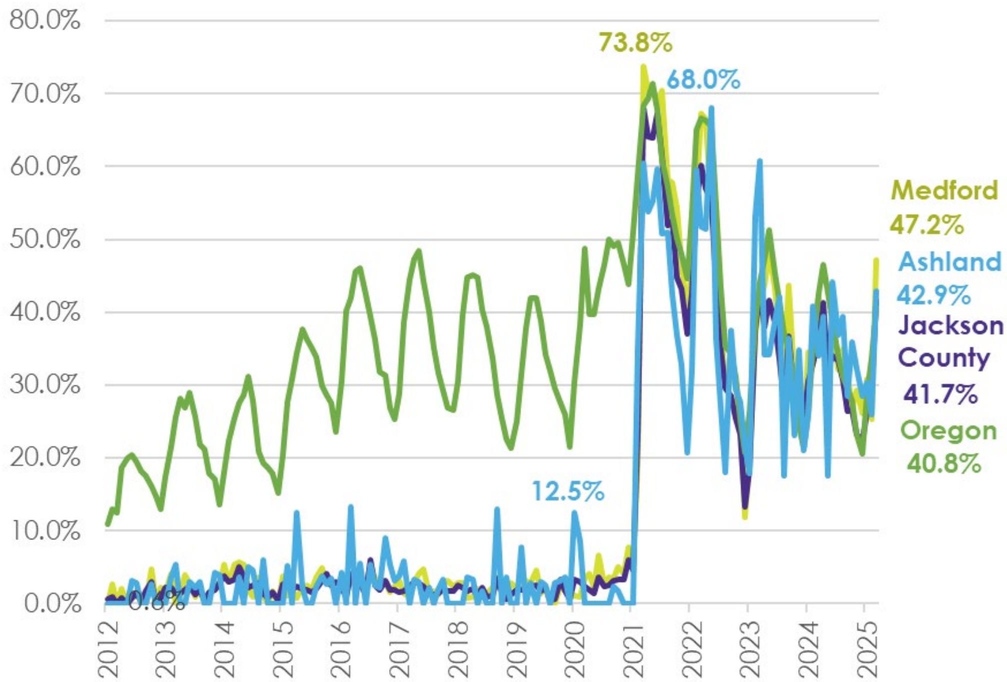
Exhibit 13. Median Home Sale Price, Ashland, Medford, Jackson County and Oregon, Jan 2012 – March 2025



Sources: Redfin, 2025; CAI, 2025.

The share of homes sold within two weeks of listing remained relatively low and stable across all areas from 2012 to 2020, when this indicator spiked sharply in all geographies, such that in Medford 74% of listings were removed within two weeks (**Exhibit 14**). Ashland's peak was 68%, recorded in May of 2022. Since then, the rate of two-week sales has declined somewhat but remains elevated compared to pre-2020 levels. As of May 2024, this value was 18%. Most recent data (March of 2025), shows that 47% of all of Medford's new listings and 43% of all of Ashland's new listings were sold within two weeks.

Exhibit 14. Housing Units off the Market within Two Weeks of Listing, Ashland, Medford, Jackson County and Oregon, Jan 2012 – March 2025

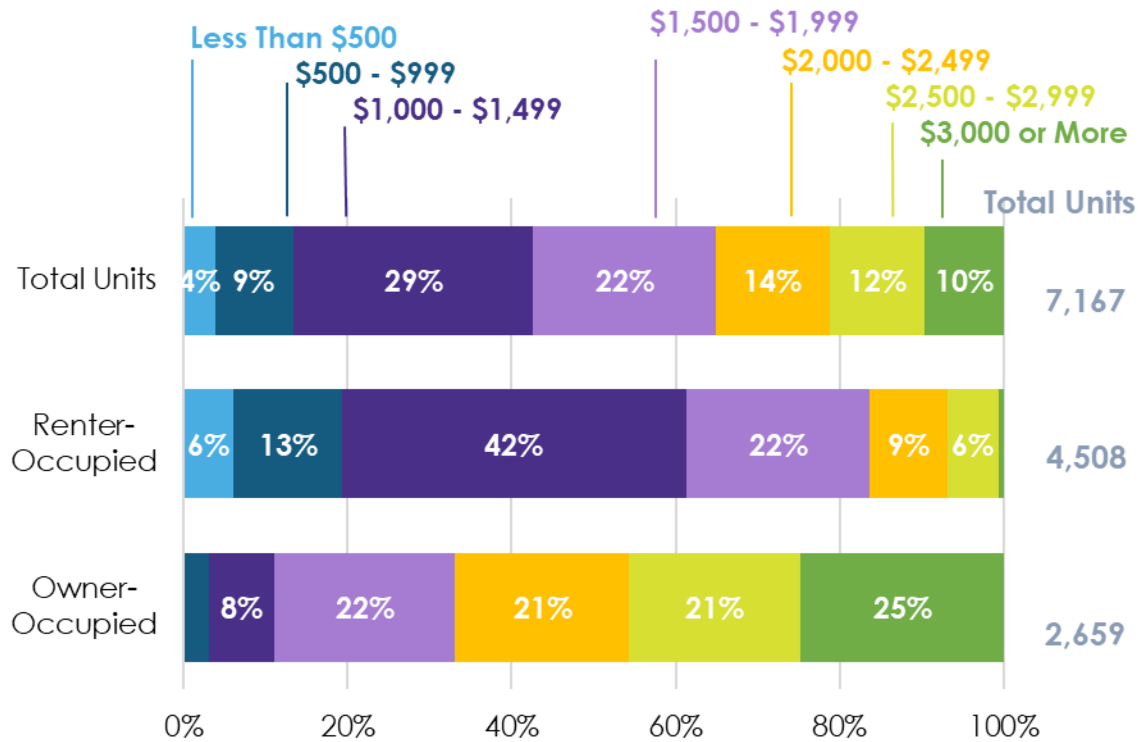


Sources: Redfin, 2025; CAI, 2025.

As of 2023, median housing costs per rental unit, including rent, utilities, or other costs, was $1,367 per month, which is slightly lower than that of the state ($1,450) (**Exhibit 15**). Housing costs for owner-occupied units however, were a median of $2,398 monthly including mortgage, taxes, utilities, insurance, and HOA fees as applicable. This is over $1,000 higher than the rental units and is slightly higher than the median monthly home cost for homeowners at the state level ($2,080).

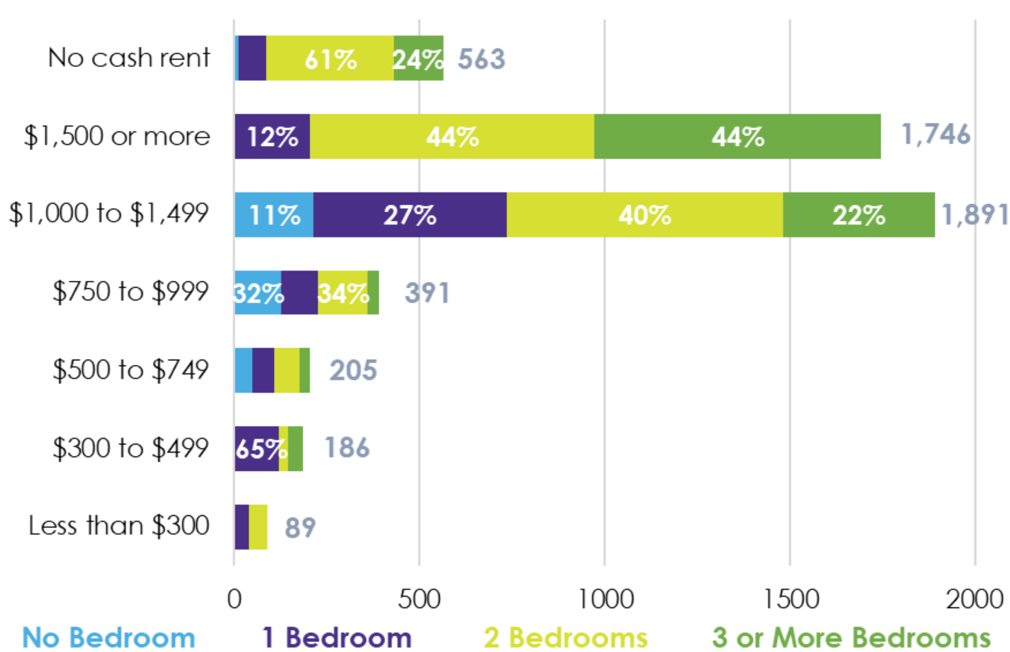
The majority of rental units in Ashland, at about 81%, cost more than $1,000 a month (**Exhibit 16**). The largest grouping of rental units in Ashland (1,891) fall within the $1,000 - $1,500 rental range. Of these, most (62%) are large units with 2 or more bedrooms. The second largest range is housing units for $1,500 or more in rent, with 1,746 units. 88% of these units have 2 or more bedrooms. A greater proportion of lower-cost rental units are also smaller in size. Among units with rents between $300 and $499, 65% are studios, or no bedroom units.

Exhibit 15. Monthly Housing Costs by Tenure, Ashland, 2023



Source: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2023; CAI, 2025.

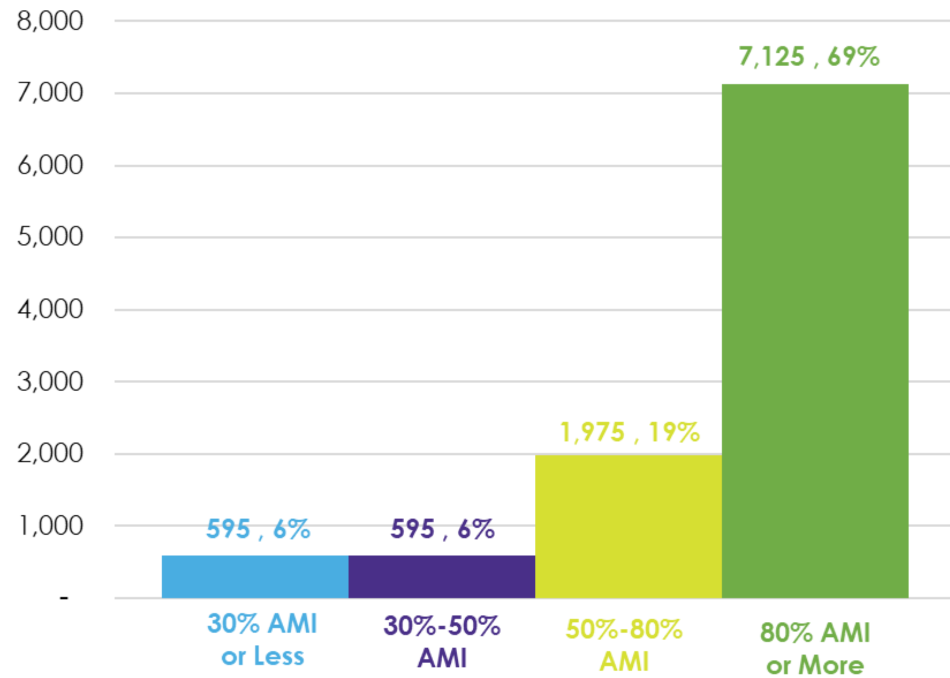
Exhibit 16. Housing Units by Rental Rate, Ashland



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2023; CAI, 2025.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's CHAS data, housing units are categorized by the maximum rent or home price affordable to households earning 30%, 50%, and 80% of area median income (AMI). [4] For HUD CHAS data, "affordable housing" means that a household spends no more than 30% of its gross income on housing costs. **Exhibit 17** shows the total number of housing units available at different income levels in Ashland. While 26% of Ashland's households earn less than 50% AMI (**Exhibit 7**), only 12% of Ashland's housing stock is affordable at that income level. Ashland has more housing units affordable at 50% - 80% AMI and 80% AMI and more than there are households that earn incomes at those levels.

Exhibit 17. Household Earnings Compared to Housing Affordability Levels, Ashland, 2021



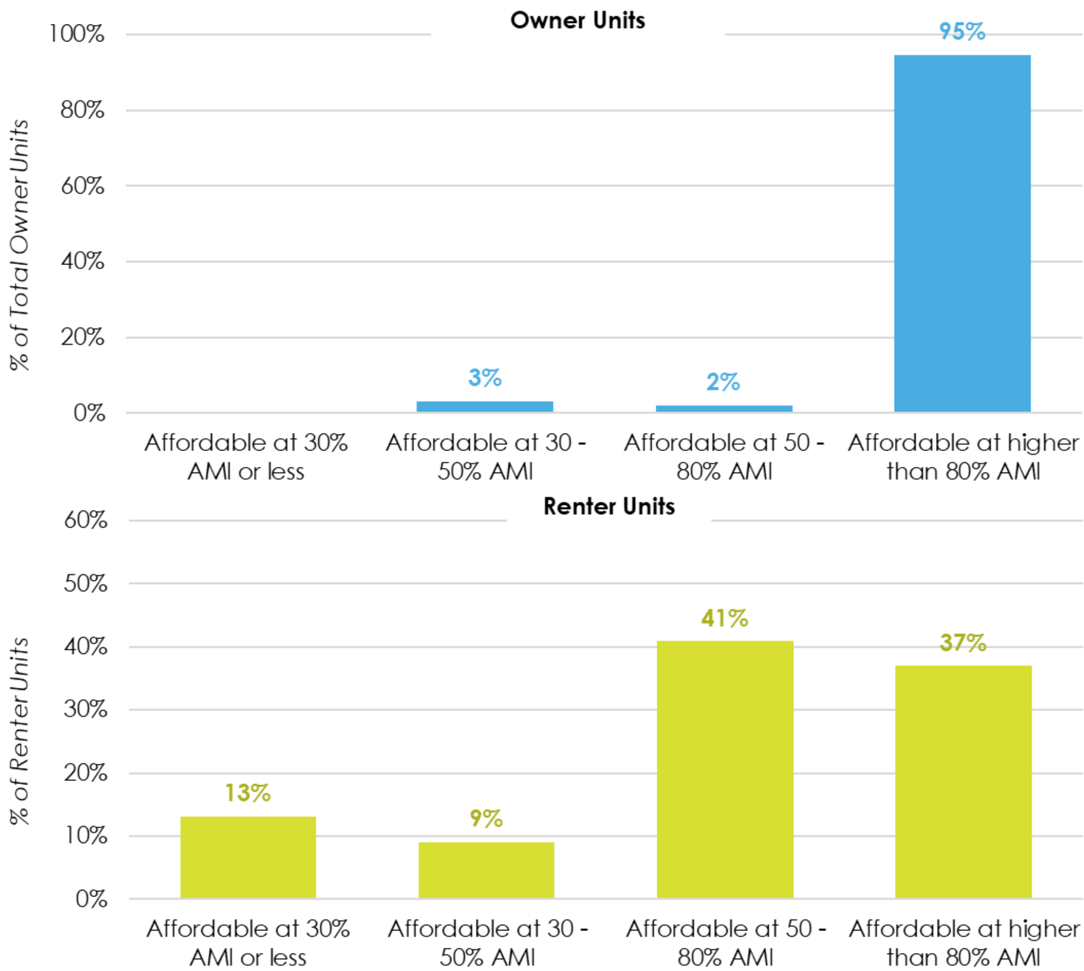
Source(s): CHAS 2017-2021; CAI 2025.

Exhibit 18 shows the availability of Ashland's housing stock at various levels of affordability. 95% of owner-occupied housing in Ashland is only

[4] HUD CHAS data dictionary is available online for viewing at: https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.huduser.gov%2Fportal%2Fdatasets%2Fcp%2FCHAS%2F2007Data%2FDimensions.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

available for households making 80% AMI or higher. Renter-occupied units, however, show some (13%) housing options affordable for households making less than 30% AMI, another 9% of units available at the 30%-50% AMI range, and 41% of units available at 50% - 80% AMI.

Exhibit 18. Housing Units by Tenure and Affordability Level, Ashland, 2021

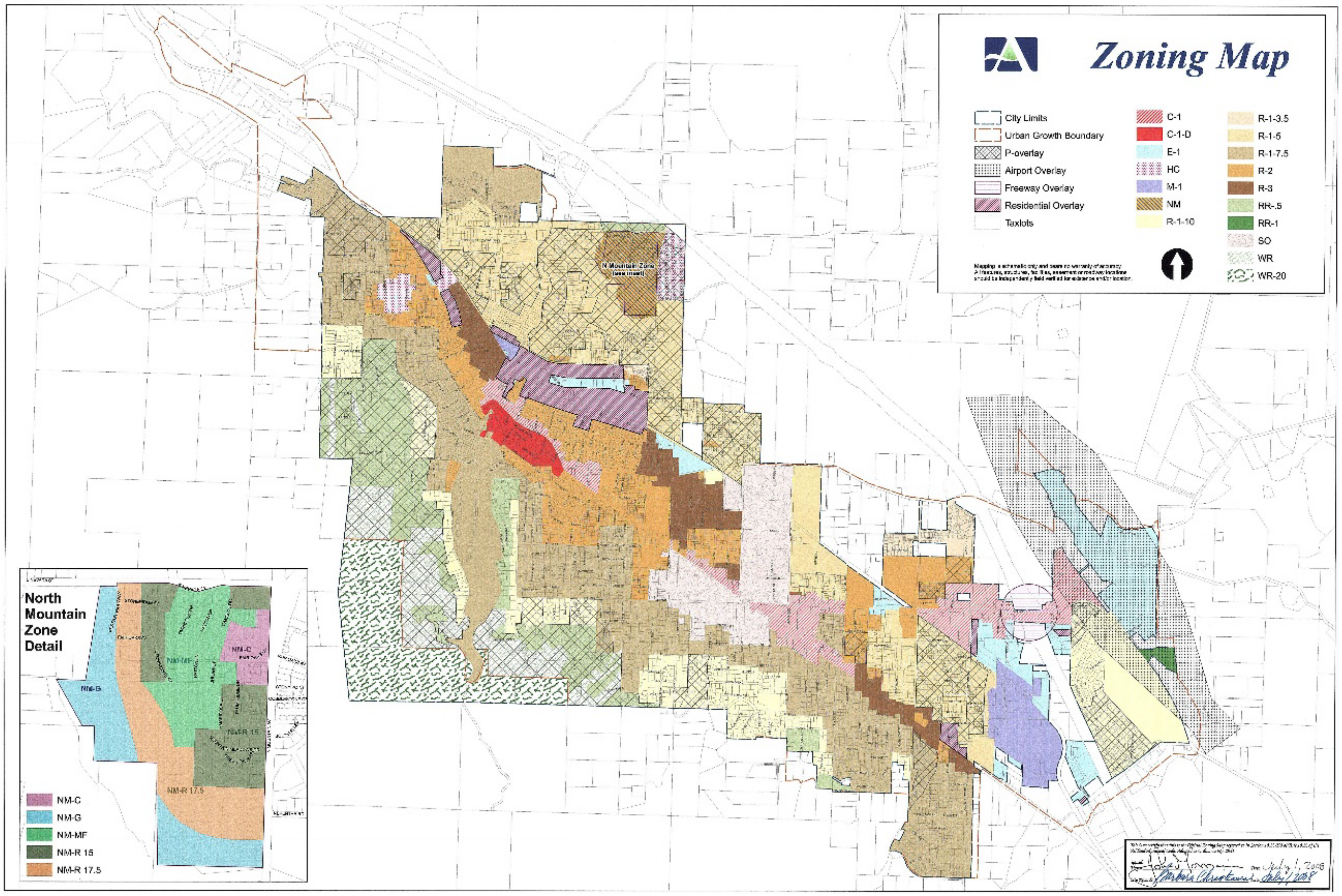


Source(s): CHAS 2017-2021; CAI 2025.

Local Land Use Setting

Ashland's total land area is 4,256 acres (gross land area, including all rights-of-way) (**Exhibit 19**). Ashland's land area net of rights-of-way is estimated to be 3,553 acres, of which 46% are zoned for single-family residential uses.

Exhibit 19. Ashland Zoning Map

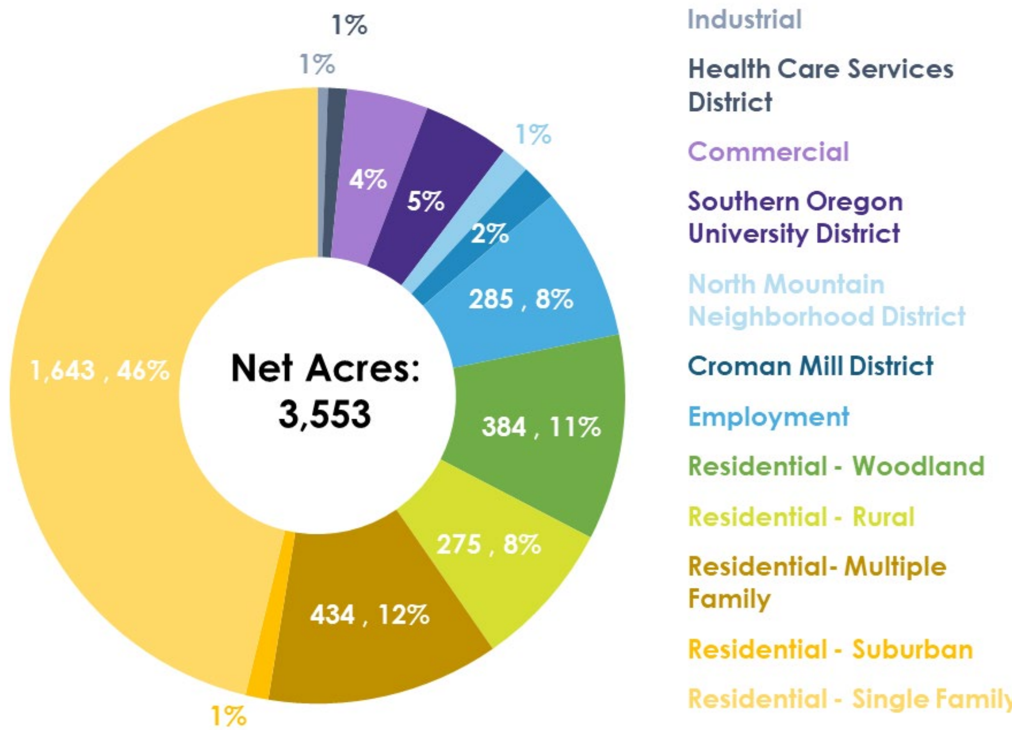


Sources: Ashland Open Data Portal, 2024.

Commercial-zoned land represents about 4% of Ashland's land area (net rights-of-way), while industrial land represents 1% (**Exhibit 20**). Ashland's Employment district makes up 8%, or 285 acres. Some of the land zoned for commercial, industrial, or employment uses are subject to overlays which may limit the uses or development potential on these parcels.

The Croman Mill District (68 acres) and North Mountain Neighborhood District (53 acres) each offer mixed uses, which includes employment potential, but are subject to development regulations.

Exhibit 20. Ashland Land by Zoning Designation, 2025



Source: Ashland Open Data Portal, 2025; CAI, 2025.

Climate

Ashland has a mild climate with four distinct seasons, influenced by its location on the West Coast and within the surrounding mountains. Situated at approximately 2,000 feet above sea level, the city is framed by Mt. Ashland to the south, rising to 7,500 feet, and the Cascade Range to the north and east. Ashland receives an average of 19.5 inches of rainfall annually, and less than 0.5 inches per year.

The City of Ashland completed and Addendum to Jackson County's Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2024. It describes Ashland's climate and describes hazard probability and vulnerability within the City. Climate related risks which have been rated as both high probability and high vulnerability for Ashland are Wildfire, Severe Weather (such as Extreme Heat, Windstorm, Winter Storm), Earthquake hazard, Drought hazard, and Air Quality (**Exhibit 21**). Air quality issues are linked to increased frequency and severity of wildfire smoke and climate change impacts, including higher ground-level ozone and fine particulate matter. These climate risks have impacts on public health and safety as well as impacts on economic activities and growth.

Exhibit 21. Climate Hazards Analysis, Ashland, 2024-2029

Hazard	History	Vulnerability	Maximum Threat	Probability	Total Threat Score	Hazard Rank	Hazard Tiers
Wildfire	18	45	100	70	233	#1	Top Tier
Extreme Heat Event	18	40	80	70	208	#2	
Emerging Infectious Dise	16	40	100	49	205	#3	
Earthquake - Cascadia	2	50	100	49	201	#4	
Winter Storm	20	50	60	70	200	#5	
Drought	20	50	60	63	193	#6	Middle Tier
Windstorm	20	50	50	70	190	#7	
Air Quality	18	40	60	63	181	#8	
Landslide	10	35	80	56	181	#9	
Flood	20	30	60	70	180	#10	
Earthquake - Crustal	2	25	70	21	118	#11	Bottom Tier
Volcanic Event	2	5	50	7	64	#12	

Sources: City of Ashland Addendum to the Jackson County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2024.

National, State, and Regional Economic Trends

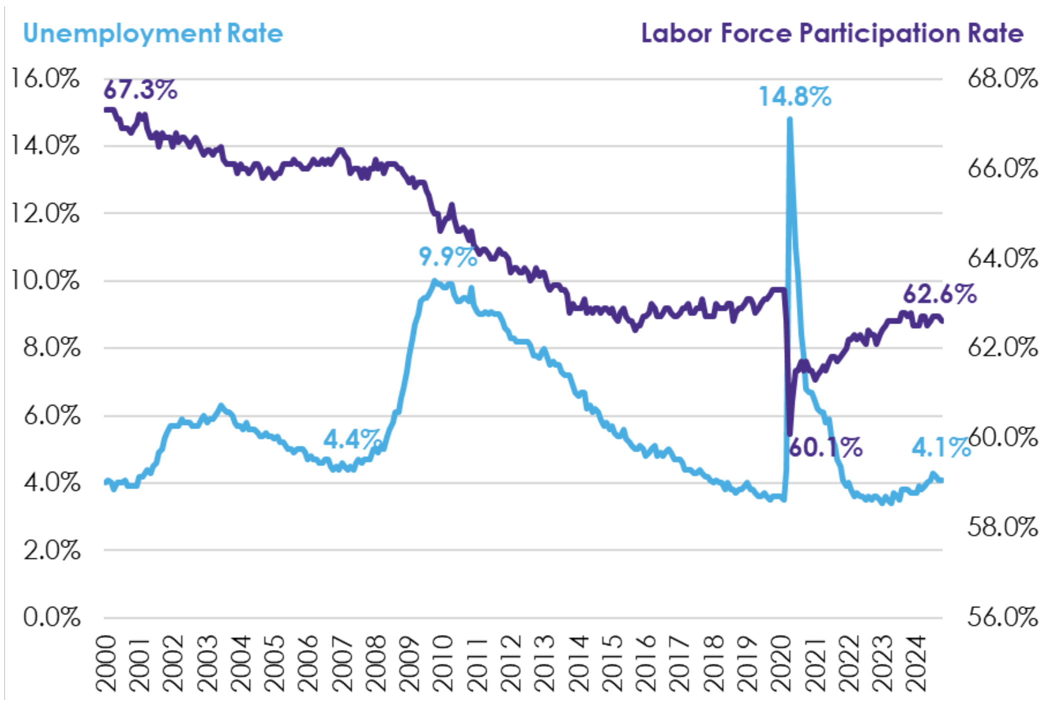
This section summarizes economic trends at the national, state and regional levels that influence local economic conditions in Ashland.

Macroeconomic Indicators

Nationally, the unemployment rate in 2024 matches pre-pandemic level lows.

The national estimate for labor force participation rate has steadily declined since 2000, falling from 67.3% and reaching a low of 60.1% in early 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic (**Exhibit 22**). The unemployment rate increased during two recent economic downturns, rising to 9.9% after the 2008 financial crisis and to 14.8% in April 2020 due partially to pandemic-related job losses. Since then, the unemployment rate has fallen lower than pre-pandemic levels, reaching 4.1% in 2024. As of October of 2024, labor force participation in the U.S. increased to 62.6%, though this remains lower than early 2000s levels.

Exhibit 22. U.S. Unemployment Rate and Labor Force Participation

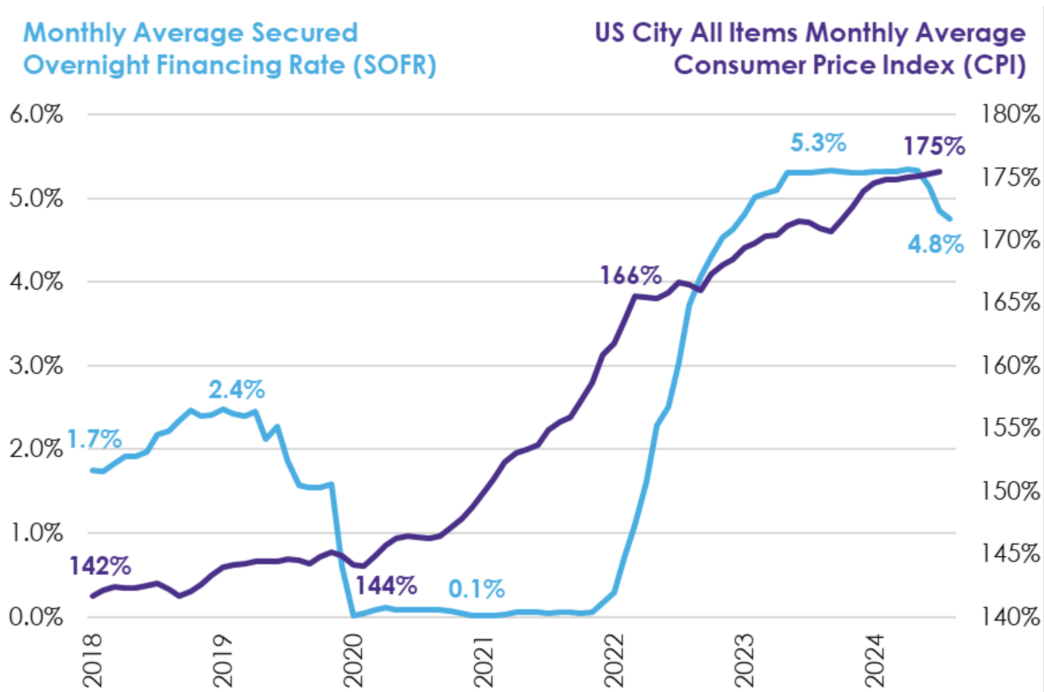


Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024; CAI, 2024.

Meanwhile, the national Consumer Price Index (CPI) has consistently climbed upward since 2018, reaching a local high at the end of 2024.

In 2020, amid the pandemic, SOFR dropped to near-zero levels (0.1%) while the CPI began to increase (**Exhibit 23)**. SOFR remained low until mid-2022, when it increased to a peak of 5.31% in 2023 as the Federal Reserve tightened monetary policy. Concurrently, the CPI increased from 144% in the beginning of 2020 up to 166% by the end of 2022. This reflects an 15% average annual growth rate 2020-2022, signifying increased inflation. Following 2022, CPI continued to climb, though at a lower average annual rate of 5% from the end of 2022 to 2024. As of late 2024, CPI remains high compared to pre-pandemic levels, at 175%, while SOFR decreased to 4.8%.

Exhibit 23. Monthly Average Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) and Consumer Price Index (CPI), United States, (2018-2024)



Sources: U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, 2024; U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024; CAI, 2024.
Note: CPI Base Period: December 1999 = 100

Southern Oregon and the Rogue River Valley

Population

Overall, Oregon has experienced steady population growth, with Jackson and Josephine Counties ranking near the middle in terms of population growth compared to other counties in the state.

From 2010 to 2023, Oregon experienced a 12% growth in statewide population. Jackson County's population grew by 10% in this timeframe, reflecting moderate but slower growth compared to rapidly expanding counties like Deschutes County (34%) and Crook County (26%). In contrast, Josephine County grew by 7%, below the statewide average.

Since 2020, the populations of both Medford and Ashland have grown more quickly than the state. Medford's growth rate was the highest of these geographies (**Exhibit 24**).

Exhibit 24. Historic Population Growth Estimates, Jackson County, Josephine County, Medford and Ashland, 1980-2023

Geography	1980	2000	2020	2023	CAGR (2020-2023)
Oregon State	**2,633,156**	**3,421,399**	**4,268,055**	**4,296,626**	**0.2%**
Jackson County	132,456	181,269	223,240	222,762	-0.1%
City of Medford			83,115	90,887	3.0%
City of Ashland			21,105	21,457	0.6%
Josephine County	58,855	75,726	86,560	88,814	0.9%

Sources: University of Portland Population Research Center, 2023; CAI, 2024.

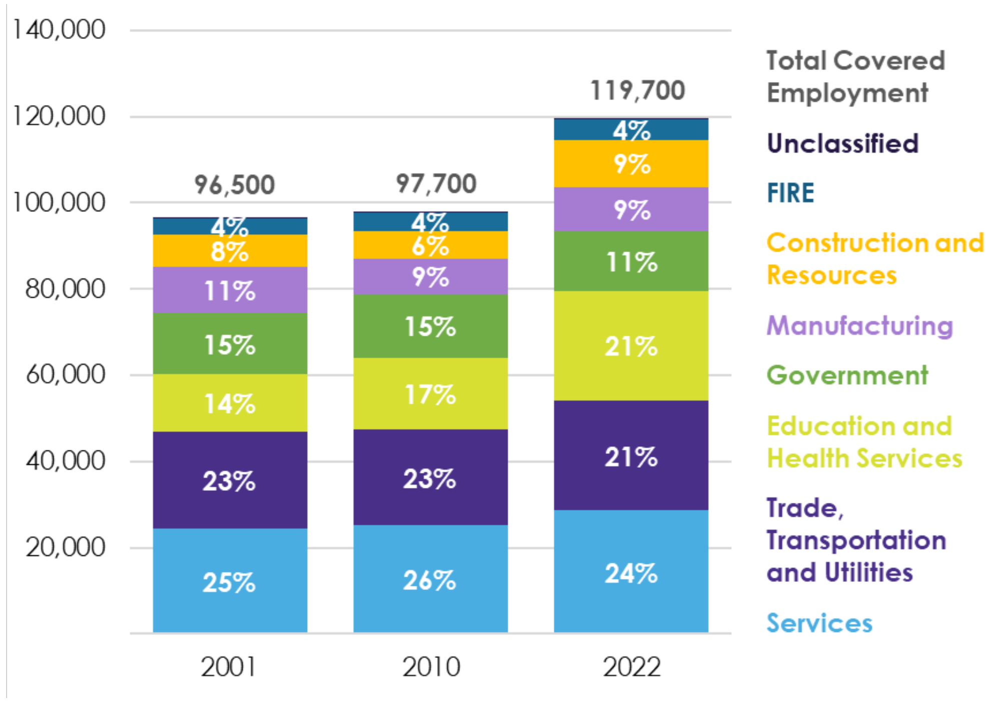
Industry Employment and Wages

Both Oregon and Jackson County economies are heavily reliant on the Services sector, making up nearly half of all jobs. Jackson County also shows an emphasis on Retail Trade, underscoring the presence of regional commercial hubs within the county.

Covered employment includes wage and salary jobs that are covered by state unemployment insurance. Covered employment includes most jobs, but excludes self-employed individuals, military personnel, and certain exempt sectors such as some agricultural or domestic work. It includes all part-time and full-time jobs. For the Jackson and Josephine 2-County region, the major industry sectors that account for the most covered jobs in 2022 are Services (with 24% of all jobs within the two counties); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (21%); and Education Services[5] and Health Services (21%) (**Exhibit 25**). A list of the 2-digit NAICS code industries that are included in each major industry sector is described in **Exhibit 26**.

[5] Employment on public sector institutions, such as Southern Oregon University are included in Government.

Exhibit 25. Total Covered Employment by Major Industry Sector, Jackson and Josephine 2-County Region, 2001, 2010, & 2022



Sources: Oregon Employment Department; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, 2001, 2010 & 2022; CAI 2024.
Note 1: FIRE industry group includes Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.

Exhibit 26. Major Industry Sectors by Corresponding NAICS Codes, 2022

Industry Aggregates	2-Digit NAICS	2-Digit NAICS Industry Description
Construction and Resources	11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
	21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
	23	Construction
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	22	Utilities
	42	Wholesale Trade
	44	Retail Trade
	45	Retail Trade
	48	Transportation and Warehousing
	49	Transportation and Warehousing
Manufacturing	31	Manufacturing
	32	Manufacturing
	33	Manufacturing
FIRE	52	Finance and Insurance
	53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
Education and Health Services	61	Educational Services
	62	Health Care and Social Assistance
Services	51	Information
	54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
	55	Management of Companies and Enterprises
	56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
	71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
	72	Accommodation and Food Services
	81	Other Services (except Public Administration)
Unclassified	99	Unclassified
Government	All Government	Federal Government State Government Local Government

Source: US Census, 2025.

Jackson County's covered employment has grown steadily since 2010, adding 14,350 jobs at a CAGR of 1.5% to reach approximately 89,800 total jobs in 2022 (**Exhibit 27**). The fastest growing 2-digit NAICS code industry sectors from 2010 to 2022 were Construction (adding 2,439 jobs with a CAGR of 5.4%), Education (+379, CAGR of 4.1%) and Resources (+1,343, CAGR of 4.0%) industries.

Exhibit 27. Covered Employment Change Over Time by Industry, Jackson County, 2010 & 2022

Industry	NAICS Code	2010	2022	Net Change (2010-2022)	CAGR (2010-2022)	Employment Forecast* (2035)	Average Wages 2010	Average Wages 2022
Construction	23	2,789	5,228	2,439	5.4%	10,327	$38,235	$60,220
Educational Services	61	617	996	379	4.1%	1,673	$24,597	$39,183
Natural Resources and Mining	11, 21	2,258	3,601	1,343	4.0%	5,971	$25,398	$46,280
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	54	1,948	2,985	1,037	3.6%	4,740	$38,935	$74,399
Health Care and Social Assistance	62	11,806	16,561	4,755	2.9%	23,896	$43,095	$64,298
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	48	2,555	3,351	796	2.3%	4,495	$40,163	$64,346
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	53	975	1,253	278	2.1%	1,644	$23,209	$45,359
Accommodation and Food Services	72	7,315	8,963	1,648	1.7%	11,170	$15,268	$24,771
Manufacturing	31-33	6,052	7,392	1,340	1.7%	9,180	$40,386	$60,222
Wholesale Trade	42	2,190	2,497	307	1.1%	2,878	$42,815	$62,535
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	56	3,109	3,530	421	1.1%	4,051	$24,574	$46,357
Retail Trade	44	12,574	14,010	1,436	0.9%	15,751	$26,565	$40,323
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	71	1,426	1,427	1	0.0%	1,428	$22,187	$32,805
Other Services	81	2,820	2,755	(65)	-0.2%	2,686	$22,936	$38,787
Finance and Insurance	52	2,216	2,140	(76)	-0.3%	2,061	$45,957	$82,652
Government		11,444	10,502	(942)	-0.7%	9,569	$41,885	$63,764
Management of Companies and Enterprises	55	1,667	1,440	(227)	-1.2%	1,229	$59,493	$109,628
Information	51	1,677	981	(696)	-4.4%	549	$39,820	$80,218
Unclassified	99	11	188	177	26.7%	4,071	$44,817	$70,055
Total		**75,449**	**89,799**	**14,350**	**1.5%**	**108,440**	**$38,935**	**$60,222**

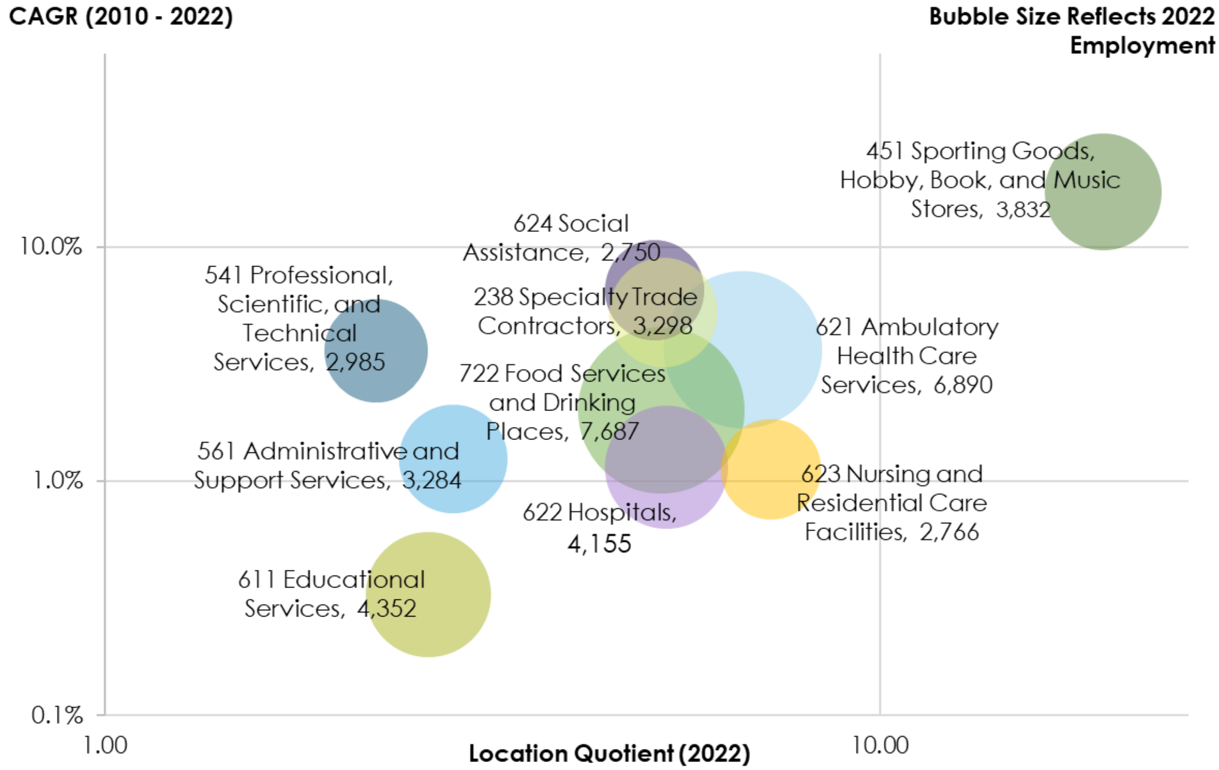
Sources: Oregon Employment Department, BLS, QCEW 2001, 2010 & 2022; CAI 2024.

Some more narrowly defined industries are concentrated and growing in Jackson County, such as Sporting Goods, Healthcare Services, and Food and Beverage Locations growing and providing jobs.

The Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores industry, or NAICS Code 451, not only has seen significant growth since 2010 (with a CAGR greater than 10.0%), but it also has a high concentration of employment in Jackson County compared to the nation, with an LQ above 10.0 (**Exhibit 28**). Jackson County's other fastest growing industries from 2010-2022 are Social Assistance (NAICS Code 624) with a CAGR of 6.6%, and Specialty Trade Contractors (NAICS Code 238) with a CAGR of 5.3%.

Jackson County also specializes in Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (NAICS Code 623), which shows an LQ value of 7.24, and Ambulatory Health Care Services (NAICS Code 621), which has an LQ value of 6.66. This industry also has high employment, at around 6,900 workers. The Food Services and Drinking Places industry (NAICS Code 722) is significant in Jackson County as well, demonstrating a high LQ (5.23) along with the highest employment in the County with around 7,700 workers in 2022.

Exhibit 28. Top 10 Industries (at 3-digit NAICS) by Employment, Location Quotient, and Growth, Jackson County



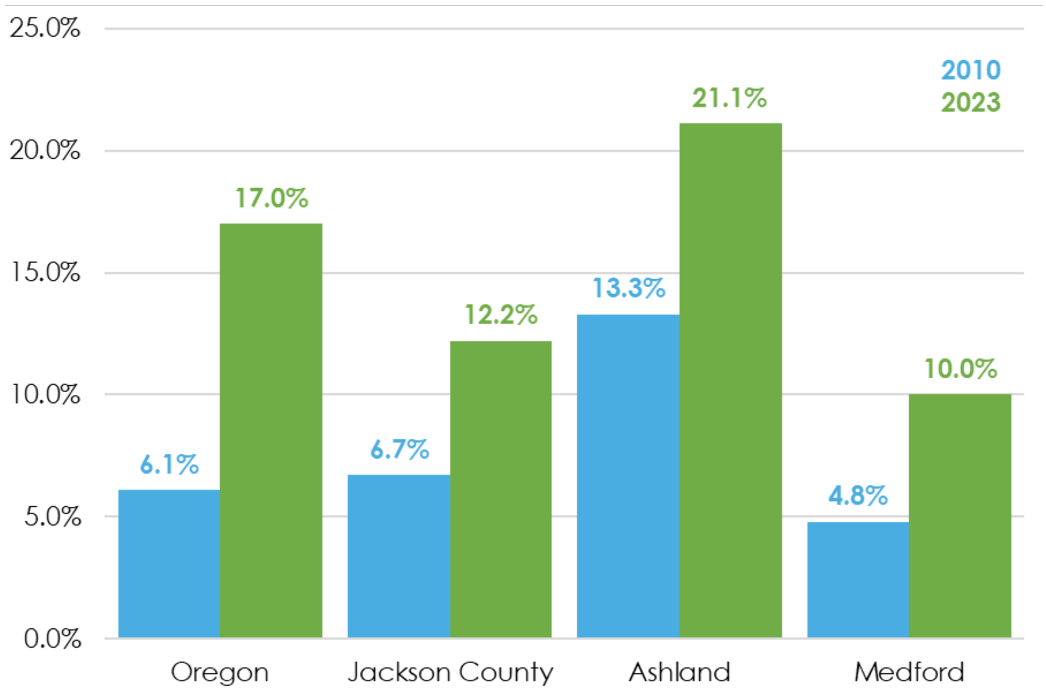
Sources: Oregon Employment Department 2010 & 2022; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022; CAI 2024.

Workforce and Wages

The proportion of working residents (16 and older) who report working from home has increased significantly across Oregon and Jackson County since 2010 (**Exhibit 29**). In 2010, 6.1% of Oregon's working residents reported working from home; by 2023, that figure had risen to 17.0%, representing a compound annual growth rate of 8.2%. Ashland had the highest share of at-home workers highest share among whom? All cities in Oregon? in 2010 at 13.3%, and experienced a similar growth trajectory, with a CAGR of 7.8% over the same period. By 2023, 21.1% of Ashland's residents who work reported working from home. Is this still the highest share?

The Census Bureau's American Community Survey does not differentiate between remote workers, home occupations or other work-from-home arrangements. However, the elevated proportion of workers reporting at-home work aligns with larger trends towards remote work following the pandemic. In Ashland, the higher share of residents working from home may reflect both the local shift toward remote jobs and the city's appeal to remote workers relocating from elsewhere in response to broader remote work trends.

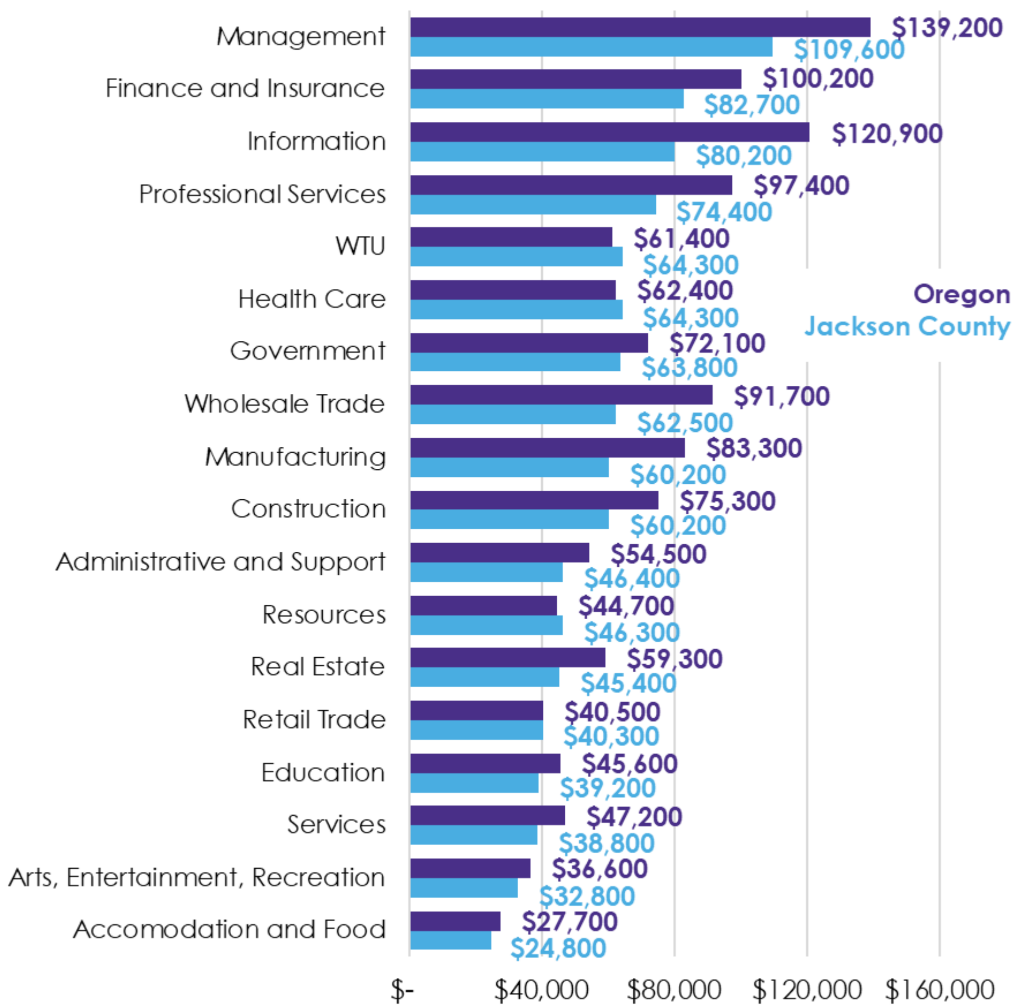
Exhibit 29. Proportion of Workers 16+ Who Work from Home, Oregon, Jackson County, Ashland & Medford, 2010 & 2023



Source: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2023; CAI, 2025.

Jackson County's top earning industries include Management (making an average annual wage of $109,600), Finance and Insurance ($82,700), and Information ($80,200) (**Exhibit 30**). Average annual wages in Jackson County are generally lower than wages at the State level.

Exhibit 30. Average Annual Wages by Occupation, Oregon & Jackson County, 2022



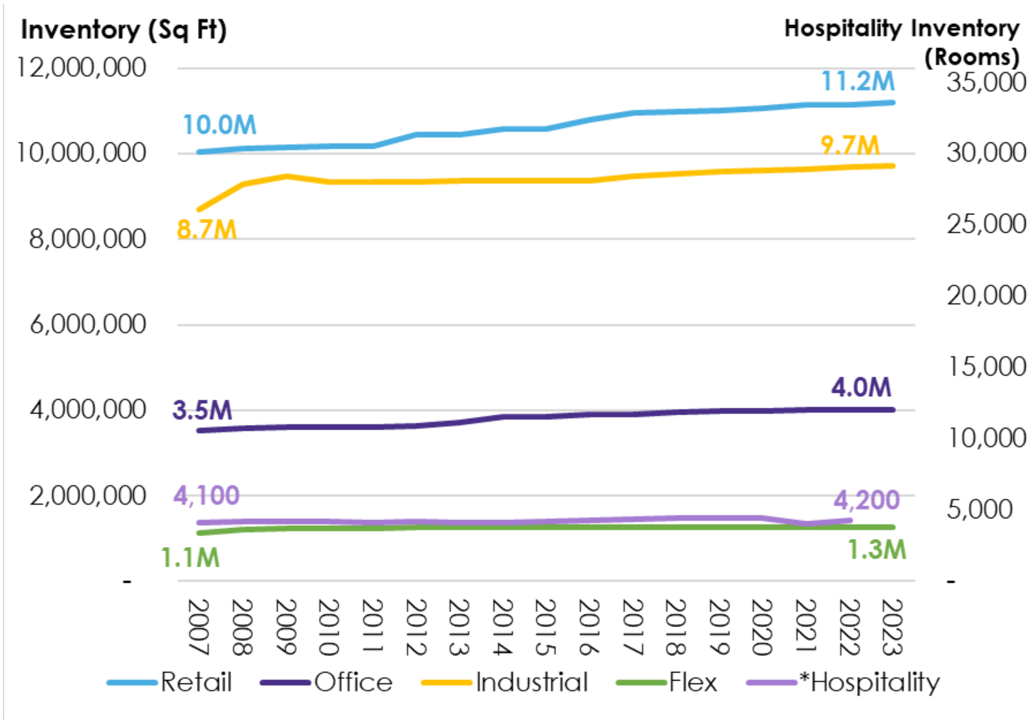
Sources: Oregon Employment Department, 2022; CAI 2024.

Commercial Real Estate

Retail consistently leads in real estate inventory in Jackson County, showing steady growth over time. Meanwhile, Office and Industrial inventories generally maintained moderate levels with slight upward trends.

Exhibit 31 shows Jackson County's retail inventory increasing from 10 million square feet in 2007 to 11.2 million square feet in 2023. Office inventory also grew steadily over the same time period, rising from 8.7 million square feet to 9.7 million square feet. Industrial inventory in Jackson County grew by about 1 million square feet from 2007 to 2023, reaching 4 million square.

Exhibit 31. Commercial Real Estate Inventory, Jackson County, 2007-2023



Sources: Costar, 2007-2023; CAI 2024.

Local Economic Characteristics and Trends

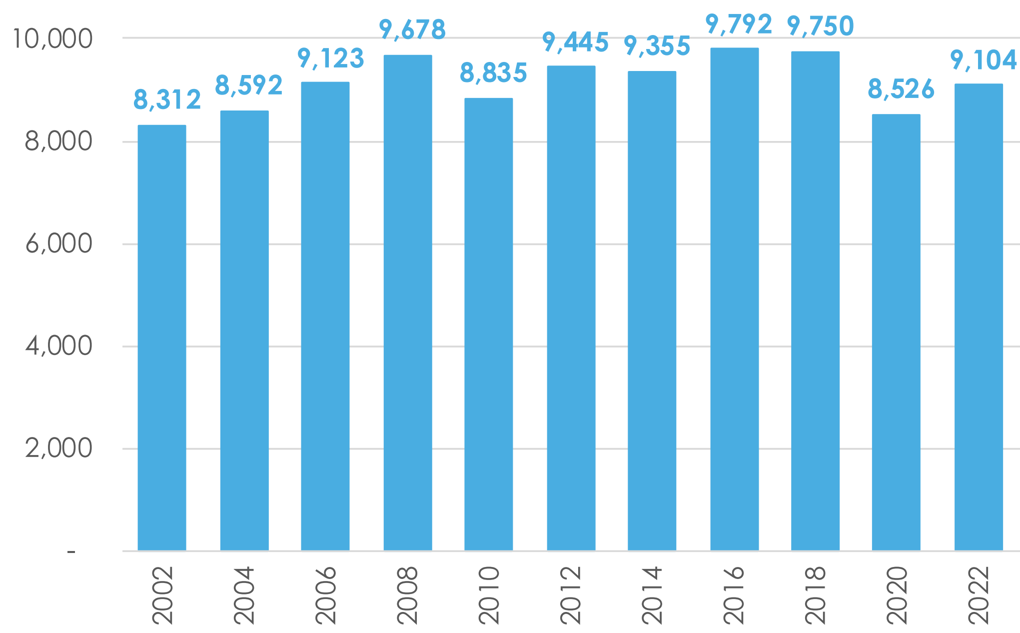
This section analyzes data on Ashland's local economy—including industry composition, employment, workforce and commuting patterns, market conditions, and other key metrics—to describe local economic characteristics and trends.

Industry and Workforce

Ashland's Industries and Employment

Local employment data are challenging to present, given the latency of publication and constraints among varying data providers. According to the US Census LODES data, total (private and public) employment in Ashland has experienced both growth and decline since 2002, ending with a total of 9,104 jobs in 2022, the most recent year available during report production (**Exhibit 32**).

Exhibit 32. Total Job Growth, Ashland, 2002 to 2022



Sources: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LODES), 2002-2022; CAI 2025.

Ashland's top private sector industries in 2023 by employment were Accommodation and Food Services (with 1,860 jobs), Retail Trade (1,471 jobs), and Health Care (1,354 jobs) (**Exhibit 33**). The different data sources (LODES in **Exhibit 32**, versus OED in **Exhibit 33**) result in different totals for the city. OED provided data exclude all public sector jobs, which include Southern Oregon University and other public sector jobs.

Top growing private industry sectors from 2013 – 2023 were Resources, Infrastructure and Enterprises, which expanded at a CAGR of 9.9% (+ 516 jobs), the Information sector, which grew at 1.8% CAGR (+31 jobs), and Real Estate, which also expanded by 1.8% CAGR (+20 jobs).

Private sector industries with declining employment included Wholesale Trade (-3.7% CAGR, -50 jobs), Education (-1.6% CAGR, -19 jobs), and Accommodation and Food Services (-1.1% CAGR, -72 jobs).

Exhibit 33. Private, Non-confidential Employment by 2-Digit NAICS Industry Sector, Ashland, 2013 & 2023

Industry	2-Digit NAICS	2013	2023	CAGR	Change
Construction, Resources & Enterprise*	11, 21, 22, 23, 48 & 49, 55	329	845	9.9%	516
Manufacturing (31-33)	31-33	511	546	0.7%	35
Wholesale Trade	42	161	111	-3.7%	-50
Retail Trade (44 & 45)	44-45	1,404	1,471	0.5%	67
Information	51	158	189	1.8%	31
Finance and Insurance	52	178	170	-0.5%	-8
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	53	109	130	1.8%	21
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	54	339	398	1.6%	59
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	56	275	245	-1.1%	-30
Educational Services	61	124	105	-1.6%	-19
Health Care and Social Assistance	62	1,359	1,354	0.0%	-5
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	71	677	605	-1.1%	-72
Accommodation and Food Services	72	1,912	1,860	-0.3%	-52
Other Services (except Public Administration)	81	418	430	0.3%	12
Unclassified	99	0	11		11
Total		**7,954**	**8,470**	**0.6%**	**516**

Sources: State of Oregon Employment Department, 2013 & 2023; CAI 2025.
Note: Private employment does not include public sector jobs including government or public education services, such as workers at Southern Oregon University.

Exhibit 34 summarizes projected employment growth within Ashland's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) through the year 2045. These employment forecasts inform the **Employment Lands Sufficiency** section of the EOA.

Forecast employment in Ashland is based on estimates of covered employment from 2013-2023 provided by the State of Oregon Employment Department (OED) (as shown above), as well as Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Workers (QCEW) covered employment estimates for Jackson and Josephine Counties. These were utilized to apportion the OED published Rogue Valley Forecast for the period 2023-2033. The resulting Ashland forecast adapts Jackson County's portion of projected regional growth to the city based on the trajectory of sectoral shares of countywide employment projected into the future. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) represents resulting year over year growth for the twenty-year period 2025-2045.

Total private employment is projected to increase from 8,644 in 2025 to 10,045 by 2045, a total increase of 1,401 jobs. The Leisure and Hospitality sector is projected to add the most jobs (an estimated 654) over this time frame, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 0.8%. Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (FIRE) is projected to grow the fastest from 2025-2045, with a CAGR of 2.2% and Health Care is the second fastest growing, with a CAGR of 1.4%. Information is projected to decrease the most over the period, with a projected loss of 53 jobs.

The Leisure and Hospitality sector is expected to see the largest absolute growth, adding approximately 654 jobs, with a CAGR of 0.8%. Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE) is projected to grow the fastest, with a CAGR of 2.2%, followed by Health Care, at 1.4%. In contrast, the Information sector is expected to decline by 53 jobs over the same period.

These estimates reflect only private, non-confidential employment—defined as jobs in privately owned businesses and institutions. Public sector employment, including positions at public universities and government agencies, is not included. As such, the employment forecast is specifically intended to support land use planning and may not capture the full range of community economic priorities.

Industry categories used in the forecast correspond to 2-digit NAICS codes, as detailed in **Exhibit 35**.

Exhibit 34. Private, Covered Employment Forecast Total and by Sector, Ashland UGB, 2025 – 2045

Industry	2013	2025	2035	2045	20 Year Growth	CAGR
Leisure & Hospitality	2,589	2,441	2,791	3,095	654	1.2%
Retail	1,404	1,485	1,456	1,443	(42)	-0.1%
Health Care	1,359	1,353	1,569	1,775	422	1.4%
Const, Resources & TWU	307	952	887	979	27	0.1%
Professsional & Business Services	636	714	766	826	112	0.7%
Manufacturing	511	553	556	565	12	0.1%
Other Services	418	432	467	500	67	0.7%
FIRE	287	303	382	467	165	2.2%
Information	158	196	162	143	(53)	-1.6%
Wholesale	161	103	117	123	19	0.9%
Educational Services	124	102	111	116	15	0.7%
Unclassified	0	11	12	14	3	1.2%
Total	**7,954**	**8,644**	**9,276**	**10,045**	**1,401**	**0.8%**

Sources: BLS, 2024; Oregon Employment Department, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Exhibit 35. Industry Groupings by 2-Digit NAICS, Ashland Employment Forecasts, 2025

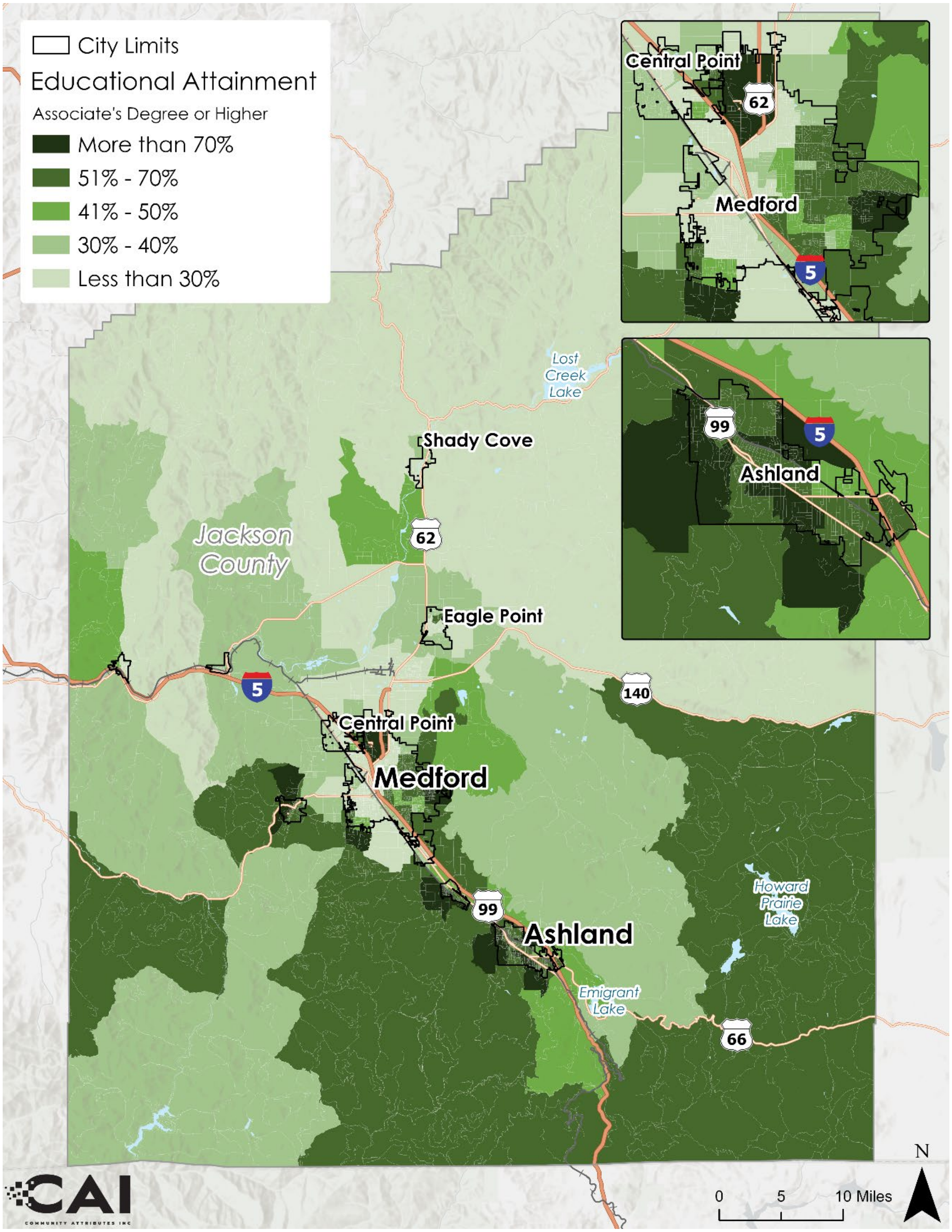
Industry Aggregates	Covered NAICS	Industry Descriptions
Construction, Resources & TWU	11	Natural resources and mining
	21	Mining and logging
	22	Utilities
	23	Construction
	48-49	Transportation & warehousing
Manufacturing	31-33	Manufacturing
Wholesale	42	Wholesale trade
Retail	44-45	Retail trade
Information	51	Information
FIRE	52	Finance and Insurance
	53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
Professional & Business Services	54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
	55	Management of Companies and Enterprises
	56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
Educational Services	611	Private educational services
Health Care	62	Health care and social assistance
Leisure & Hospitality	71	Leisure and hospitality
	72	Accommodation and food services
Other Services	81	Other services

Sources: CAI, 2025.

Ashland’s Labor- and Commute- Sheds

Ashland’s residents are highly educated, contributing to a well-qualified labor pool. As of 2023, 62% of the population holds a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 28% in Medford (**Exhibit 36**).

Exhibit 36. Educational Attainment by Block Group, Jackson County, 2022



Sources: Jackson County Open Data Portal, 2024; U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year 2018-2022 Estimates; CAI, 2024.

However, the Rogue Valley's labor and commute sheds are very intertwined. Ashland's residents travel all over the valley to work, including to Medford, which serves as a primary employment hub in the Rogue Valley.

According to the Census Bureau's 2022 commute data, Ashland had 5,783 employed residents in 2022 (**Exhibit 37**). Just 37% worked within the city, while 63% commuted to jobs outside of Ashland.

Ashland's workforce, however, included 6,910 people. Of these, only 31% (2,158 individuals) both lived and worked in Ashland, while the remaining 69% commuted in from other communities.

Exhibit 37. Commuting Patterns of Ashland's Workforce and Residents, Ashland, 2022

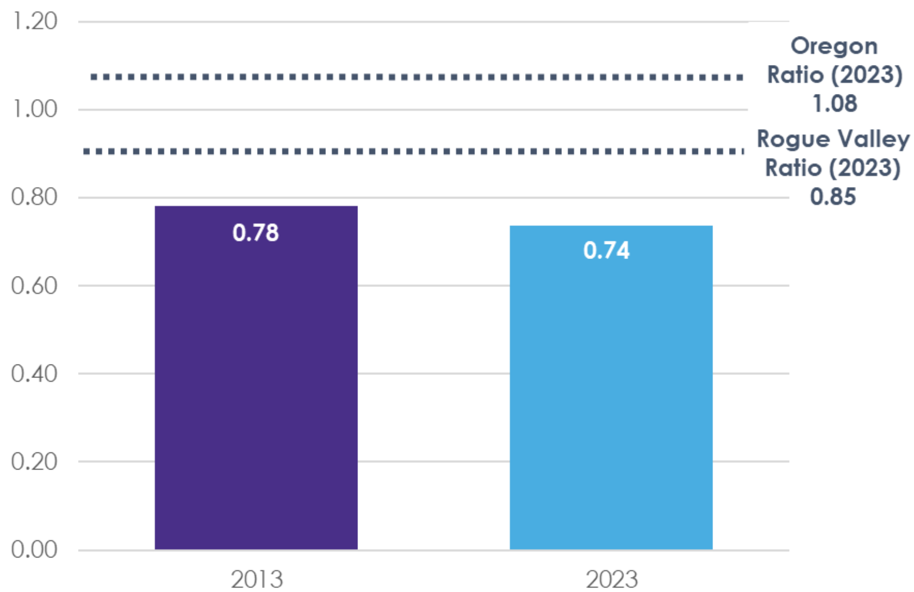
Metric	Count	Share of Ashland Residents	Share of Ashland Workers
Total Employed in Ashland	6,910		
Total Living in Ashland	5,783		
Net Inflow of Workers	1,127		
Both Live and Work in Ashland	2,158	37%	31%
Work in Ashland, Live Outside	4,752		69%
Live in Ashland, Work Outside	3,625	63%	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), 2021; CAI, 2024.

Considering that many of Ashland's working residents commute elsewhere for employment, while a significant share of local jobs are filled by workers commuting into the city. This dynamic suggests a mismatch between the types of jobs available in Ashland and the skills or preferences of its resident workforce.

Ashland's jobs-to-housing unit ratio is 0.74 in 2023, down slightly from 0.78 in 2013 (**Exhibit 38**). This modest decline points to a growing imbalance between local employment opportunities and housing availability. A ratio below 1.0 indicates there are fewer jobs than housing units, which may reflect demographic factors—such as a higher share of retirees—and regional commuting patterns. Compared to the Rogue Valley (0.85) and Medford (1.35), Ashland's lower ratio is likely impacted by both a reduced labor force participation due to a high proportion of seniors (**Exhibit 2**) and the outflow of residents commuting elsewhere for work (as described in **Exhibit 37** above).

Exhibit 38. Job to Housing Unit Ratio, Ashland, 2013 and 2023



Source: American Community Survey, 2013, 2023; State of Oregon Employment Department, 2013, 2023; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013, 2023; CAI, 2025.

In 2022, these dynamics come together to result in a net inflow of 1,685 workers into Ashland (**Exhibit 39**). It's important to note that inflow/outflow values do not reflect the actual number of commuters; rather, they represent the net difference between the total number of jobs located in Ashland and the total number of Ashland residents working in each industry. As such, they do not account for residents who may commute elsewhere for similar jobs, and should be interpreted as a rough indicator of industry-level labor exchange.

In Ashland, industries with the highest net inflow include Accommodation and Food Services (+638), Educational Services (+596), and Retail Trade (+354). These patterns suggest relatively higher demand for labor in these sectors compared to the local workforce available to fill them.

Exhibit 39. Total Employment Labor Inflow & Outflow by Industry, Ashland, 2022

Jobs in Ashland	Jobs in Ashland	Jobs of Ashland Residents	Inflow / (Outflow)
Accommodation and Food Services	1,620	982	638
Educational Services	1,362	766	596
Retail Trade	1,379	1,025	354
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	674	334	340
Manufacturing	589	423	166
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	480	349	131
Information	244	159	85
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	377	293	84
Administration & Support, Waste Management a	320	315	5
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	7	4	3
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	118	120	(2)
Utilities	-	11	(11)
Wholesale Trade	143	163	(20)
Finance and Insurance	140	168	(28)
Management of Companies and Enterprises	51	96	(45)
Public Administration	188	271	(83)
Transportation and Warehousing	64	155	(91)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	40	172	(132)
Construction	179	322	(143)
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,129	1,291	(162)
	9,104	**7,419**	**1,685**

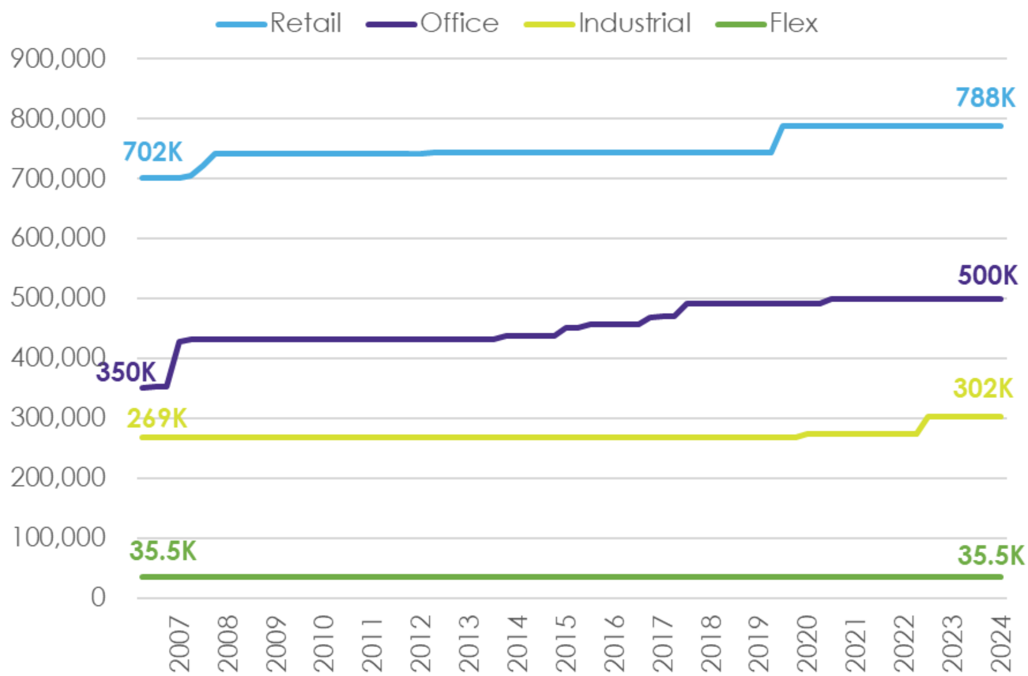
Sources: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LODES), 2022; CAI 2025.

Ashland's Market Conditions

Commercial Real Estate Inventory

Ashland's retail inventory increased from 702,000 square feet in 2007 to 788,000 square feet in 2024, maintaining the largest share of commercial real estate inventory in the city (**Exhibit 40**). Office space grew from 350,000 square feet in 2007 to 500,000 square feet in 2024. Industrial inventory increased gradually, starting at 269,000 square feet in 2007 and reaching 302,000 square feet in 2024.

Exhibit 40. Square Footage of Inventory by Typology, Ashland, 2007-2024

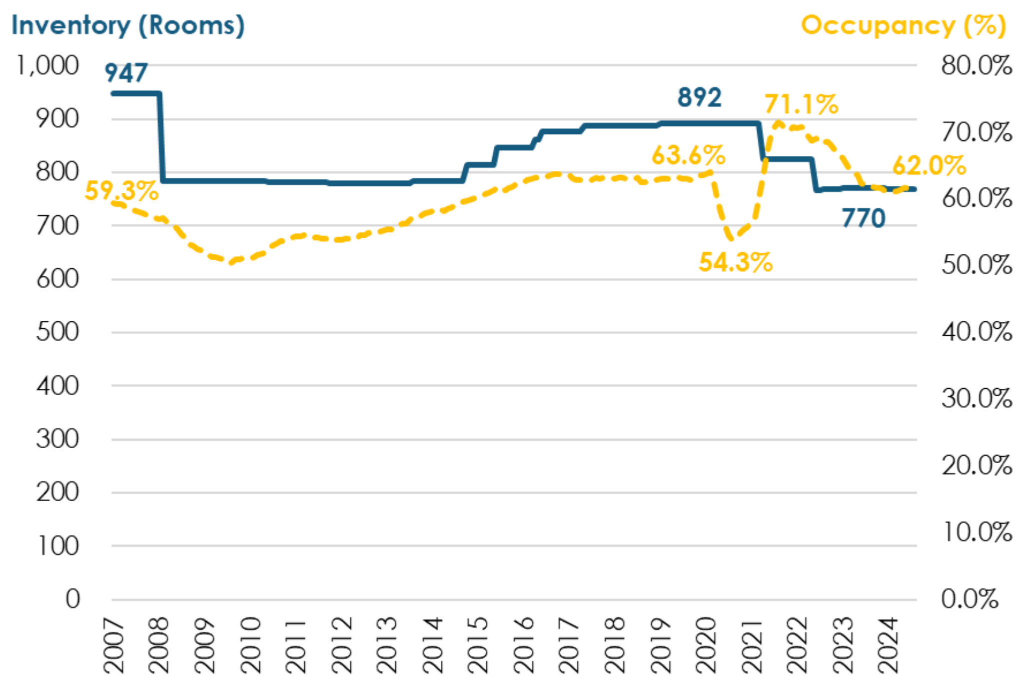


Source(s): Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Hospitality

Hospitality real estate inventory in Ashland, measured by the number of rooms, decreased from 947 rooms in 2007 to 770 rooms in 2024 (**Exhibit 41**). After an initial decline in inventory in 2008, the number of rooms grew modestly, peaking at 892 rooms in 2020 before declining again. Occupancy rates began at 59.3% in 2007, peaked at 71.1% in 2019, and declined to 62.0% in 2024, with a significant dip to 54.3% in 2020. Despite some recovery in occupancy rates post-2020, both inventory and occupancy remain below their earlier peaks.

Exhibit 41. Hospitality Real Estate Inventory (by Rooms) and Occupancy (Annually-Smoothed), Ashland, 2007-2024



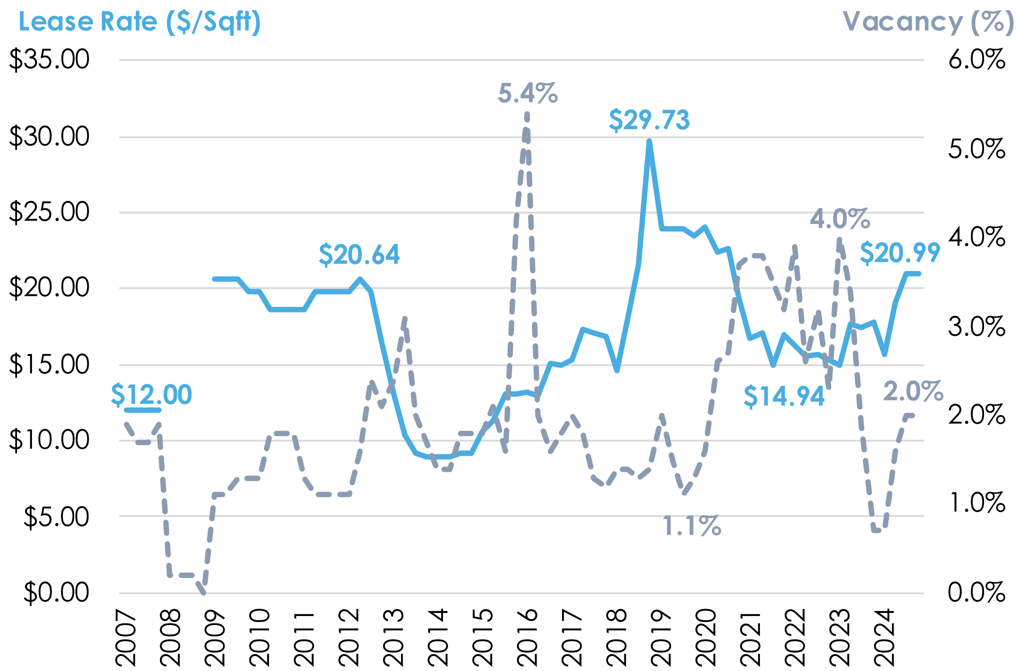
Source(s): Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Retail

Exhibit 42 explores retail lease rates and vacancy trends in Ashland from 2007 to 2024. Retail lease rates started at $12.00 per square foot in 2007, reached a peak of $29.73 per square foot in 2018, and declined to $20.99 per square foot as of 2024. Retail vacancy rates fluctuated, beginning at 5.4% in 2007, reaching a low of 1.1% in 2020, and ending at 2.0% in 2024, with a temporary increase to 4.0% in 2023.

This reflects a different trend to that seen in the Rogue Valley region. Annual average vacancy rates for retail in the Rogue Valley fluctuated from 2.4%-3.9% from 2009-2024, landing at 3.05% in 2024. Lease rates peaked in the Rogue Valley in 2022, with $17.06 per square foot, before dropping slightly to $16.55 in 2024.

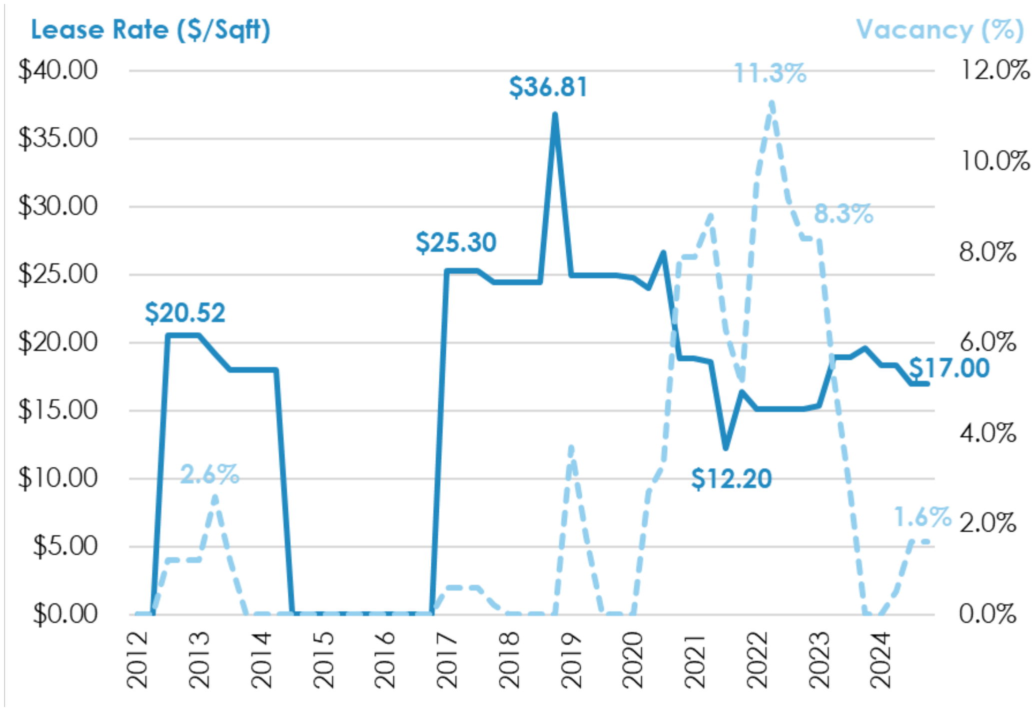
Exhibit 42. Retail Lease and Vacancy Rate, Ashland, 2007-2024



Source(s): Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Retail lease and vacancy trends in Downtown Ashland have diverged from the citywide market somewhat (**Exhibit 43**). Downtown lease rates, like lease rates city-wide, peaked in 2019. However, its lease rates were more volatile than at the city level, with the peak very briefly reaching $36.81. Downtown lease rates have decreased since, reaching $17.00 in 2024. Similarly, downtown vacancy rates spiked sharply to 11.3% in 2021 before declining to 1.6% in 2024, whereas citywide vacancy has remained more stable. These patterns suggest that downtown Ashland experienced a more intense cycle of disruption and recovery, possibly reflecting its concentration of tourism-facing retail or greater exposure to pandemic-related impacts. Despite this, current downtown vacancy is low, signaling potential for a rebound in tenant demand.

Exhibit 43. Downtown Retail Lease and Vacancy Rate, Ashland, 2012-2024

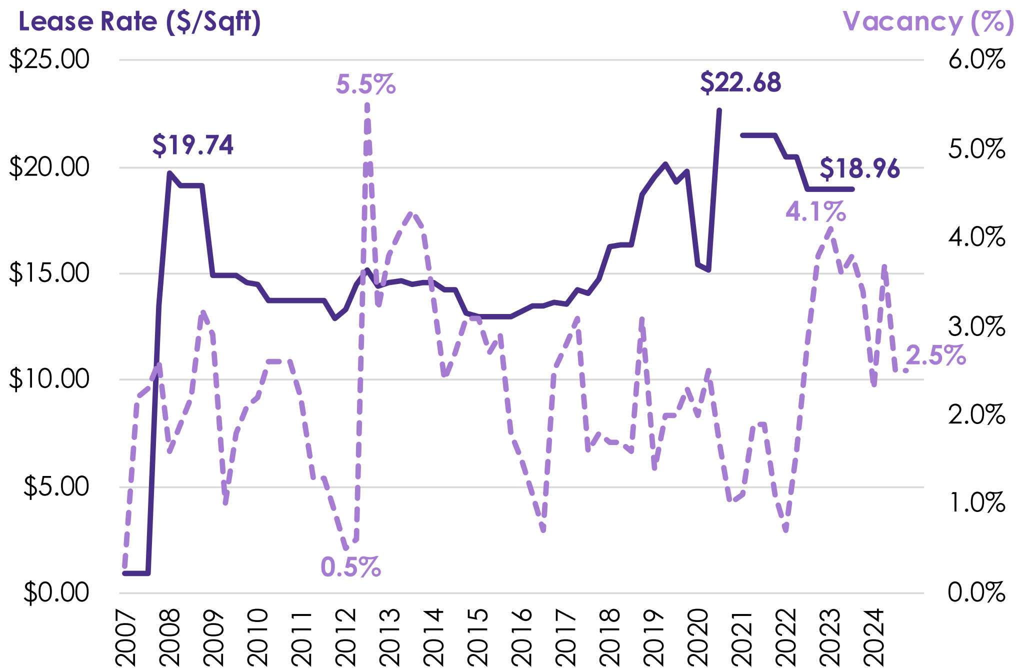


Source(s): Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Office

Office lease rates peaked at $22.68 per square foot in 2021 but declined to $18.96 by 2023 (**Exhibit 44**). Vacancy rates fluctuated but remained low, ending at 2.5% in 2024. This is lower than the 2024 average vacancy rate for office space in the Rogue Valley region of 4.73%.

Exhibit 44. Office Lease and Vacancy Rate, Ashland, 2007-2024

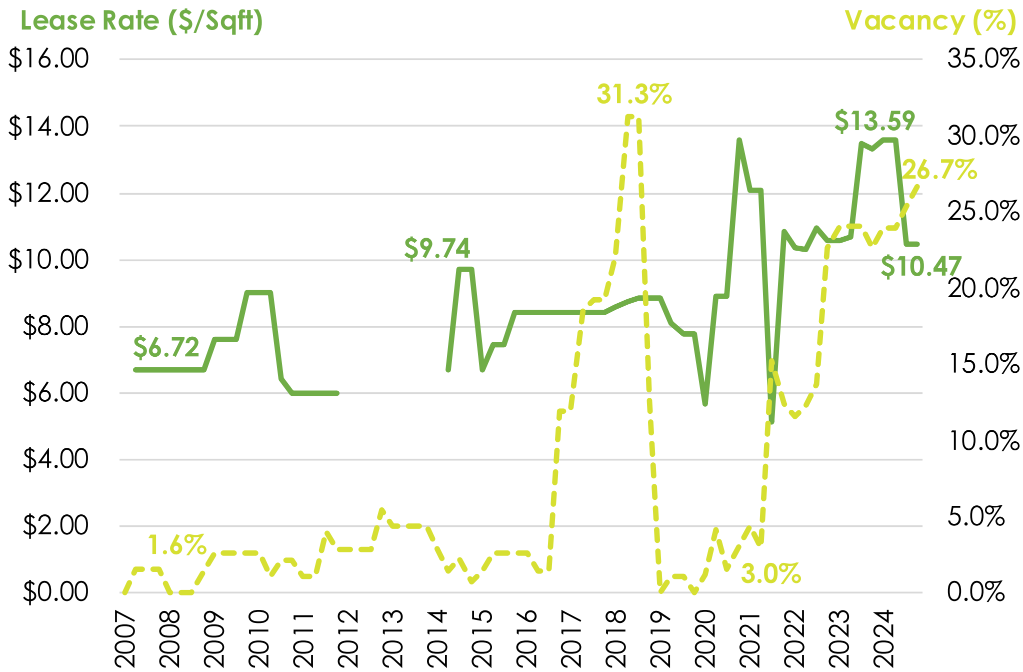


Source(s): Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Industrial

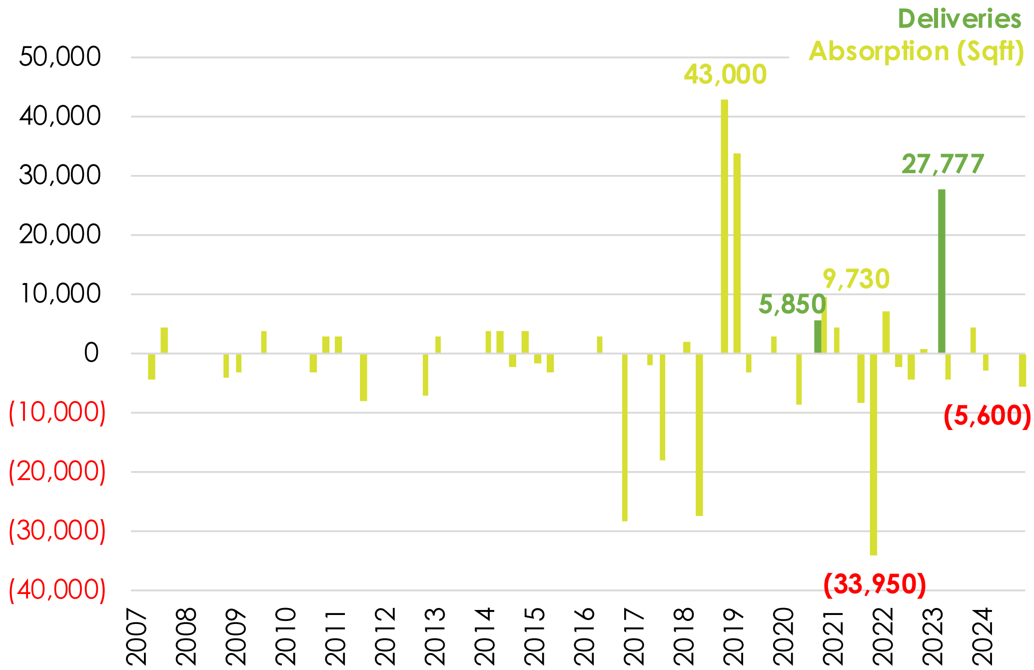
Industrial lease rates in Ashland peaked at $13.59 per square foot in 2023 before declining to $10.47 in 2024 (**Exhibit 45**). Industrial vacancy rates increased from near 0% in 2019 to 26.7% in 2024. The sharp rise in Ashland's industrial vacancy rate since 2019 may be attributed to a combination of new space deliveries outpacing tenant demand, pandemic-related business disruptions, and increased competition from nearby markets such as Rogue Valley, where vacancy rates remain comparatively low (**Exhibit 46**).

Exhibit 45. Industrial Lease and Vacancy, Ashland, 2007-2024



Source(s): Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Exhibit 46. Industrial Absorption and Deliveries, Ashland, 2010-2023



Source(s): Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Employment Lands Sufficiency Assessment

Background

OAR 660-038-0060 requires that cities maintain a buildable lands inventory within the UGB sufficient to accommodate the residential, employment and other urban uses such as public facilities, streets, parks and open space needed for a 20-year planning period.

Ashland's Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI), adopted in 2024, mapped net developable land supply by Comprehensive Plan and Zoning categories for the City and Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Along with the 2021 Housing Capacity Analysis, the BLI largely focused on residential land capacity and determined that sufficient supply exists to satisfy residential growth needs for housing units for the 20-year planning horizon.

This 2024-2025 Economic Opportunity Analysis update forecasts the demand for employment on commercial and industrial lands and utilizes the BLI to assess whether an adequate supply of land zoned for employment uses is available to meet this forecasted demand.

Methodology

Step 1. Supply
Isolate, extract, and further analyze the supply of buildable employment (commercial and industrial) land from the 2024 BLI.

Step 2. Demand
Using a detailed, customized employment data based on published sources including the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Oregon Employment Department, forecast employment in aggregate and by industry / land use is modeled and utilized to estimate land demand by category.

Step 3. Reconcile Supply with Demand
Supply of employment land is reconciled with demand in aggregate and by category.

Step 4. Site Types
A range of site types required to meet Ashland's forecast demand for employment land are explored and characterized.

Buildable Land Segments

Oregon statutes define Buildable Lands as "Residentially and commercially designated **vacant, partially vacant**, and, at the option of the local jurisdiction, **redevelopable** land within the urban growth boundary that is not severely constrained by natural hazards, (Statewide Planning Goal 7) or subject to natural resource protection measures (Statewide Planning Goals 5 and 15)."

For the BLI analysis conducted for this EOA, the following categories were defined and used;

Vacant: Vacant lots were those parcels that were free of improvements (structures) and were available for future residential or commercial development.[6]

Partially Vacant: In Commercially zoned lands, those parcels with additional undeveloped land area yet containing a building on a portion of the property were considered partially vacant.[7]

Ashland Employment Comp Plan / Zoning Categories

This analysis extracts and examines net buildable acreage (vacant and partially developed) for these five **"employment land"** Comprehensive Plan land use categories:

- **Commercial** (C-1) This district is designed to stabilize, improve and protect the characteristics of those areas providing commercial commodities and services.
- **Commercial-Downtown** (C-1-D) This district is an employment zone that allows retail, office, and other uses.
- **Employment (E-1)** The district is designed to provide for a variety of uses such as office, retail, or manufacturing in an aesthetic environment and having a minimal impact on surrounding uses.
- **Industrial District (M-1**) This district is designed to encourage sound industrial development in the City by providing a protective environment exclusively for such development.
- The **Croman Mill zone (CM-X)** is a group of large parcels of land in south Ashland that have their own set of design elements and permitted, special permitted, and conditional uses. The redevelopment plan for this site was passed by the Ashland City Council in August 2010 and includes a Croman Mill site specific land use code.

[6] *Other categories of vacant land were identified but excluded from net buildable supply, including vacant-unbuildable (due to physical constraints like floodplains and steep slopes); vacant - open space; vacant – parking; and vacant – parks. Vacant – airport may be discussed later.*
[7] *Publicly owned land and sites with slopes greater than 35% were not considered buildable. Commercial properties deemed "redevelopable" were included in "partially vacant" category.*

Supply of Employment Land

Summary of Buildable Lands Inventory

The 2024 BLI found a combined total area within Ashland's political boundaries (City + UGB) of **4,958 acres**. Of this, there was a total of **542 acres of "employment land"** (including Industrial, Commercial, Employment, Downtown Commercial, and Croman Mill Employment, Ind. & Mixed Use) found within the City and UGB.

A total of **630 net buildable acres** of land were found within the City and UGB that are developable across all Comprehensive Plan designations, out of a **gross buildable area of 985 acres**.

Exhibit 47. Total Net Buildable Acreage, Ashland and Urban Growth Boundary, 2024

Table 4 - Total Net Buildable acreage (V&PV) UGB & City Limits

BLI_STATUS	# of Parcels	Gross Acreage	Net Buildable Acres
Vacant	363	393	250
Partially Vacant	420	592.4	380.4
Vacant/Airport	10	115.2	per plan
Vacant/UnDevelopable	86	244.7	0
Vacant /Open Space or Park	411	619.1	0
Vacant /Parking	80	22.4	0

Source: Excerpted from Ashland Buildable Lands Inventory, 2024.

Public rights-of-way, parks/open space and civic uses accounted for 27.8% of the City's total gross acreage. The remaining land is classified as Residential (60.1%), Commercial (11.4%), and Industrial (0.4%).

Total Supply

Total **net buildable supply** for all **"employment land"** categories was **181 acres** per the 2024 BLI analyzed for this work. Net buildable supply is exclusive of constrained areas, such as steep slopes, wetlands, and special flood hazard areas. Gross buildable supply, including constrained areas, totaled 267 acres across 140 parcels.

The 2024 BLI found that most land supply was in the Employment land use category, comprising around 50% of the total buildable acreage, and Croman Mill, comprising another 33%. The least constrained parcels were in the

Industrial and Croman Mill designations. Industrial and Employment sites had the lowest built FARs generally. Downtown Commercial parcels represented a small fraction of supply, were heavily constrained, and had much higher FARs.

Exhibit 48. Developable and Redevelopable Employment Lands by Category, Ashland, 2024

Comp Plan Category	Number of Parcels	Gross Acreage	Net Buildable Acreage	Percent Constrained
Croman Mill (Employment, Ind. & MU)	13	85.7	61.1	29%
Downtown (Commercial)	8	2.9	0.44	85%
Employment	89	136.7	90	34%
Commercial	24	25.3	15.2	40%
Industrial	6	16.3	14.6	10%
Total	**140.0**	**266.9**	**181.3**	**32%**

Sources: Ashland Zoning Map, 2024; Ashland Future Land Use Map, 2024; CAI, 2024.

Supply Location

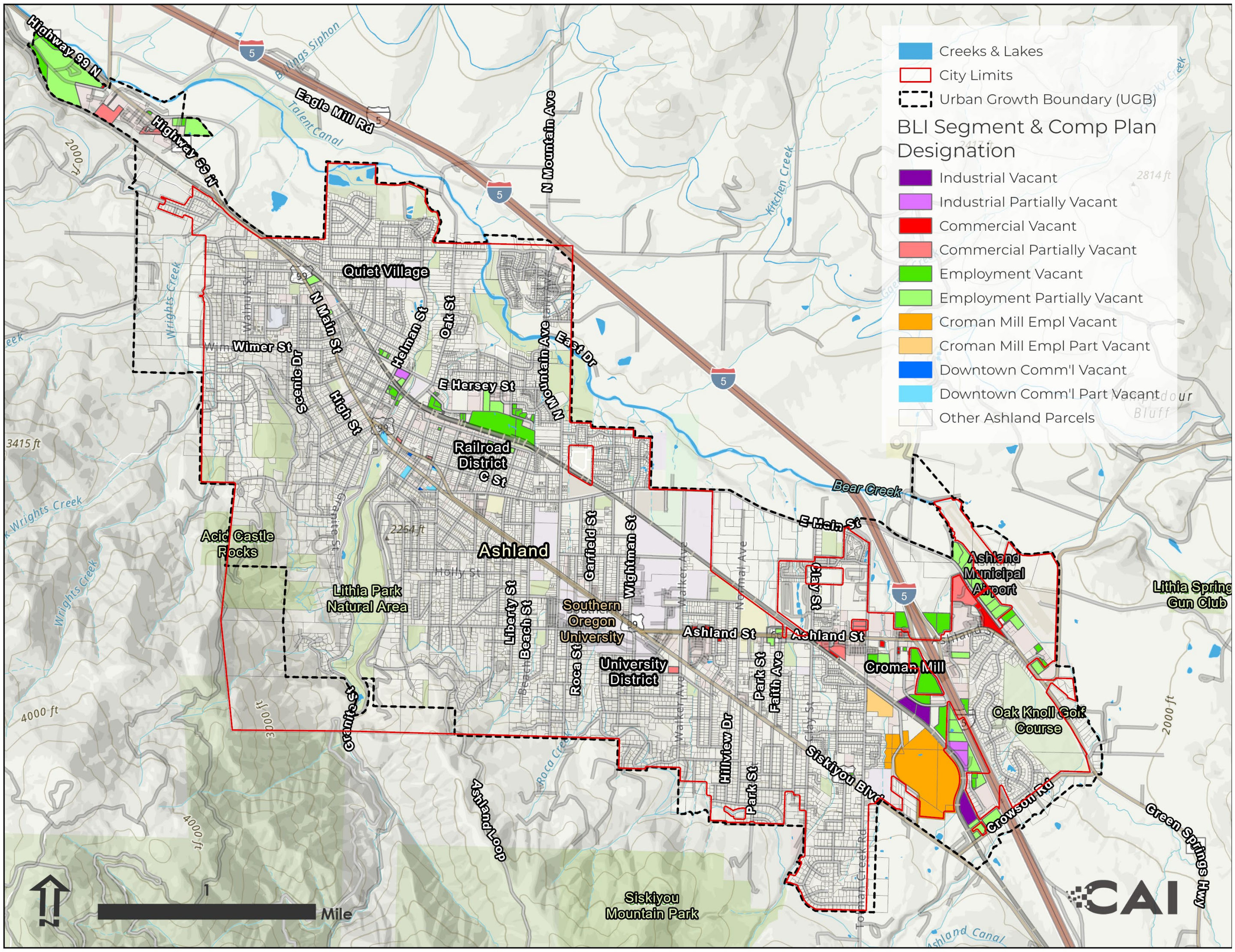
The 2024 BLI found that Ashland's current buildable employment land supply was located mainly in the City limits (69%, by net buildable acreage).

Most was located in southeast Ashland, and/or adjacent to the Central Oregon & Pacific railroad right of way.

Major nodes were located:

- South of the airport on Main St.;
- Along I-5 and the railroad line from Croman Mill down to Crowson;
- North of the Railroad District in central Ashland, and;
- Around Jackson Rd. and Hwy 99

Exhibit 49. Buildable Commercial and Industrial Lands Map, Ashland, 2024



Sources: Ashland Zoning Map, 2024; Ashland Future Land Use Map; CAI, 2025.

Short Term Supply

The Goal 9 Administrative Rule (OAR 660-009) includes provisions that require that cities within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) account for and ensure an adequate short-term supply of industrial and other employment lands for near term growth needs. As Ashland is within the Rogue Valley MPO, it is subject to this requirement.

Short term supply, per the administrative rules, refers to land that can be ready for construction in one year based on “engineering feasibility.” For this assessment, CAI and the City of Ashland have interpreted this to include a subset of sites within the above described overall employment land supply that:

- Have road access,
- Have minimal contamination or environmental constraints (or are undergoing remediation currently),
- And are served with basic infrastructure (stubbed at property or adjacent) including power, water, and sanitary sewer.

Per these criteria, the City of Ashland's **short term supply** of employment land sites amounts to a total of **21 parcels** comprising **101.3 acres** of land within the city and / or urban growth boundary. Key pieces of this short term supply include the Croman Mill employment sites, and the large Union Pacific E-1 site north of Downtown Ashland.

In particular, the Croman Mill employment sites identified in this inventory may satisfy this requirement, as all necessary utilities—water, sewer, and electricity—can be extended with the installation of internal streets and supporting infrastructure. While the site contains contaminated soil and requires environmental remediation, a cleanup proposal is currently under review by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

In addition to Croman Mill, the large E-1 site between A Street and Hersey owned by Union Pacific also meets the serviceability standard. It has an approved DEQ remediation plan, with cleanup expected to begin in the fall. Once completed, the site will support employment uses and potentially urban residential development. Approximately three acres of the property will remain under a vegetative cap due to residual contamination, which may require additional remediation if more intensive development is pursued.

All essential public facilities and services are available at the perimeter of both sites and can be extended through the properties as needed, which supports their classification as development-ready short term supply sites under Oregon's Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) framework.

For other industrial sites identified in the BLI south of the airport, no impediments were identified to the extension of infrastructure necessary to serve future development. Public facilities such as water, sewer, and transportation connections can be extended as needed in these locations to support employment uses.

In addition to current supply, the Rule requires cities within an MPO to make a commitment to provide a competitive short-term supply of land and establishes a target of 25% of total UGB employment land supply. As total employment land supply in Ashland amounts to 542 acres, a target of 25%

would represent **136 acres**. A "competitive" short term supply refers to having parcels in a range of sizes and designations to meet the needs of a variety of employers interested in locating or expanding in the city.

Forecasted Employment Land Demand

In this section, future commercial and industrial employment growth is modeled and converted into an approximation of land needed to accommodate this growth.

Total and industry sector growth is represented by a twenty-year private employment forecast for the Ashland UGB (2025-2045). This forecasted private employment growth is then mapped to generalized land use typologies (commercial and industrial) corresponding to Ashland's General Comprehensive Plan designations for employment land. Finally, demand for employment land is modeled based on local employment densities derived from existing land absorption patterns cross referenced with site-level employment data.

Forecasted Employment Growth

Forecasted employment growth by industry, given in **Exhibit 34**, is mapped to generalized land use types corresponding broadly to Ashland's employment lands Comprehensive Plan designations (**Exhibit 50**). By 2045, Ashland is forecasted to experience employment growth in the form of an estimated 1,343 jobs generally requiring commercial land and 59 jobs that generally require industrial land (**Exhibit 51**). Mapped land use categories are broad and site sufficiency is examined with greater precision in the subsequent section.

Exhibit 50. Mapping Employment Forecasts to Generalized Land Uses, Ashland, 2045

Industry	20 Year Growth	Generalized Land Use
Leisure & Hospitality	654	Commercial
Retail	(42)	Commercial
Health Care	422	Commercial
Construction, Resources & WTU	27	Industrial
Professsional & Business Services	112	Commercial
Manufacturing	12	Industrial
Other Services	67	Commercial
FIRE	165	Commercial
Information	(53)	Commercial
Wholesale	19	Industrial
Education	15	Commercial
Unclassified	3	Commercial
Total	**1,401**	

Sources: CAI, 2025.

Exhibit 51. Forecasted Employment by Generalized Land Use Types, Ashland, 2025 & 2045

Generalized Land Use	2025 Employment	2045 Employment	Employment Growth
Commercial	7,036	8,378	1,343
Industrial	1,608	1,667	59
Total	**8,644**	**10,045**	**1,401**

Sources: CAI, 2025.

For absorption of vacant land, this analysis converts forecast growth by land use to land demand using locally-derived **assumptions for employment density**. These density figures, in terms of **Employees Per Acre (EPA)** were calculated by dividing summed site-level employment data by total developed acres per category for Commercial, Commercial-Downtown, Employment, and Industrial sites. Though the small number of developed industrial sites (8) renders this data less reliable as a reference, other comparables from Medford and recent report commissioned on Croman Mill (by Jonson Economic), demonstrate consistent density findings.

Exhibit 52. Employment Density Metrics by Land Use Category, Ashland, 2025

Employment Comp Plan / Zoning Categories	Total 2025 Site Employment (Employees)	Developed 2025 Site Acreage (Ac)	Employment Density (EPA)
Commercial (C-1)	1,963	103	19.1
Commercial-Downtown (C-1-D)	1,201	13	92.4
Employment (E-1)	1,932	114	16.9
Croman Mill (NC, MU, OE, CI)	153	2	76.5
Industrial (M-1)	142	13	10.9
Total	**5,391**	**245**	**22.0**

Source: Jackson County Assessor, 2024; City of Ashland, 2025; ESRI Business Analyst, 2025; CAI, 2025.
Note: 500 employees for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, though technically based in Downtown Ashland, are in fact distributed and were removed from local employment totals.
Note: For additional reference, a 2023 report by Johnson Economics estimated an average employment density of 18 employees per acre (EPA) for the Croman Mill site with its projected mix of retail, office, industrial, and residential. The nearby Jackson County city of Medford was found to have an existing industrial employment density of 9.3 EPA across a much larger sampling of sites.

For **aggregate land demand**, 20-year employment growth (2025-2045) by generalized land use category (commercial and industrial) was converted using locally derived employment densities for generalized Commercial and Industrial use categories (**Exhibit 53**). Total aggregate land demand based upon this method was **76 acres** (net of any additional required acreage for ROWs, public facilities, etc.), including **70 acres of commercial** land and **5 acres of industrial** land.

Exhibit 53. Aggregate Land Demand Forecast, Ashland, 2045

Generalized Land Use	20 Year Growth	Employment Density (EPA)	Net Land Demand (Ac)
Commercial	1,343	19.1	70
Industrial	59	10.9	5
Total	**1,401**	**-**	**76**

Source: Jackson County Assessor, 2024; City of Ashland, 2025; ESRI Business Analyst, 2025; CAI, 2025.

Employment Lands Sufficiency

With a **total net buildable supply of 181 acres** of “employment lands”, and only **76 aggregate acres of demand** projected for industrial and commercial uses, Ashland has a likely **surplus of over 100 acres** within the City and UGB urbanized area.

But does Ashland have the right kind of sites? The following section examines **supply versus demand by category** more closely and **characterizes needed site types** in Ashland based on existing and historic patterns of land absorption.

Land Needed for Economic Growth

Exhibit 54 models one potential distribution of land demand given existing shares of current employment by land use / zoning category as applied to employment growth for the 20-year planning period (forecast at 1,401 new jobs by 2045). Croman Mill is likely significantly underestimated given assumptions based on current employment as the site has largely not yet been redeveloped.

Discounting Croman Mill, which is likely to see much greater future development, there could be a small deficit of commercial lands but surpluses of employment and industrial lands in Ashland currently. Since the E-1 category can accommodate many commercial uses, it is possible that the city of Ashland has sufficient supply to meet demand in all categories, possibly excepting Downtown Commercial.

Exhibit 54. Estimated Demand for Employment Land by Land Use Type, Ashland, 2025-2045

	Supply	Demand				
Comp Plan Category	**Net Buildable Acres**	**Current Employment (% of Total)**	**Share of 20-Year Job Growth**	**Employment Density (EPA)**	**Estimated Demand (Ac)**	**Surplus (Deficit)**
Commercial	15.2	22.7%	318	19.1	16.7	(1.5)
Downtown (Commercial)	0.44	13.9%	195	92.4	2.1	(1.7)
Employment	90	22.4%	313	16.9	18.5	71.5
Croman Mill (Employment, Ind. & MU)	61.1	1.8%	25	76.5	0.3	60.8
Industrial	14.6	1.6%	23	10.9	2.1	12.5
Total	**181.3**	**62%**	**874**		**39.7**	**141.6**

Sources: Jackson County Assessor, 2024; City of Ashland, 2025; ESRI Business Analyst, 2025; CAI, 2025. Note: Current employment totals do not sum to 100% because 38% of Ashland employment occurs outside of these zones, mainly on residential lands.

Land Sufficiency by Site Types

Exhibit 55 summarizes the number of vacant sites by size that are available for new development on employment lands in Ashland in 2025. In total, there are 140 sites available to support future land demand through 2045. The largest grouping of these are small sites of less than 0.5 acres (56). The next largest grouping are sites sized 1-5 acres. Few sites are larger than 5 acres (8) and even fewer are needed at the 20 acres or larger range (2). The largest proportion of sites is in the Employment land use category (89) with the next largest categories being commercial (24) and Croman Mill (13). These findings inform the following discussion of demand by category.

Exhibit 55. Land Supply by Site Size and Designation, Ashland, 2025

	Number of Vacant Tax Lots					
Comp Plan Category	Less than .5 ac	.5 to 1 ac	1-5 ac	5-20 ac	More than 20 ac	Total
Commercial	13	5	5	1	0	**24**
Downtown (Commercial)	5	3	0	0	0	**8**
Employment	37	13	35	3	1	**89**
Croman Mill (Employment, Ind. & MU)	1	2	5	4	1	**13**
Industrial	0	0	6	0	0	**6**
Total	**56**	**23**	**51**	**8**	**2**	**140**

Source(s): City of Ashland, 2025; Jackson County Assessor, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Commercial Zone

Site Statistics

- Number of Developed Parcels: **178**
- Mean (Average) Parcel Size: **0.58 acres**
- Median (Most Frequent) Parcel Size: **0.23 acres**

Ashland’s **Retail Commercial (C-1)** zone allows for a range of retail, food & beverage, and service uses, while generally speaking, manufacturing and industrial uses are not permitted unless they are small and contiguous to retailing. Mini-storage is not permitted. Office is permitted in commercial, employment, and industrial zones.

Three primary nodes of this zone encompass the area immediately surrounding Downtown Ashland, the highway commercial along Siskiyou / 99, and the larger format retail node around I-5 and Ashland / 66.

Ashland’s Retail Commercial (C-1) zone currently has a median (most frequent) developed site size of 0.23 acres. If current patterns of land consumption persist, this category will require around 17 aggregate acres of land, distributed across a range of site sizes, but predominantly small (less than 0.5 acre) size sites, which constitute 54% of all currently buildable Commercial sites.

Downtown Commercial Zone
Site Statistics

- Number of Developed Parcels: **77**
- Mean (Average) Parcel Size: **0.16 acres**
- Median (Most Frequent) Parcel Size: **0.12 acres**

Ashland's **Downtown Commercial (C-1-D)** zone aims to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment by permitting a mix of uses, including high-density housing, civic offices, and small-scale commercial, food and beverage, and retail businesses. It emphasizes mixed-use developments and encourages locally oriented professional and personal services. The zone is designed to foster a compact, transit-oriented area with public spaces, extensive landscaping, and shared parking.

This zone is the location of many of Ashland's Oregon Shakespeare Festival organizations (including the HQ of the festival itself) and supporting businesses and encompasses a compact zone in downtown Ashland.

Ashland's **Downtown Commercial (C-1-D)** zone currently has a median (most frequent) developed site size of 0.12 acres. If current patterns of land consumption generally continue, this category would required only around 2 more aggregate acres of land (given extremely small lot sizes and higher built FARs), distributed across a range of small site sizes, but predominantly less than 0.5 acre size sites, which constitute two-thirds of the eight currently buildable Downtown Commercial sites.

Employment Zone
Site Statistics

- Number of Developed Parcels: **214**
- Mean (Average) Parcel Size: **0.53 acres**
- Median (Most Frequent) Parcel Size: **0.26 acres**

Ashland's **Employment (E-1)** zone is designated to allow for various types of businesses, including office, retail, and manufacturing, while aiming for a visually appealing and minimally disruptive environment. Large nodes of E-1 exist along the railroad right-of-way (ROW) north of downtown, and south of the airport.

The **Employment category (E-1) is more inclusive** as it allows many commercial uses, in addition to office and some (lower impact) manufacturing and industrial uses. As such, the *E-1 zone could feasibly absorb demand for both commercial and industrial land.*

In E-1, retail is limited to 20,000 square feet (sf) per lot. Mini-storage is conditionally permitted. Marijuana retailing is conditionally permitted and limited to C-1 or E-1. Auto service and gas stations are permitted with conditions in C-1 and E-1.

Ashland's **Employment (E-1)** zone currently has a median (most frequent) developed site size of 0.26 acres and an average size of 0.53 acres. If current patterns of land consumption continue, this category will demand around 19 aggregate acres of land, distributed across a range of site sizes, but predominantly small and small-mid-size sites, which constitute 42% and 15% of currently buildable Employment sites.

Industrial Zone
Site Statistics

- Number of Developed Parcels: **8**
- Mean (Average) Parcel Size: **1.6 acres**
- Median (Most Frequent) Parcel Size: **1.6 acres**

Ashland has several industrial zoned areas and business parks designed to encourage business development. These areas offer a mix of infrastructure, zoning options, and potential for various industrial and commercial uses. Specifically, the Croman Mill Site, the Ashland Industrial Park, and IPCO Commercial Properties are key locations for industrial activity.

The **Industrial zone (M-1**) in Ashland allows for a range of general manufacturing, distribution, office and industrial uses, well-buffered from residential uses. Mini-storage is a permitted use here. Retail is limited to serving workers in the zone but restaurants are permitted.

Ashland's **Industrial (M-1)** zone currently has a median (most frequent) and average developed site size of 1.6 acres. If current patterns of land consumption continue, this category will demand around 2 more aggregate acres of land, most likely in the mid-size (1-5 ac) range, which constitute 100% of the currently buildable Industrial sites.

Summary of Findings

- This analysis finds that, with a **total net buildable supply of 181 acres** of "employment lands" and only **76 total acres of demand** projected for industrial and commercial uses, Ashland has a likely **surplus of over 100 acres** within the City and UGB urbanized area.
- However, **there may be a shortage of small, centrally located commercial sites.** While overall supply is sufficient, further analysis suggests a relative lack of small Downtown Commercial and mid-sized commercial sites. Some of this demand could be absorbed by surplus

E-1 employment lands; however, businesses that depend on visibility and foot traffic—such as those tied to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival—will continue to prefer prominent downtown locations. Improving pedestrian connectivity, signage, and branding between downtown and the northern E-1 node may help support business attraction in those areas.

- **Ownership dynamics may limit redevelopment of key opportunity sites.** The Croman Mill and Railroad District properties represent the city's largest groupings of buildable land, but lack of proactive ownership and incentives to sell have historically stalled redevelopment efforts.
- **There is capacity to accommodate stronger-than-forecasted employment growth.** If employment growth is greater than forecasts indicate in coming years, there will likely be sufficient land in Ashland to accommodate it given the surplus employment land supply identified within the City / UGB. In particular, certain segments within industrial – such as outdoor recreation manufacturing or craft food and beverage – may be worth consideration for targeted economic development efforts by Ashland to synergize with its evolving economic base.

Public Engagement

Following an inclusive engagement plan, reviewed by Ashland's Committee for Community Involvement, this project conducted several forms of engagement designed to speak directly with a diverse audience of stakeholders in Ashland and solicit insights into fundamental dynamics underlying the Ashland economy. These activities included interviews, focus groups, forums, a regional business and resident survey, and review of other engagement materials provided by the City of Ashland. This engagement summary reviews the findings identified through these activities.

Key Engagement Findings

Outreach Overview & Demographics

- Overall, the public survey received 472 responses from residents and businesses owners throughout Jackson County. 174 respondents live in Ashland, 125 work in Ashland, and 79 own or manage a business in Ashland. (Survey)
- The majority (67%) of Ashland respondents are over the age of 45, compared to 54% of total respondents. Only 4% of Ashland's respondents were 25 or younger. (Survey)
- 88% of respondents speak English only at home, while the remaining 12% speak some combination of English, Spanish, Mandarin and/or Russian. (Survey)
- 87% of respondents who identified as Ashland residents are permanent residents, while the rest have temporary housing, move often, or do not have stable housing in Ashland. (Survey)
- Of the 146 total businesses surveyed, 97 (66%) of them are small businesses with 4 or less employees. Of Ashland's businesses respondents (83), a similar majority (51 respondents, or 61% of Ashland's business respondents) also identified as small businesses (with 4 employees or less). (Survey)
- Just over half (52%) of Ashland's businesses represented in the survey have been in operation for over ten years. (Survey)
- 45% of Ashland business survey respondents report that their employees work full-time, 41% part-time and 14% seasonally. (Survey)
- The most common descriptors of the Ashland businesses surveyed were locally owned (91%), women-owned (48%), and family-owned (47%). (Survey)
- Interviews and focus groups included a diverse pool of stakeholders in Ashland, including City Councilors and Planning Commissioners, developers and property owners, major employers, the development

community, SOU students, and local business owners and residents. (Interviews)

Tourism and Economic Vitality

- Tourism is identified by Ashland survey respondents, and by interviewees, as Ashland's greatest economic asset (with an average rank of 4.0 out of 15), along with the Rogue Valley airport (4.4), Recreational Amenities (4.9), and Southern Oregon University (5.7). Tourism was also ranked highly in open-ended survey questions, with residents citing the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) and outdoor recreation as popular attractions. (Survey, Interviews)
- While survey respondents believe in the strength of Ashland's arts and tourism offerings, they hope for less focus to be paid to tourism and instead hope investment goes into lowering cost of living and supporting small businesses for year-round stability. (Survey)
- Both survey respondents and interviewed stakeholders believe tourism has a place in Ashland's economic future, but that more work needs to be done to diversify the tourism industry and create an economy that supports Ashland locals – in terms of livability and wages as well as service offerings. (Survey, Interviews)
- Ashland stakeholders are actively working to expand and refine a marketing approach which moves beyond the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to promote the city as a year-round destination that leverages its natural beauty, events, and quality of life. Stakeholders highlighted efforts to brand Ashland as a basecamp for Southern Oregon tourism, and one idea gaining traction is the concept of "Storytown USA," which aims to build on the city's narrative and cultural assets. This effort also includes expanding year-round events, targeting families and younger audiences, and promoting outdoor recreation and other cultural assets. (Interviews)
- Post-COVID changes in tourism also includes a shift to younger, outdoors focused visitors and away from traditional cultural institutions like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. (Interviews)
- Wildfire smoke, rising costs, and housing availability continue to pose significant threats to tourism viability and workforce stability. (Interviews)

Business Priorities

- There was strong consensus that Ashland must diversify its economy beyond tourism by supporting small-scale manufacturing, remote work, and creative industries. Stakeholders highlighted the need to leverage regional partnerships, underutilized infrastructure like AFN, and redevelopment sites such as Croman Mill to attract a broader mix of employers and improve economic resilience. (Interviews, Survey)

- Almost half (49%) of Ashland businesses respondents to the survey have plans to expand to additional locations, while 29% have no expansion plans, and 12% plan to expand their current location. (Survey)
- When Ashland business owners were asked in the survey to rank business challenges in order of importance, business owners, on average, ranked inflation, qualified employees, increased labor cost and unaffordable rents highest. (Survey)
- When asked about workforce challenges, Ashland's business owner survey respondents largely cited talent pool offerings (35%), wage expectations (32%) and skills gaps (28%) as primary employment discrepancies. (Survey)
- Ashland's survey respondents who are employers mentioned inflation (48%), real estate costs (32%) and labor costs (32%) as economic factors with the most significant impacts on their business. (Survey)
- When asked about Ashland's economy of the future, Ashland survey respondents describe support for local businesses and arts (29% of responses), a diversified economy (24%), and a lower cost of living (28%). (Survey)

Housing Affordability and Workforce

- Ashland's quality of life is a compelling draw for remote workers, entrepreneurs, and leadership talent; however, high housing costs, elevated development expenses, and a perceived resistance to growth limit the city's ability to attract and retain businesses. (Interviews)
- These same housing challenges affect workforce recruitment, prompting many employees to live in neighboring communities, forcing Ashland-based businesses to offer higher wages to offset commuting burdens. (Interviews)
- High housing costs, and lack of housing stock in Ashland was identified by stakeholders as a major barrier to attracting and retaining younger residents, SOU graduates, and essential workers, especially in healthcare, education, and service sectors. (Interviews)
- Workers state that Ashland is not perceived as accessible to families or moderate-income earners and that this effect is felt across many areas, such as school enrollment and neighborhood services. Similarly, when asked about barriers to equal access for economic opportunity in Ashland, 42% of survey responses cite cost of living and 21% of responses cite a lack of employers and opportunity. (Interviews, Survey)
- When prioritizing investments for economic development, Ashland survey respondents ranked jobs with livable wages and upward mobility as the top priority (receiving an average score of 8.1 out of the

possible 11, in which a higher number indicated higher priority), followed by small business support (7.7). (Survey)

- Major employers recommended increasing alignment between local institutions and industry to build workforce pipelines and support economic mobility. (Interviews)
- Ashland's AFN fiber-optic infrastructure was highlighted as a powerful but underutilized asset to support remote work and entrepreneurship in the tech sector. (Interviews)

Community Development and Future Growth

- Stakeholders broadly called for greater regional collaboration to leverage Ashland's unique cultural, educational, and natural assets as part of a cohesive Southern Oregon strategy. (Interviews)
- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of balancing Ashland's unique identity with the need for innovation and growth. Future development should honor Ashland's identity and support values expressed by the community. (Interviews)
- Ashland is widely perceived as a difficult place to develop, largely due to historic barriers such as unreliable permitting, high fees, and restrictive land use policies. While some stakeholders noted recent improvements, the city's historical reputation for regulatory hurdles and community resistance continues to deter investment, especially compared to more flexible neighboring cities. (Interviews)
- About half (53%) of Ashland survey respondents believe the local government to be "somewhat supportive" in helping businesses thrive, while 32% believe it is "not supportive" and 15% believe it is "very supportive". (Survey)
- Stakeholders envision a more vibrant, accessible, and visually cohesive downtown, but note the need for infrastructure investment and long-term planning. (Interviews)
- When asked if there was a different city Ashland might take lessons from, Ashland survey respondents cited locations across the globe including Boulder, Colorado (5 mentions) and Davis, California (5 mentions). However, over half of responses described other cities in Oregon, with 27 (about 30% of all mentions) listing Bend, Oregon as a city Ashland should work to emulate. (Survey)

SOU and Student Feedback

- Similar to other groups, students feel affordability in Ashland is a great barrier to their staying and succeeding in the community post-graduation. (Student Forum)
- Students value Ashland's walkability and natural beauty, but find entertainment and retail options limited—especially for those without cars or under 21. (Student Forum)

- Students desire a greater connection to the city of Ashland (and the region) through improved public transportation, expanded attractions, and inclusive, affordable events and activities that cater to younger, sober, and under-21 audiences. (Student Forum)
- The lack of high paying jobs and career development opportunities further discourage SOU students from envisioning careers in Ashland. (Student Forum)

Strategic Themes and Implications for Policy

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis

This SWOT analysis assesses Ashland's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. This list has been informed through data analysis completed as part of this EOA and further vetted and augmented through engagement with Ashland's stakeholders and community, and, finally, is supplemented by recent planning work surrounding Ashland economy including the 2022 Ashland Chamber of Commerce's Economic Diversification Study and Ashland's 2023 Housing Production Strategy.

Strengths

Strengths highlight internal advantages and positive attributes that contribute to Ashland's economic success.

- **High Quality of Life** – Natural beauty, walkability, safety, and strong cultural identity attract visitors, remote workers, and established professionals.
- **Vibrant Arts and Tourism Brand** – The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Cabaret Theatre, First Friday, and other arts/cultural assets position Ashland as a unique regional destination.
- **Educated, Engaged Community** – A highly educated resident base with strong civic pride and community involvement.
- **Strong Institutions** – Presence of SOU, high-performing public schools, and community-oriented organizations like Ashland's Chamber and Travel Ashland.
- **Fiber-Optic Infrastructure (AFN)** – Advanced internet infrastructure provides a solid base for remote work and digital entrepreneurship.
- **Distinctive Small-Town Character** – Ashland's historic charm and walkable downtown create a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere for residents, businesses, and visitors.

- **Strategic Interstate Access** – Location along Interstate-5 offers regional connectivity and logistical advantages for businesses, visitors, and talent movement.
- **Abundant Outdoor Recreation** – A well-loved park system, access to Bear Creek, mountain biking and ski trails, and nearby vineyards enhance quality of life and attract tourism and recreation-driven business.
- **A Niche Manufacturing Sector** – Local firms in medical devices, agricultural products, and green technology provide a foundation for light industry and economic diversification.
- **Publicly Owned Land Offers Additional Development Potential** – While not included in the formal buildable lands inventory, city- and SOU-owned properties present valuable opportunities for strategic development, partnerships, and community-serving projects.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses identifies internal challenges or limitations that hinder Ashland's economic progress.

- **High Cost of Living and Limited Housing Options** – Housing affordability limits workforce attraction and retention, student stay rates, and business growth.
- **Perceived Difficulty in Development** – Perceptions of regulatory complexity, high fees, and limited available land deter business expansion and investment in Ashland.
- **Over-Reliance on Tourism** – Seasonal fluctuations and vulnerability to external shocks (e.g., wildfire smoke, pandemics) threaten economic stability.
- **Weak Talent Retention Pipeline –** Disconnect between SOU, Ashland's school district, and local employers reduces youth retention and career pathway development.
- **Fragmented Economic Coordination –** Efforts across sectors and institutions are often siloed, making regional and intra-city collaboration harder to sustain.
- **Limited Investment in Infrastructure and Downtown Revitalization** – A lack of recent development and public or private reinvestment in the downtown core and key infrastructure assets may weaken Ashland's economic competitiveness and long-term vitality.
- **Insufficient Childcare Availability –** A shortage of affordable, accessible childcare options creates barriers to workforce participation and family retention.
- **Lack of Diversity in Ashland's Community** – Ashland's high cost of living contribute to limited racial, economic, and age diversity in the

city's population. Without housing and job options for younger residents, Ashland risks demographic and economic stagnation.
- **Cultural Resistance to Growth** – Some opposition among locals to new development, including housing and commercial uses, constrains progress and deepens barriers to affordability and economic renewal.
- **Declining School Enrollment** – Shrinking student populations are reducing funding and limiting the school district's ability to maintain robust academic and extracurricular offerings.
- **Limited Availability of Small and Mid-Sized Commercial Sites** – While some demand may be absorbed by surplus Employment (E-1) lands, there is a shortage of centrally located, smaller-scale commercial spaces with strong visibility and foot traffic—particularly for businesses serving the tourism and cultural sectors who might need a space in downtown.
- **Inactive Ownership of Key Redevelopment Sites** – The Croman Mill and Railroad properties represent Ashland's largest developable land holdings, but disengaged ownership and speculative holding patterns have stalled redevelopment and limited the city's ability to activate these strategic sites.

Opportunities

Opportunities explore external factors or trends that could be leveraged for growth or improvement in Ashland's economy.

- **Redevelop Strategic Sites** – Sites at Croman Mill, the Railroad, University District, and Downtown all have unique opportunities to develop in such a way as to add to Ashland's vibrancy.
- **Expand and Diversify Tourism Offerings –** Build on Ashland's arts and culture foundation by promoting year-round tourism through events like the Mystery and Comedy Festivals, expanded winter activities, and outdoor recreation experiences such as skiing, biking, and hiking. Strategies for Economic Diversification can also be found in Ashland's Chamber of Commerce's Economic Diversification study (2022).
- **Leverage Agritourism and Culinary Assets –** The Rogue Valley wine region, farm-to-table culture, and local food production industries offer growth opportunities in culinary tourism, food entrepreneurship, and value-added agriculture.
- **Diversify Beyond Tourism** – Encourage growth in Ashland's non-tourism sectors including education, healthcare, creative entrepreneurship, and niche manufacturing to build a more resilient local economy.
- **Grow Creative and Cultural Industries** – Support sectors that complement Ashland's identity, including film, digital arts, visual

arts, and culinary arts, to attract talent and expand economic opportunities.

- **Capitalize on Outdoor Recreation Economy** – Enhance Ashland's brand as an outdoor destination by investing in assets like Mt. Ashland Ski Area, trail systems, and nature-based events that can draw visitors beyond peak tourist seasons.
- **Support Expansion in Health and Wellness Sectors** – Advance growth in healthcare-adjacent industries, such as senior care, functional medicine, and integrative wellness, in alignment with regional trends and demographics.
- **Deepen Regional Partnerships** – Collaborate with neighbors, including Talent, Phoenix, and Medford, and with regional partners like SOREDI, to align workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investment.
- **Engage Younger and Diverse Populations** – Expand housing, employment, and civic opportunities for families, students, and younger professionals to foster long-term community vitality.
- **Elevate Ashland's Brand and Marketing Reach** – Leverage Ashland's identity to attract new residents, businesses, and investment through targeted branding and promotion focused on lifestyle, creativity, and inclusivity.
- **Attract Remote Workers and Lifestyle Migrants** – Position Ashland as a high-quality living destination for professionals and retirees relocating from urban areas, bringing investment, civic engagement, and economic stability.
- **Coordinate Housing and Employment Land Strategies for Mutual Benefit –** As the City continues to implement policies from the 2023 Housing Production Strategy, identify opportunities to simultaneously advance goals for commercial and employment land. Strategies such as increased residential allowances in employment zones, adaptive reuse, and tools like land banks or MUPTE can help support both housing production and vibrant, flexible mixed-use areas that contribute to Ashland's economic vitality.
- **Enhance Connectivity Between Downtown and E-1 Employment Areas –** Improve pedestrian access, wayfinding, and branding between the downtown core and northern commercial nodes to increase customer flow and visibility for businesses located outside the traditional retail core.
- **Expand Retail Flexibility Within Employment Zones –** Reevaluate retail use caps in select E-1 areas—such as the Oak Street/Clear Creek corridor—to allow for greater integration of customer-facing businesses and support mixed commercial activity near downtown.

Threats

Threats examine external challenges or risks that could negatively impact Ashland's goals.

- **Stagnant Population Growth** – Persistently low or negative population growth limits workforce availability, school enrollment, and the long-term sustainability of city services and local institutions.
- **Impacts from Climate Change** – Wildfire risk, poor air quality, extreme heat, and declining water availability threaten public health, economic activity, outdoor-oriented quality of life, and Ashland's appeal as a destination.
- **Regional Competition** – Neighboring communities offer lower costs of living, lower costs of development, easier permitting, and more industrial space, attracting businesses and talent that Ashland could lose.
- **Competition from Peer Communities** – Other small, arts-driven cities like Bend and Santa Fe compete with Ashland for tourists, arts funding, and business investment.
- **Limited Economic Resilience –** A narrow economic base anchored in tourism and cultural institutions leaves the city vulnerable to external shocks.
- **SOU Enrollment Has Not Recovered Post-COVID** – Southern Oregon University continues to experience lower student enrollment, reducing its economic and cultural contributions to the local community.
- **Rising Housing Costs from In-Migration –** An influx in high-income residents from out-of-state can further inflate housing prices and risk displacing local families.

Strategic Themes

1. Strengthen Economic Resilience Through Diversification

Ashland's economy is heavily reliant on tourism and service sectors, leaving it vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations, wildfires, cost of living challenges, and broader economic disruptions. There is interest expanding Ashland's tourism economy to attract more visitors at different times of the year, as well as to expand the sectors which are most active in Ashland. This could include light manufacturing, tech, food production, wellness, and specialty industries—particularly those aligned with Ashland's lifestyle values and small-town character.

2. Foster an Inclusive, Forward-Looking Community

Ashland's strong sense of place and cultural identity are major assets, but there is a tension between preserving what exists and adapting to future needs. Residents recognize the need to welcome new residents, businesses, and ideas to avoid economic and social stagnation. Embracing thoughtful growth—especially that which supports families, younger residents, and diverse voices—is seen as essential to keeping Ashland vibrant and relevant for future generations.

3. Unlock the Potential of Local Talent and Institutions

There is untapped opportunity to better connect local educational institutions—particularly SOU and Ashland High School—to economic development goals. Strategies could include efforts to build career pipelines, host internships, develop networking programs, and support entrepreneurship, especially in partnership with regional organizations.

4. Make Space for Business Growth

Ashland's built environment and development patterns could act as barriers to expansion. It is important to have flexible, ready-to-develop commercial and industrial space, as well as reasonable permitting costs and consistent regulations, to support economic growth. Sites such as the Croman Mill and the railroad properties are of strategic priority.

5. Build Regional Partnerships to Scale Impact

Ashland's economic future is closely tied to the broader Southern Oregon region, and stakeholders highlighted the need for deeper collaboration with neighboring cities, SOREDI, the SBDC, and workforce partners. Stronger alignment is needed on land use planning, workforce development, business support, and infrastructure investment—particularly to access larger labor pools, grow entrepreneurship, and compete for state and federal funding.

6. Activate Ashland's Lifestyle Advantage

Ashland's greatest strengths—its natural beauty, safety, walkability, cultural amenities, and robust fiber infrastructure—are clear economic assets that position the city to attract remote workers, lifestyle-driven entrepreneurs, and talent seeking high quality of life. By strategically leveraging these assets, Ashland can better align its economic development efforts to attract the types of businesses, visitors, residents, and workers that reflect its long-term vision and values.

Ashland Economic Opportunity Analysis
Outreach Summary

DRAFT Prepared by CAI
May 20, 2025

OVERVIEW

Purpose

This outreach summary presents the engagement activities and findings that informed Ashland's 2025 update to the Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA). In collaboration with the City, the project team prioritized inclusive outreach to ensure participation from individuals and businesses across a diverse geographic range within Ashland. Engagement efforts were designed to capture the perspectives of Ashland's residents, business community, government officials, partners, and a broad range of local leaders, following the guidelines set forth in the project's Inclusive Outreach Plan.

Engagement activities used a mix of in-person, virtual, and hybrid approaches. These included a public survey, distributed regionally, interviews and focus groups with Ashland stakeholders, an open forum with students at Southern Oregon University, and presentations to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Organization of this Report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- The **Key Findings** section summarizes the main themes and insights gathered across all engagement activities.
- The **Findings by Engagement Type** section describes each engagement activity and highlights the key takeaways from each.
- **Appendix A** provides the full list of survey questions and charts summarizing responses.

KEY FINDINGS

Outreach Overview & Demographics

- Overall, the public survey received 472 responses from residents and businesses owners throughout Jackson County. 174 respondents live in Ashland, 125 work in Ashland, and 79 own or manage a business in Ashland (**Exhibit 1) (Exhibit 2) (Exhibit 3**). (Survey)

- The majority (67%) of Ashland respondents are over the age of 45, compared to 54% of total respondents. Only 4% of Ashland's respondents were 25 or younger (**Exhibit 9**). (Survey)
- 88% of respondents speak English only at home, while the remaining 12% speak some combination of English, Spanish, Mandarin and/or Russian (**Exhibit 8**). (Survey)
- 87% of respondents who identified as Ashland residents are permanent residents, while the rest have temporary housing, move often, or do not have stable housing in Ashland (**Exhibit 4**). (Survey)
- Of the 146 total businesses surveyed, 97 (66%) of them are small businesses with 4 or less employees. Of Ashland's businesses respondents (83), a similar majority (51 respondents, or 61% of Ashland's business respondents) also identified as small businesses (with 4 employees or less). (Survey)
- Just over half (52%) of Ashland's businesses represented in the survey have been in operation for over ten years. (Survey)
- 45% of Ashland business survey respondents report that their employees work full-time, 41% part-time and 14% seasonally (**Exhibit 16**). (Survey)
- The most common descriptors of the Ashland businesses surveyed were locally owned (91%), women-owned (48%), and family-owned (47%) (**Exhibit 17**). (Survey)
- Interviews and focus groups included a diverse pool of stakeholders in Ashland, including City Councilors and Planning Commissioners, developers and property owners, major employers, the development community, SOU students, and local business owners and residents. (Interviews)

Tourism and Economic Vitality

- Tourism is identified by Ashland survey respondents, and by interviewees, as Ashland's greatest economic asset (with an average rank of 4.0 out of 15), along with the Rogue Valley airport (4.4), Recreational Amenities (4.9), and Southern Oregon University (5.7) (**Exhibit 24**). Tourism was also ranked highly in open-ended survey questions, with residents citing the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) and outdoor recreation as popular attractions. (Survey, Interviews)
- While survey respondents believe in the strength of Ashland's arts and tourism offerings, they hope for less focus to be paid to tourism and instead hope investment goes into lowering cost of living and supporting small businesses for year-round stability (**Exhibit 28).** (Survey)
- Both survey respondents and interviewed stakeholders believe tourism has a place in Ashland's economic future, but that more work needs to be done to diversify the tourism industry and create an

economy that supports Ashland locals – in terms of livability and wages as well as service offerings. (Survey, Interviews)

- Ashland stakeholders are actively working to expand and refine a marketing approach which moves beyond the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to promote the city as a year-round destination that leverages its natural beauty, events, and quality of life. Stakeholders highlighted efforts to brand Ashland as a basecamp for Southern Oregon tourism, and one idea gaining traction is the concept of "Storytown USA," which aims to build on the city's narrative and cultural assets. This effort also includes expanding year-round events, targeting families and younger audiences, and promoting outdoor recreation and other cultural assets. (Interviews)
- Post-COVID changes in tourism also includes a shift to younger, outdoors focused visitors and away from traditional cultural institutions like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. (Interviews)
- Wildfire smoke, rising costs, and housing availability continue to pose significant threats to tourism viability and workforce stability. (Interviews)

Business Priorities

- There was strong consensus that Ashland must diversify its economy beyond tourism by supporting small-scale manufacturing, remote work, and creative industries. Stakeholders highlighted the need to leverage regional partnerships, underutilized infrastructure like AFN, and redevelopment sites such as Croman Mill to attract a broader mix of employers and improve economic resilience. (Interviews, Survey)
- Almost half (49%) of Ashland businesses respondents to the survey have plans to expand to additional locations, while 29% have no expansion plans, and 12% plan to expand their current location (**Exhibit 18**). (Survey)
- When Ashland business owners were asked in the survey to rank business challenges in order of importance, business owners, on average, ranked inflation, qualified employees, increased labor cost and unaffordable rents highest (**Exhibit 19**). (Survey)
- When asked about workforce challenges, Ashland's business owner survey respondents largely cited talent pool offerings (35%), wage expectations (32%) and skills gaps (28%) as primary employment discrepancies (**Exhibit 20**). (Survey)
- Ashland's survey respondents who are employers mentioned inflation (48%), real estate costs (32%) and labor costs (32%) as economic factors with the most significant impacts on their business (**Exhibit 21**). (Survey)
- When asked about Ashland's economy of the future, Ashland survey respondents describe support for local businesses and arts (29% of

responses), a diversified economy (24%), and a lower cost of living (28%) (**Exhibit 29**). (Survey)

Housing Affordability and Workforce

- Ashland's quality of life is a compelling draw for remote workers, entrepreneurs, and leadership talent; however, high housing costs, elevated development expenses, and a perceived resistance to growth limit the city's ability to attract and retain businesses. (Interviews)
- These same housing challenges affect workforce recruitment, prompting many employees to live in neighboring communities, forcing Ashland-based businesses to offer higher wages to offset commuting burdens. (Interviews)
- High housing costs, and lack of housing stock in Ashland was identified by stakeholders as a major barrier to attracting and retaining younger residents, SOU graduates, and essential workers, especially in healthcare, education, and service sectors. (Interviews)
- Workers state that Ashland is not perceived as accessible to families or moderate-income earners and that this effect is felt across many areas, such as school enrollment and neighborhood services. Similarly, when asked about barriers to equal access for economic opportunity in Ashland, 42% of survey responses cite cost of living and 21% of responses cite a lack of employers and opportunity (**Exhibit 26**). (Interviews, Survey)
- When prioritizing investments for economic development, Ashland survey respondents ranked jobs with livable wages and upward mobility as the top priority (receiving an average score of 8.1 out of the possible 11, in which a higher number indicated higher priority), followed by small business support (7.7) (**Exhibit 27)**. (Survey)
- Major employers recommended increasing alignment between local institutions and industry to build workforce pipelines and support economic mobility. (Interviews)
- Ashland's AFN fiber-optic infrastructure was highlighted as a powerful but underutilized asset to support remote work and entrepreneurship in the tech sector. (Interviews)

Community Development and Future Growth

- Stakeholders broadly called for greater regional collaboration to leverage Ashland's unique cultural, educational, and natural assets as part of a cohesive Southern Oregon strategy. (Interviews)
- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of balancing Ashland's unique identity with the need for innovation and growth. Future development should honor Ashland's identity and support values expressed by the community. (Interviews)
- Ashland is widely perceived as a difficult place to develop, largely due to historic barriers such as unreliable permitting, high fees, and

restrictive land use policies. While some stakeholders noted recent improvements, the city's historical reputation for regulatory hurdles and community resistance continues to deter investment, especially compared to more flexible neighboring cities. (Interviews)

- About half (53%) of Ashland survey respondents believe the local government to be "somewhat supportive" in helping businesses thrive, while 32% believe it is "not supportive" and 15% believe it is "very supportive" (**Exhibit 25**). (Survey)
- Stakeholders envision a more vibrant, accessible, and visually cohesive downtown, but note the need for infrastructure investment and long-term planning. (Interviews)
- When asked if there was a different city Ashland might take lessons from, Ashland survey respondents cited locations across the globe including Boulder, Colorado (5 mentions) and Davis, California (5 mentions). However, over half of responses described other cities in Oregon, with 27 (about 30% of all mentions) listing Bend, Oregon as a city Ashland should work to emulate (**Exhibit 31**). (Survey)

SOU and Student Feedback

- Similar to other groups, students feel affordability in Ashland is a great barrier to their staying and succeeding in the community post-graduation. (Student Forum)
- Students value Ashland's walkability and natural beauty, but find entertainment and retail options limited—especially for those without cars or under 21. (Student Forum)
- Students desire a greater connection to the city of Ashland (and the region) through improved public transportation, expanded attractions, and inclusive, affordable events and activities that cater to younger, sober, and under-21 audiences. (Student Forum)
- The lack of high paying jobs and career development opportunities further discourage SOU students from envisioning careers in Ashland. (Student Forum)

Findings by Engagement Type

Business and Resident Survey

A public survey of businesses and residents was conducted to gather community's perspectives on Ashland's economic strengths, challenges, opportunities for growth as well as strategies to support a high quality of life for residents in Ashland. The survey, distributed regionally, also aimed to collect feedback on Ashland's economic role within the Rogue Valley and provides context which helps to shape a vision for the City's economic future.

CAI, in collaboration with the City of Medford and the City of Ashland, designed the survey and finally published it online on January 8th, 2025. The survey was offered in English and Spanish. The survey was accessible online, via QR code, and was mailed and emailed to existing distribution lists from the city communication department. The survey was closed March 5th, 2025. **Appendix A** includes the full list of survey questions and analysis of the responses to those questions.

Respondent Demographic Information

Overall, the public survey received 472 responses from residents and business owners throughout Jackson County. 174 respondents live in Ashland, 125 work in Ashland, and 79 own or manage a business in Ashland.

The following are additional characteristics of survey respondents:

- Of the 174 respondents who live in Ashland, 56% (98) work in Ashland. Of the 125 workers in Ashland, 78% (98) also live in Ashland. (**Exhibit 1)** (**Exhibit 3**)
- Of the 125 respondents who work in Ashland, 14 live in Medford and another 14 live in other areas in the Rogue Valley. **(Exhibit 2)**
- 87% of respondents who identified as Ashland residents are permanent residents, while the rest have temporary housing, move often, or do not have stable housing in Ashland. (**Exhibit 4**)
- Respondents who work in Ashland report mostly working full-time (67%), while 20% work part-time and 8% are retired. (**Exhibit 5)**
- 54% of Ashland respondents are female, compared to 41% reporting male and 4% as non-binary or other. (**Exhibit 6**)
- 88% of respondents speak English only at home, while the remaining 12% speak some combination of English, Spanish, Mandarin and/or Russian. (**Exhibit 8**)
- The majority (67%) of Ashland respondents are over the age of 45, compared to 54% of total respondents. Only 4% of Ashland's respondents were 25 or younger. (**Exhibit 9**)
- 63% of respondents reported a household income over $75,000, similar to the survey average of 64%. 6% of Ashland respondents reported making an income of $25,000 or less annually. (**Exhibit 10**)

Ashland's Business Respondents

A total of 146 survey respondents identified as an owner or manager of a business. 79 of these businesses were located within Ashland.

- Within the Ashland business community, 16% of businesses were in Retail Goods, 13% Professional Services, Arts and Food Services both 11%, and 10% in Lodging. (**Exhibit 13**)
- Just over half (53%) of Ashland business respondents have been operational for over ten years. (**Exhibit 14**)

- A majority of Ashland's business respondents (61%) operate with 4 employees or less). (**Exhibit 15**)
- 45% of Ashland business employees work full-time, 41% part-time and 14% seasonally. (**Exhibit 16**)
- The most common descriptors of the Ashland businesses surveyed were locally owned (91%), women-owned (48%), and family-owned (47%). (**Exhibit 17**)
- Almost half (49%) of Ashland businesses have plans to expand to additional locations, while 29% have no expansion plans, and 12% plan to expand their current location. (**Exhibit 18**)
- When Ashland business owners were asked to rank business challenges in order of importance, business owners, on average, ranked inflation, qualified employees, increased labor cost and unaffordable rents highest. (**Exhibit 19**)
- When asked about workforce challenges, Ashland business owners largely cited talent pool offerings (35%), wage expectations (32%) and skills gaps (28%) as primary employment discrepancies. (**Exhibit 20**)
- Ashland employers mentioned inflation (48%), real estate costs (32%) and labor costs (32%) as economic factors with the most significant impacts on their business. (**Exhibit 21**)
- When asked about other business challenges that may not have been covered by survey questions, Ashland business owners had a wide range of open-ended responses, with no issue mentioned by a majority of respondents. 21% of comments were regarding regulations, 16% included ideas for attractions and 14% expressed further need for small business support. (**Exhibit 22**)

Current Perceptions of Ashland

Survey respondents were asked multiple questions on the economic advantages, strengths and weaknesses currently affecting Ashland business and economic development.

- Ashland respondents saw Workforce Availability and Skill as some of Ashland's best economic advantages. (**Exhibit 23**)
- Tourism is identified by Ashland respondents as Ashland's greatest economic asset (with an average rank of 4.0 out of 15), along with the Rogue Valley airport (4.4), Recreational Amenities (4.9), and Southern Oregon University (5.7). (**Exhibit 24**)
- About half (53%) of Ashland respondents believe the local government to be "somewhat supportive" in helping businesses thrive, while 32% believe it is "not supportive" and 15% believe it is "very supportive" (**Exhibit 25)**
- When asked about barriers to equal access for economic opportunity in Ashland, 42% of responses cite cost of living and 21% of responses cite a lack of employers and opportunity. (**Exhibit 26**)

Visioning and Opportunities

Survey respondents were asked multiple questions regarding their vision for Ashland's future and opportunities present for improvement.

- When prioritizing investments for economic development, Ashland respondents ranked jobs with livable wages and upward mobility as the top priority (receiving an average score of 8.1 out of the possible 11, in which a higher number indicated higher priority), followed by small business support (7.7). (**Exhibit 27)**
- While respondents indicated they believe tourism currently to be an asset to the local economy, when asked an open ended question about changes and improvements in the business environment, 29% of responses describe a decreased focus on tourism. A further 25% discuss cost of living improvements. (**Exhibit 28)**
- When asked about Ashland's economy of the future, Ashland respondents describe support for local businesses and arts (29% of responses), a diversified economy (24%), and a lower cost of living (28%). (**Exhibit 29**)
- Similarly, many Ashland residents presented big ideas involving creating attractions and improving the local quality of life. (**Exhibit 30**)
- When asked if there was a different city Ashland might take lessons from, respondents cited locations across the globe. However, over half of responses described other cities in Oregon, with 27 mentioning Bend, Oregon as a strong model. (**Exhibit 31**)
- When asked if there was a different city Ashland might take lessons from, respondents cited locations across the globe including Boulder, Colorado (5 mentions) and Davis, California (5 mentions). However, over half of responses described other cities in Oregon, with 27 (about 30% of all mentions) listing Bend, Oregon as a city Ashland should work to emulate. (**Exhibit 31**)

Interviews and Focus Groups

This project engaged with many of Ashland's stakeholders through interviews and focus groups, gathering feedback about Ashland's economic strengths and challenges as well as asking about a vision of Ashland's economic future. Stakeholders represented the following major interest groups:

- Institutional Tourism
- City Leadership
- Business And Industry
- City Council
- Local Institutions
- Commercial Development

Notably, this effort included reaching out to several healthcare/social service businesses for engagement, but we did not receive any feedback. The summary below reflects key themes exploring the future of Ashland's economic development.

Economic Identity and Diversity

- **Stakeholders noted that post-COVID changes in tourism include a shift to younger, outdoors focused visitors and away from traditional cultural institutions like the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.** This shift has highlighted the city's reliance on tourism and brought concerns from stakeholders on economic vulnerability due to the current reliance on tourism revolving around OSF.
- **Both city employees and local economic leaders agree on the need for more economic diversity to support Ashland's long-term growth and an economy which flourishes through all four seasons of the year.** While tourism supports many local businesses, it also brings challenges like low wages, housing pressure, and economic vulnerability to seasonal trends and climate events. All stakeholders describe various opportunities and strategies to diversify Ashland's economy.
- **Experts in tourism focus on how to diversify the tourism industry in Ashland beyond the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to attract visitors with Ashland's other assets**, including ski trails, mountain biking and other recreational assets, and other events such as the Mystery Festival or a Comedy Festival.
- **Experts in Commercial Development and Industry emphasize the need to diversify the economy through local entrepreneurship and existing niche industries**. Participants pointed to specialty manufacturers and creative firms as growth areas that could help balance the economy. Some expressed concern that the city's identity and policy choices overly favor tourism at the expense of broader economic development. Other stakeholders explore diversification through investing in new industries for the city, including light manufacturing, green technology, and professional services. Still others suggest strategic targeting industries already growing in Ashland, such as healthcare, food processing, high end restaurants and retail services.
- **Multiple interviewees expressed how important it is for the city to align economic development in Ashland with their established values and identity, primarily around sustainability and environmentally friendly growth.**

Tourism in Ashland

- **Tourism remains the backbone of Ashland's economy, but stakeholders are actively working to broaden its appeal and stabilize it year-round**. Tourism stakeholders acknowledged that Ashland's economy is fundamentally dependent on tourism to sustain its density of restaurants, retail, and cultural venues. Most stakeholders are pursuing efforts to extend the visitor season through winter events, festivals, and new branding strategies that diversify tourism beyond OSF. Developing Ashland as a "basecamp" for Southern Oregon and targeting drive markets like Portland and Seattle are seen as key tactics for long-term sustainability.

- **Collaboration across tourism and business sectors is fragmented, and stronger coordination is needed to align efforts and scale impact.** While many groups and individuals are leading successful initiatives (Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Epic Ashland, Travel Ashland, being a few mentioned), participants noted that these efforts often happen in silos, missing opportunities for synergy. Participants called for shared infrastructure, communication, and cross-promotion to elevate Ashland's collective impact. Branding efforts like "Storytown USA" and event coordination may show promise, but require more leadership and investment to reach scale.
- **Ashland is making progress in attracting families and younger visitors, but infrastructure and perception challenges persist**. Stakeholders highlighted emerging family-friendly assets like beginner trails, ice cream shops, and events, but noted that more is needed to compete with peer destinations. Accessibility, parking, and wayfinding were cited as barriers for some visitors, especially older or disabled guests.
- **Wildfire smoke, rising costs, and housing availability continue to pose significant threats to tourism viability and workforce stability.** Although local fire conditions have improved recently, the unpredictability of regional smoke has shifted peak seasons and added financial risk. Employers are seeing increased interest from job seekers, but housing shortages and high costs remain major barriers to staffing, especially for seasonal or temporary workers. Participants expressed interest in promoting Ashland as a "fire-wise" destination and implementing resilience strategies to address long-term risks.
- **Stakeholders envision a more vibrant, accessible, and visually cohesive downtown, but note the need for infrastructure investment and long-term planning**. Participants called for improvements to streetscape, signage, lighting, and wayfinding—especially at gateways and downtown entry points. Existing issues like poor sidewalk ramps, outdated fixtures, and visual clutter were described as detracting from the visitor experience. There was shared interest in a clear 20-year plan to guide downtown revitalization and align with broader community growth goals.

Housing Affordability and Workforce Challenges

- **High housing costs were identified by stakeholders as a major barrier to attracting and retaining essential workers, especially in healthcare, education, and service sectors**. Most workers employed by Ashland-based firms commute from surrounding cities, which increases wage pressure and limits talent attraction. Some viewed housing as a regional issue, suggesting that improving public transit and commuter systems to more affordable towns and cities around Ashland could reduce strain on Ashland's housing stock.

- **High housing costs significantly impact SOU student retention in Ashland after graduation; despite interest in staying, many students are priced out of the local housing market.** This limits the city's ability to retain young, educated talent, undermines workforce development, and contributes to the growing disconnect between the student population and long-term community integration.
- **Stakeholders emphasized the urgent need for accessible, community-based housing for young families and workers.** Commuting into Ashland was seen as a significant detriment for business owners looking to hire entry level or lower paying positions. One example of this is the local hospitals, with interviewees sharing that even though the hospital system offers competitive wages, they have difficulty filling non-clinical roles that are vital for their operations.
- **Stakeholders differ on ideas to improve housing affordability.** Some believe that the Urban Growth Boundary and the state's land use laws pose a barrier, while others advocate for increased building incentives and more applicable local policy. Still others suggest that Ashland embrace a more regional approach to housing which relies on nearby communities like Talent and Phoenix to continue to provide affordable housing.
- **Ashland's high quality of life and natural beauty help attract leadership talent, but workforce recruitment is limited by housing costs and regional labor dynamics**. Manufacturing employers reported that most of their workers live in Medford, White City, or other nearby areas due to affordability. While Ashland appeals to executives and transplants seeking lifestyle benefits, recruiting younger or entry-level workers is more difficult. Cost of living and a lack of suitable housing for working-age residents and families were frequently cited as barriers to worker retention as well.
- **Employers recommended increasing alignment between local institutions and industry to build workforce pipelines and support economic mobility.** Participants noted a disconnect between SOU, Ashland High School, and the region's employers, with few internships, job fairs, or training partnerships. There was interest in collaborating with education partners to support career exploration and skill-building at the local level. On-the-job training and entry-level pathways were seen as viable if institutional partnerships could be strengthened.

Infrastructure, Land Use, and Development

- **Ashland's limited manufacturing base and constrained space hinder industry growth, prompting many companies to expand in other regional cities.** White City and Medford were repeatedly cited as more viable locations for industrial or business expansion due to cheaper land, less regulation, and a larger labor pool. Businesses saw Ashland as an excellent headquarters for culture and leadership, but not as the primary site for production or scaling. The lack of large, ready-to-develop sites, and the cost of retrofitting older buildings, were barriers to growing Ashland's industrial footprint.

- **Ashland is often viewed as difficult to build and do business in, due to restrictive state land-use laws and a complex permitting process.** Stakeholders criticized these regulatory hurdles as discouraging both industrial and commercial investment. Others noted that this process has improved in recent years, but historical perception bears a heavy influence.
- **Suggested opportunities for redevelopment** include unused areas like the Croman Mill site and the railroad district, which could be turned into light industrial zones, business incubators, or mixed-use developments. Stakeholders highlighted Croman Mill as a major opportunity for new housing, employment, or campus-style development, but cited infrastructure and cleanup hurdles like the area's special planning requirements and remaining environmental remediation needs. Participants suggested reviewing zoning and flexibility tools and tapping state/federal programs to make these sites development-ready.
- **Ashland's AFN fiber-optic infrastructure was highlighted as a powerful but underutilized asset to support remote work and entrepreneurship in the tech sector.**
- Stakeholders believe that **current development incentives from Ashland and Oregon, may be underutilized** or mismatched relative to local demand. For example, there are many incentives to build mixed-use developments, but they do not offset the cost of building enough to lower the cost of rent. Mixed-use development is considered desirable but financially infeasible under current market conditions and incentive structures. Participants said that construction and operational costs for mixed-use buildings remain too high relative to local demand for space, while incentives such as abatements or zone overlays were viewed as insufficient to close the cost gap or offset risk. Seismic retrofits, elevator requirements, and lack of density demand were noted as additional constraints.
- Participants emphasized the need to **support and retain existing small businesses, especially those seeking to improve or adapt properties**. Stakeholders said that even modest upgrades can trigger expensive code compliance issues, which disproportionately impact small business owners. Supporting reinvestment in older buildings and providing technical assistance or fee relief were suggested approaches.

Community Health

- **For multiple stakeholders, mental health and emotional well-being emerged as foundational concerns across sectors.** SOU data showing mental health as the top reason students drop out, rather than academic performance. Business leaders noted similar challenges in workforce retention at regional employers.
- **Stakeholders called for investments in community wellness infrastructure and policies that support emotional resilience.** There is

a strong emphasis on the idea that economic development must include social and emotional health as part of a comprehensive strategy.

Regionalism and Community Collaboration

- **There is strong support among stakeholders for increased collaboration across cities, sectors, and institutions to promote shared regional economic goals.** Stakeholders emphasized partnerships with organizations like SOREDI and nearby communities as essential to Ashland's future economic resilience. SOU's President's Employers Roundtable was cited as an effective model for aligning educational outcomes with workforce needs and long-term planning efforts.
- **Stakeholders broadly called for sustained regional dialogue and coordination to better leverage Ashland's unique cultural, educational, and natural assets as part of a cohesive Southern Oregon strategy.** Local institutions are actively engaged in fostering cross-sector cooperation, such as the Chamber of Commerce's ongoing partnerships with SOU, the City of Ashland, and local development groups.
- **When it comes to supporting business, several participants expressed a need for stronger business-to-business networking and mentorship to support local entrepreneurship and industry growth**. Stakeholders shared that they were often unaware of other businesses operating in Ashland and saw value in creating sector-specific meetups or forums. Support organizations like SOREDI and the Chamber were appreciated, but businesses called for deeper peer-to-peer connections and practical resources. Mentorship opportunities for new or scaling businesses were highlighted as a key gap.

Community Character and Change

- **Stakeholders emphasized the importance of balancing Ashland's unique identity with the need for innovation and growth.** While there was recognition of the city's strong cultural, environmental, and aesthetic character, there was also agreement that thoughtful, value-aligned development is essential for long-term sustainability. Developers and land owners believe that form-based development standards and community development fees may add to Ashland's character and desirability, but also wonder if it adds costs to projects – costs they wouldn't face in nearby areas.
- **Stakeholders encouraged a "yes, and" approach, which focused on supporting growth that complements rather than compromises Ashland's distinct character.** The proposed university district, integrating senior living, student housing, retail, and public amenities, was cited as a model for multi-purpose development that serves diverse community needs.
- **There was a unified call for smart, intentional growth guided by shared community values and a long-term vision, ensuring that Ashland evolves without losing what makes it special.** Participants took pride in Ashland's distinct identity and expressed a desire to see future

development enhance—rather than erode—the city's sense of place, character, and connection to the natural environment.

Southern Oregon University Student Forum

This pop-up event, hosted at the SOU Student Union, included a discussion with 12 Students from SOU. The diverse group of participants included 5 freshman, 1 sophomore, 4 juniors and 2 seniors. The students represented majors in Sustainability, Economics, Music, Political Science, Communications, Chemistry, Education, Sociology, Business, and Computer Science.

The discussion explored challenges and opportunities that students experience living, studying and working in Ashland as well as a vision for the future of Ashland's economy.

Opportunities

- Students appreciate Ashland's natural beauty, small-town charm, and easy access to hiking and outdoor recreation.
- Many students chose SOU specifically because of the walkable environment and scenic setting.
- SOU has strong community ties; faculty help connect students to internships and local job opportunities. Professors were praised for helping connect students with opportunities, however, these connections were often limited to university-related networks.
- Students value the arts and culture scene, though some find it intimidating or inaccessible.
- Interest in youth-friendly activities, such as go-karts, non-alcoholic events, and expanded public gatherings. Students pointed out a lack of indoor, non-alcohol-centric venues and wanted more variety in affordable entertainment options. Existing programs like Open Mic or First Friday were appreciated, but not widely known or accessible. Students called for better promotion and earlier timing of events to increase participation.

Challenges

- The students perceive that Ashland's local economy is geared more toward retirees and tourists than young professionals, making it difficult for students to envision their life after graduation in Ashland. The cost of living and constrained job market pushed students to look elsewhere for their next steps
- Several students described Ashland as unaffordable, particularly when starting out in their careers. Others noted a lack of entry-level or industry-aligned job opportunities outside the university.
- Students noted that there are few job opportunities in economics, STEM fields, and limited networking or career development events. The perception that SOU and Ashland are heavily arts-focused is accompanied by limited pathways in other fields like physics, economics, or agriculture. Opportunities

in food systems, especially processing infrastructure, were described as underdeveloped despite a strong local agricultural base.

- There was a perceived disconnect between SOU and the broader Ashland community; students often identify more with the university than the town. This lack of broader community integration reduces students' interest in staying after graduation.
- This disconnect was partially due to a lack of activities for their age demographic, particularly for those under 21. Students without cars also often felt isolated on campus, as the local public transportation is insufficient for reaching Medford or grocery stores in the surrounding region (while the Route 10 bus was praised, many said it wasn't a viable substitute for accessing Medford regularly). Limited shopping hours, entertainment options geared toward older adults, and a lack of youth-oriented venues were also seen as barriers to fully enjoying the city.
- Some students, with expertise in agriculture, voiced concerns about long-term sustainability of local farming and the lack of mid-chain processing facilities in Ashland.

City Council and Planning Commission

Ashland's Planning Commission reviewed the Inclusive Engagement Plan which directed the engagement conducted in support of the Economic Opportunity Analysis. This is the engagement described in this engagement summary.

Preliminary findings, including analysis of the Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI), economic forecasts, and emerging community priorities, were presented to the Planning Commission and the City Council of Ashland in person on April 22, 2025 at a Joint Session. Discussion at the session included feedback on the direction of the project, and discussion on strategic elements including concerns about limited available land controlled by a few major owners, and the untapped potential in redevelopment, city-owned parcels, and underutilized properties. Demographic shifts, including an aging population and fewer families, also raised important workforce and housing challenges that are of interest to both parties

Upcoming presentations will present the draft complete Economic Opportunity Analysis Report. These include a virtual presentation to the Planning Commission on 5/27/25 and an in-person presentation to City Council on June 3rd.

Appendix A: Survey Results

About the Respondent

Exhibit 1. Where do you live? (Survey Total, All Respondents)

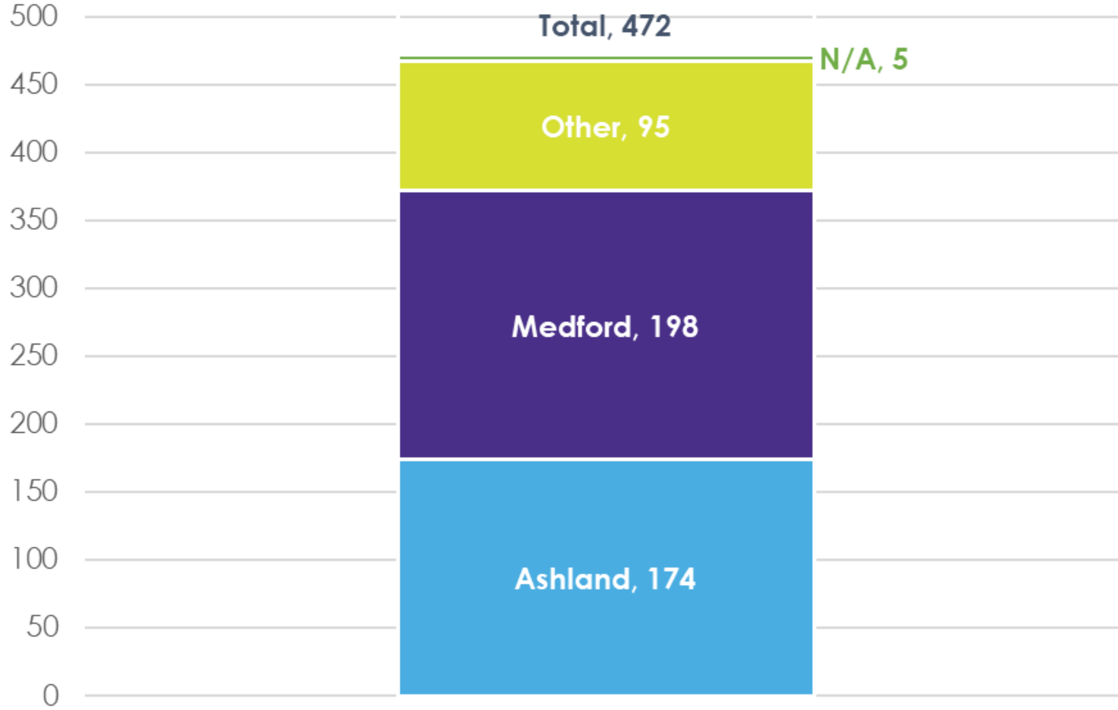


Exhibit 2. Where do you work? (Survey Total, All Respondents)

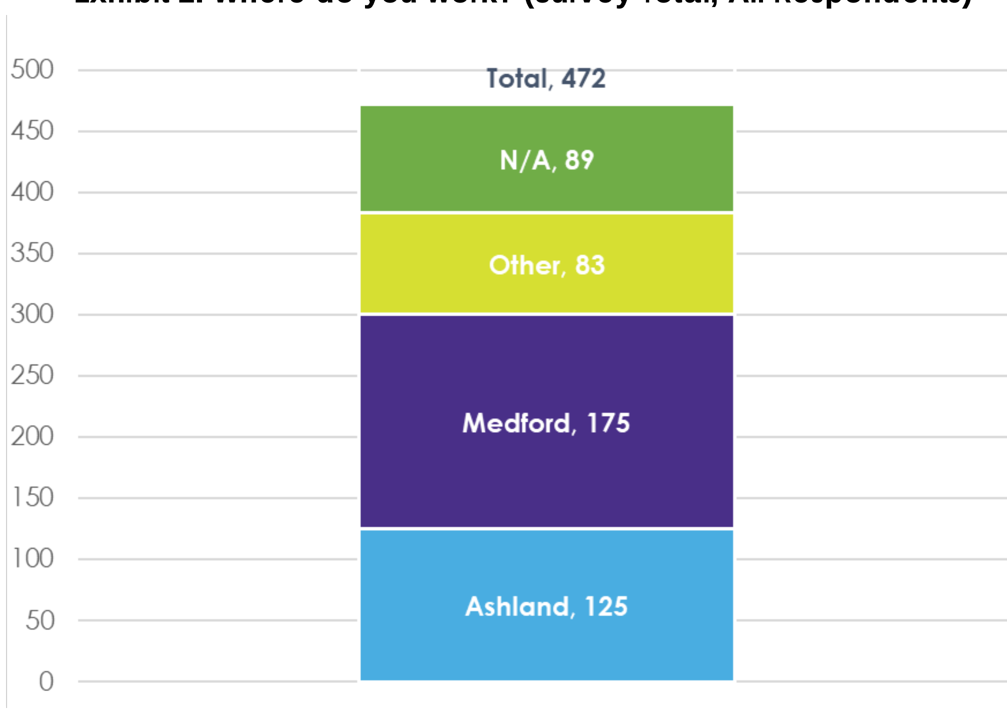


Exhibit 3. Ashland Resident Working Location vs Ashland Worker Living Location, 2025 (Ashland Residents and Ashland Workers)

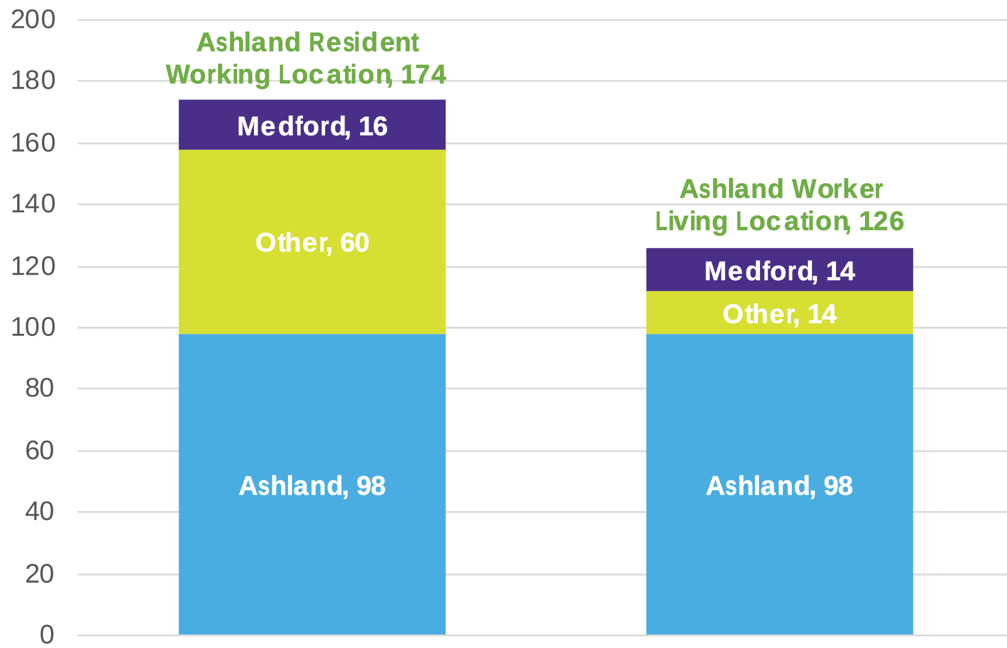


Exhibit 4. What is your living situation? (Ashland Residents Only)

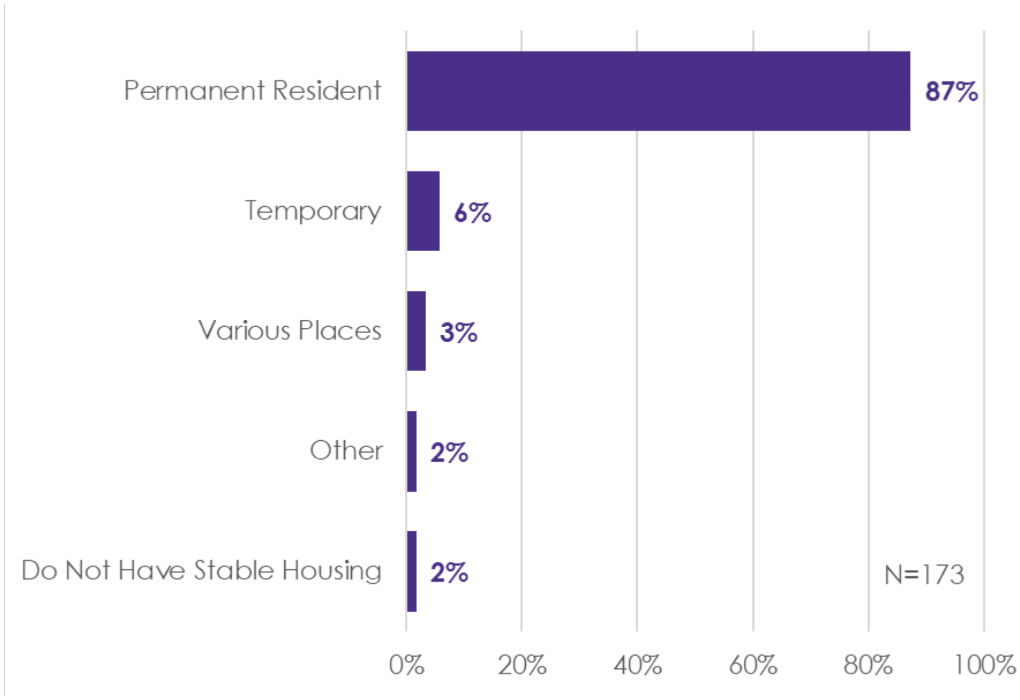
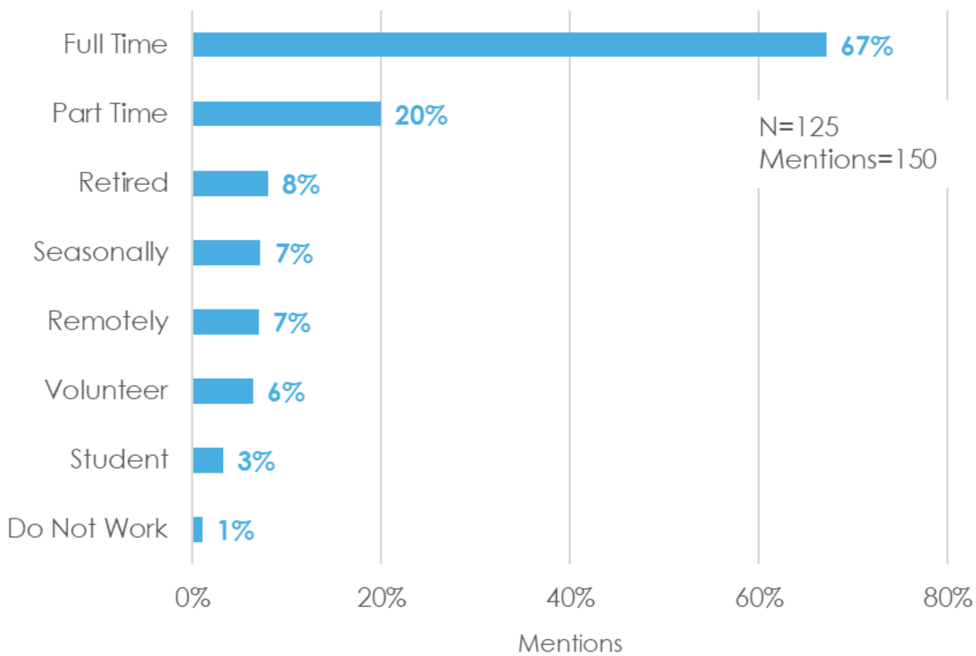


Exhibit 5.What is your work situation? (Ashland Workers Only)



Respondent Demographics

Exhibit 6. What is your gender? (Survey Total, Ashland Respondents)

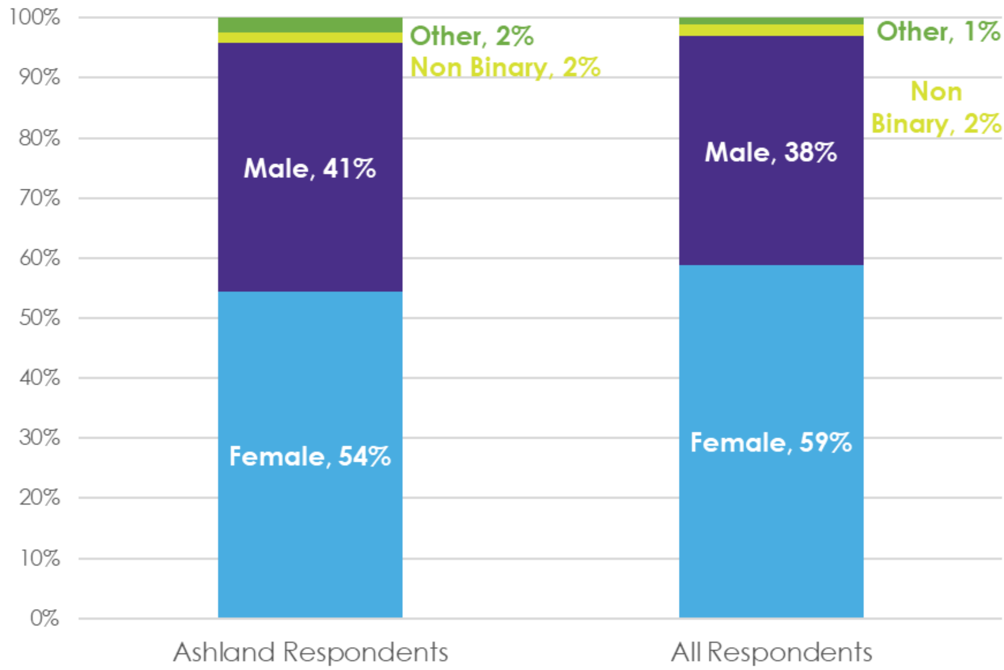


Exhibit 7.What is your race / ethnicity? (Survey Total, Ashland Respondents)

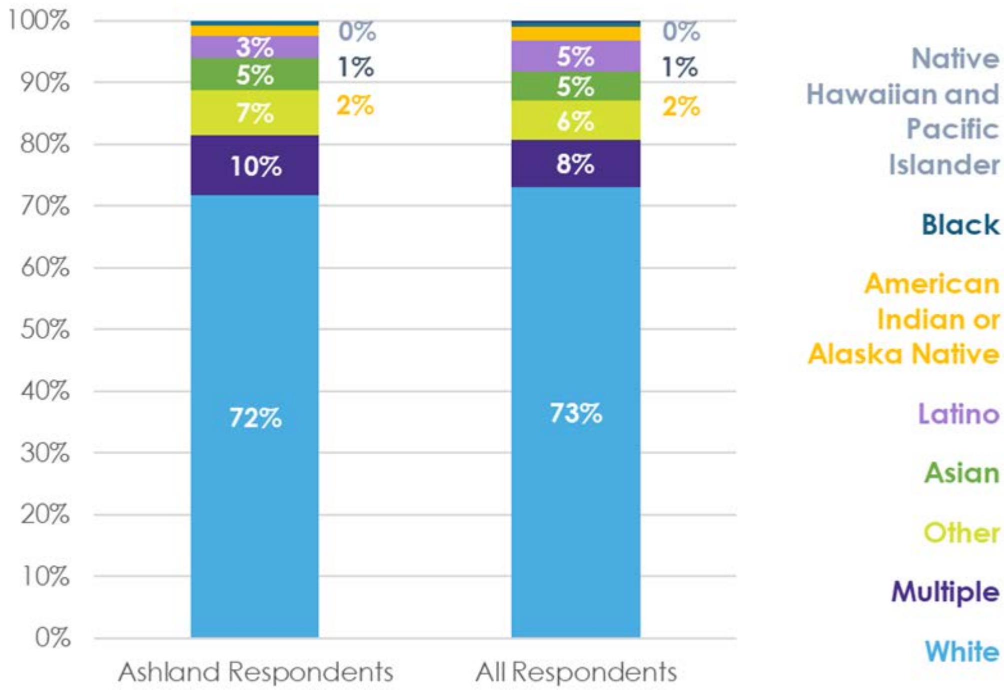
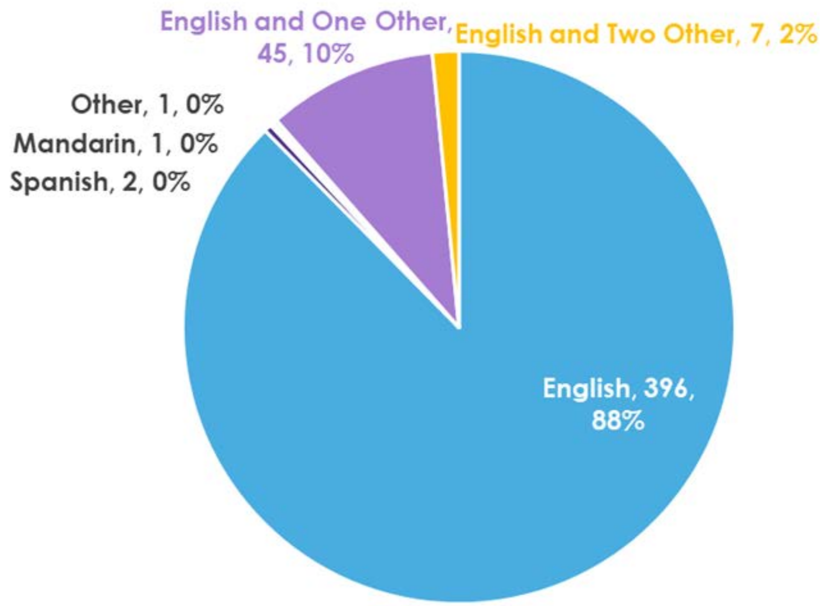


Exhibit 8. What language(s) is / are spoken at your home? (Survey Total)



Other languages spoken at home included Spanish, Mandarin and Russian.

Exhibit 9. What is your age? (Survey Total, Ashland Respondents)

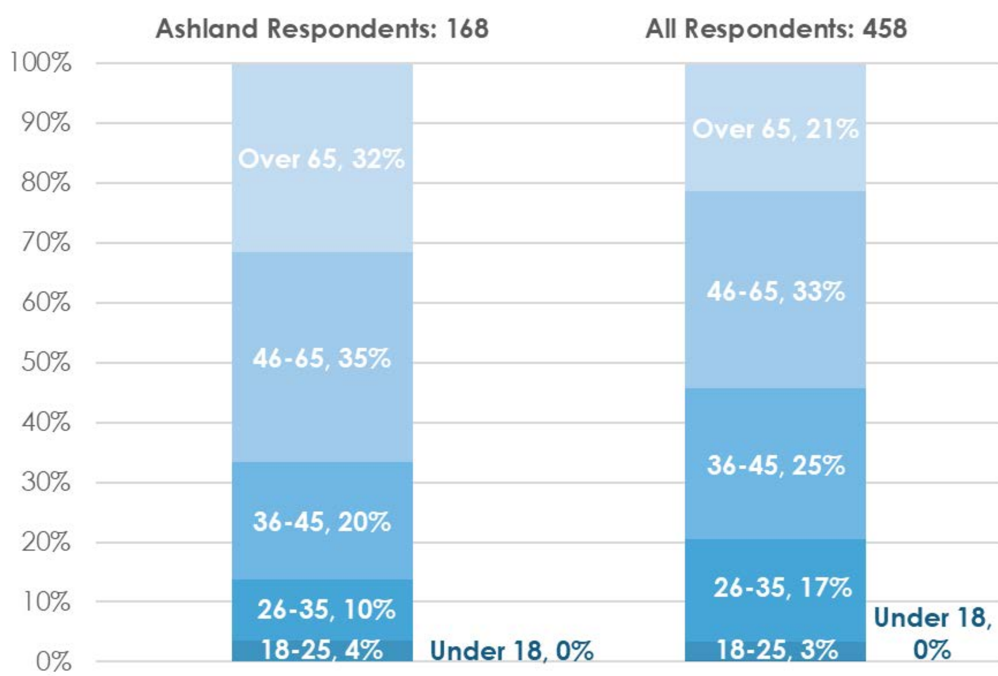


Exhibit 10. What is your household income? (Survey Total, Ashland Respondents)


100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
More than $200,000, 12%
$100,000 - 200,000, 30%
$75,000 - $100,000, 21%
$50,000-$75,000, 14%
$25,000-$50,000, 17%
Less Than $25,000, 6%
More than $200,000, 12%
$100,000 - 200,000, 32%
$75,000 - $100,000, 20%
$50,000-$75,000, 15%
$25,000-$50,000, 15%
Less Than $25,000, 6%
Ashland Respondents (N=156)
Survey Total (N=433)

Local Business Demographics

Exhibit 11. Are you a business owner (or otherwise representing a business-interest)? (Survey Total)

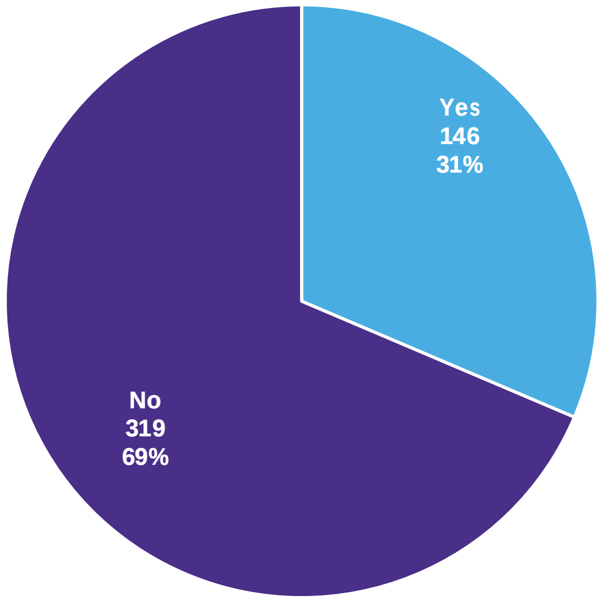


Exhibit 12. Where is your business located? (Survey Total)

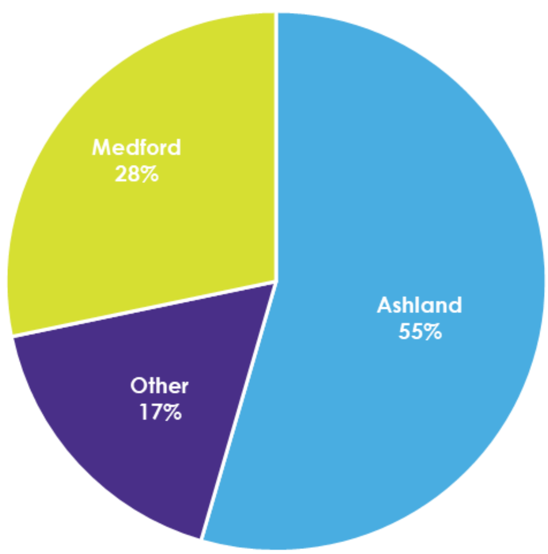
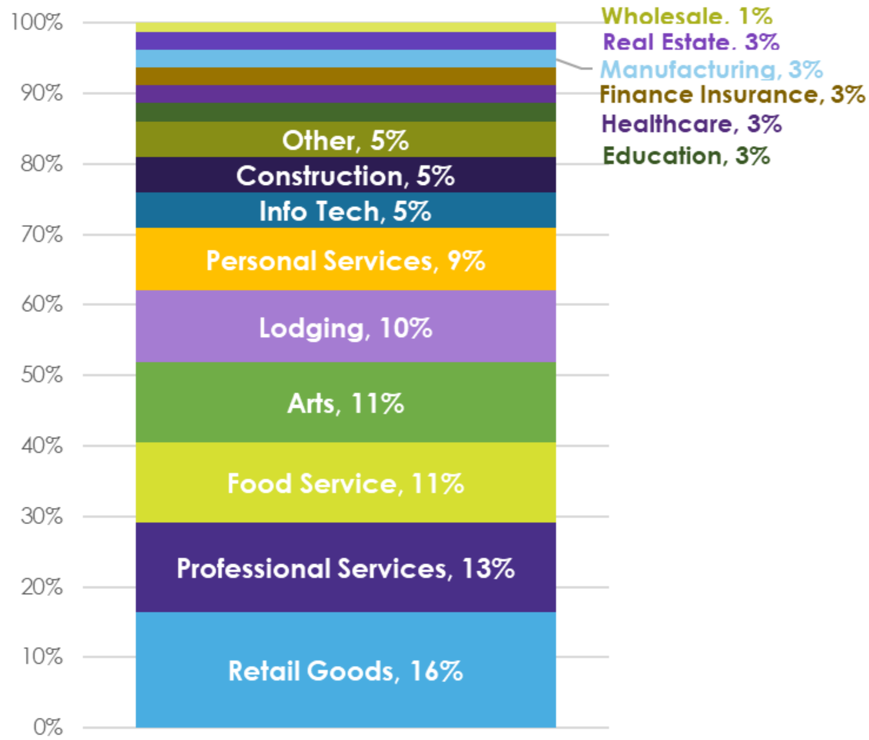


Exhibit 13. What industry does your business operate in? (Ashland Business Respondents) (N=79)



Source: Survey, 2025; CAI 2025

Exhibit 14. How long has your business been in operation? (Survey Total Business Respondents, Ashland Business Respondents)

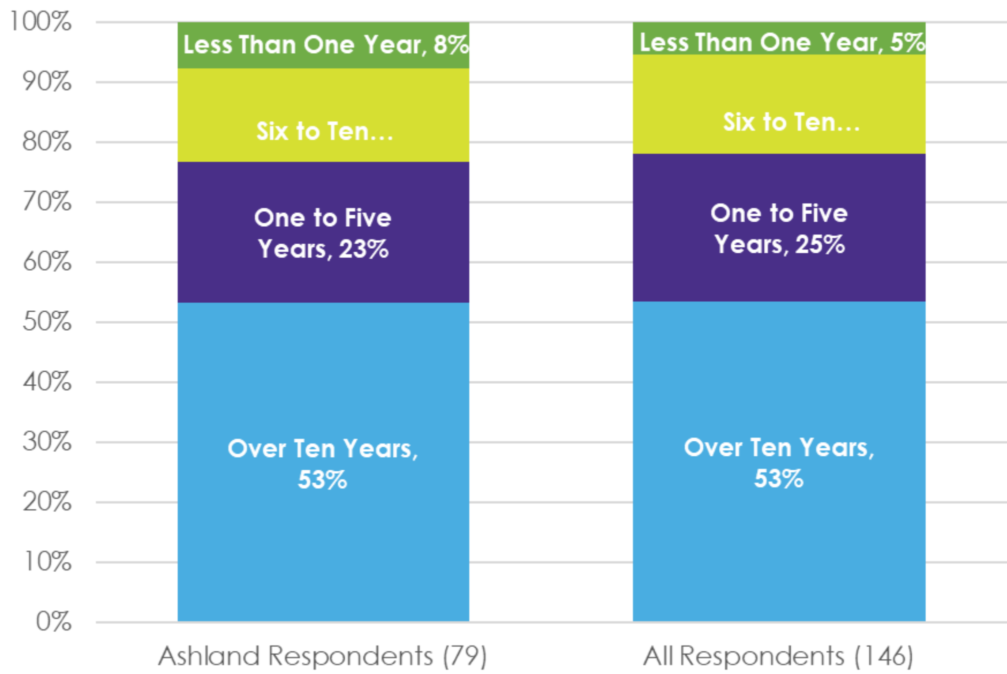


Exhibit 15. How many employees do you have (Survey Total Business Respondents, Ashland Business Respondents)

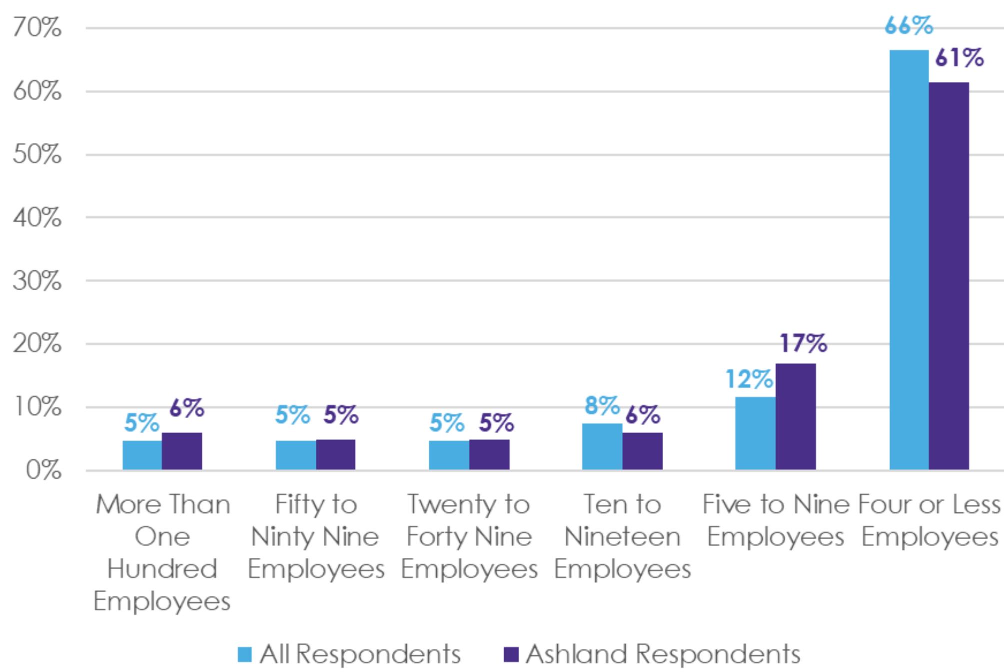
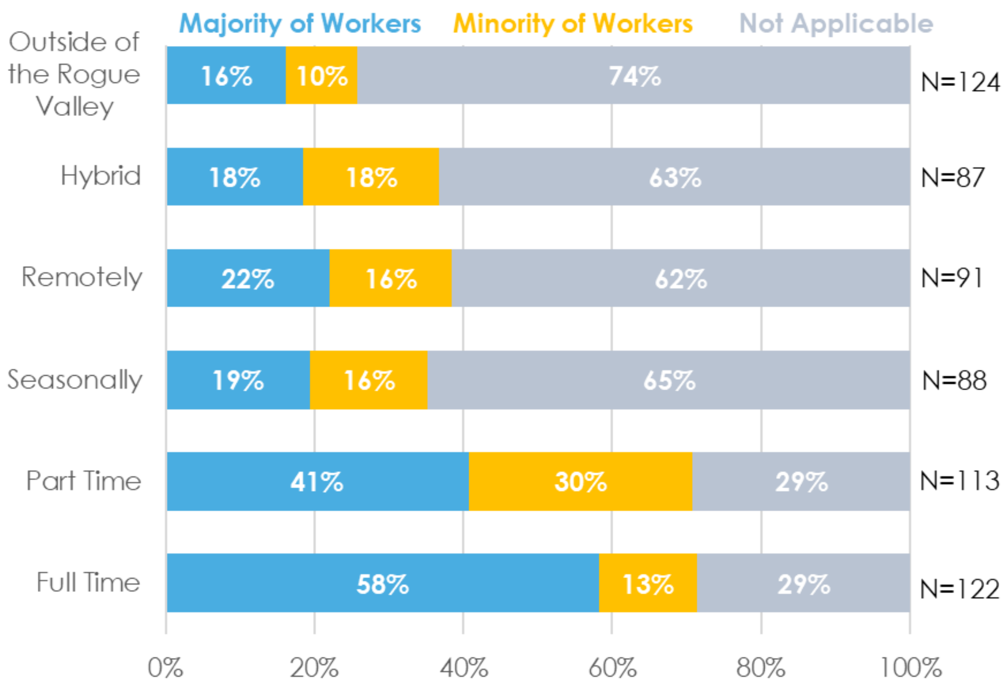


Exhibit 16. Approximately what proportion of your employees work full time, part time, seasonally, remotely, hybrid, and/or outside of the Rogue Valley? (All Business Respondents)



(Ashland Businesses Only)

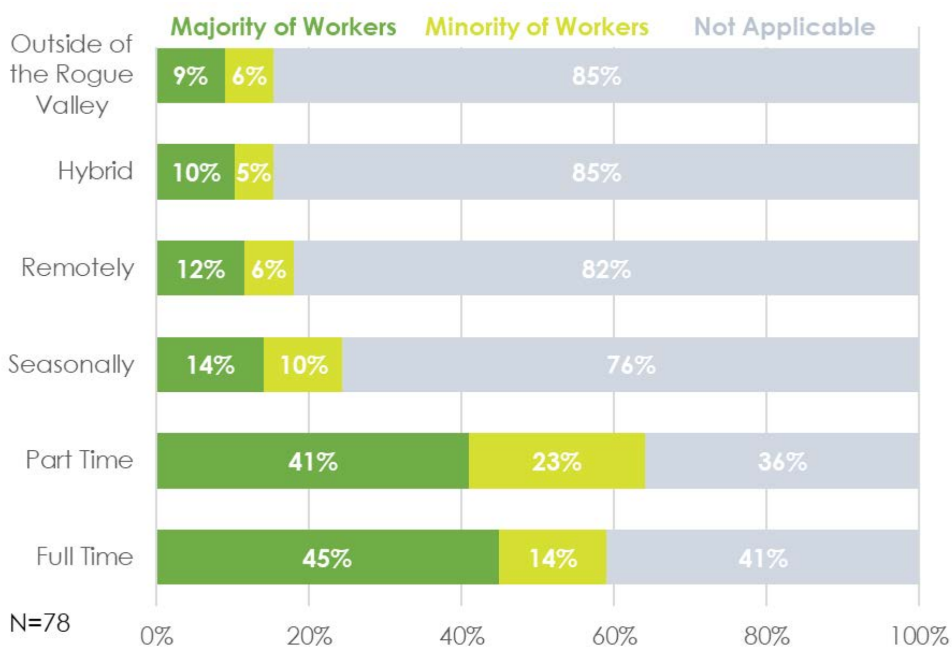


Exhibit 17. Select all that apply to your business: (Survey Total Business Respondents, Ashland Business Respondents)

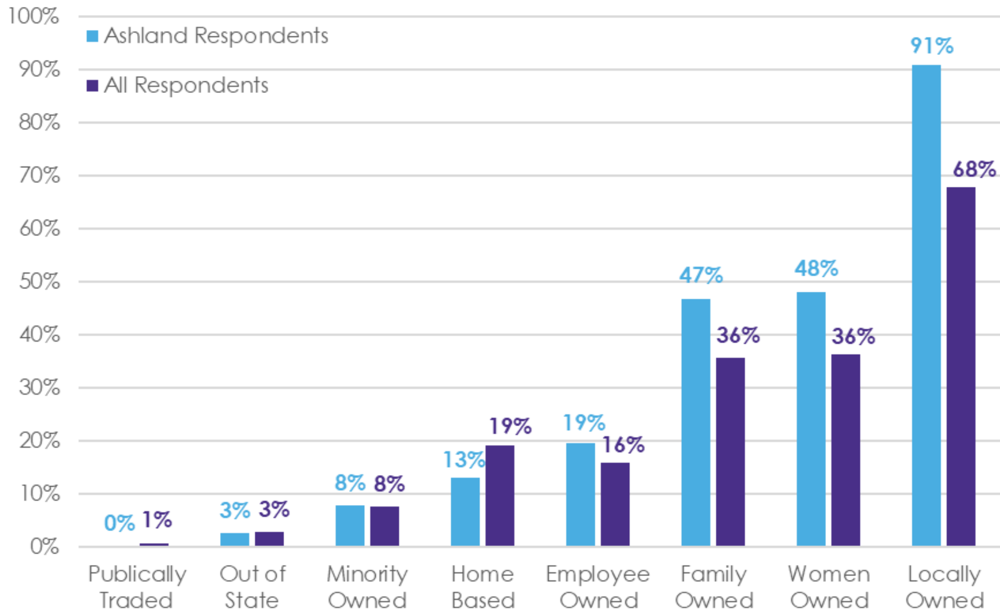


Exhibit 18. Does your business have plans to expand and grow in Jackson County in the next five years? (Ashland Business Respondents)

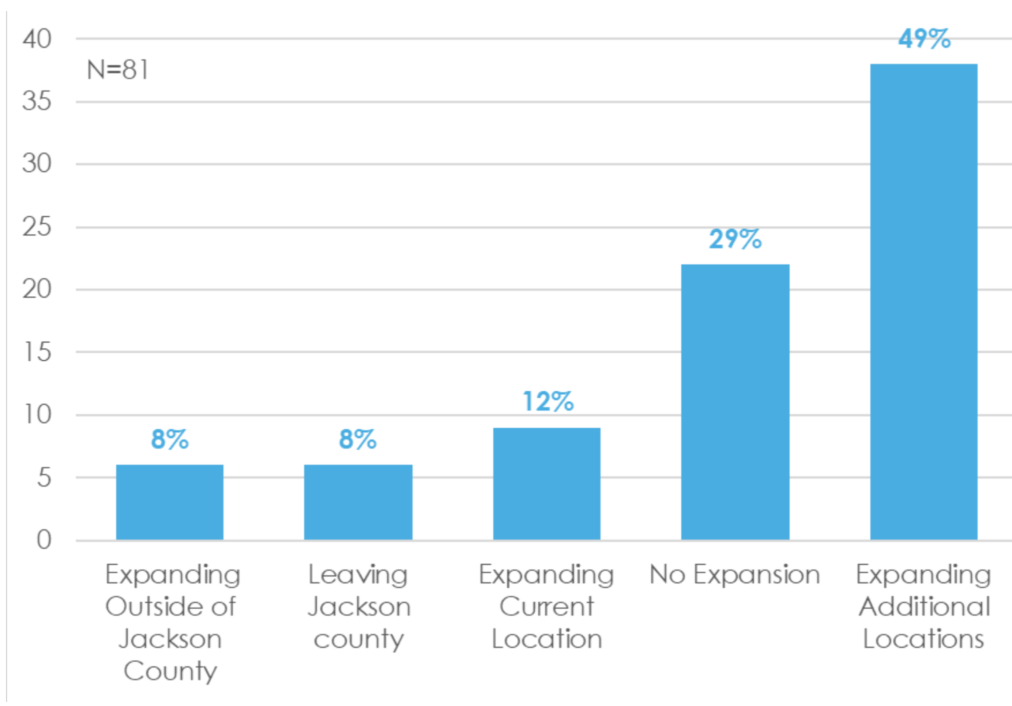


Exhibit 19. Please rank these challenges according to their importance for your business. (Ashland Business Respondents)

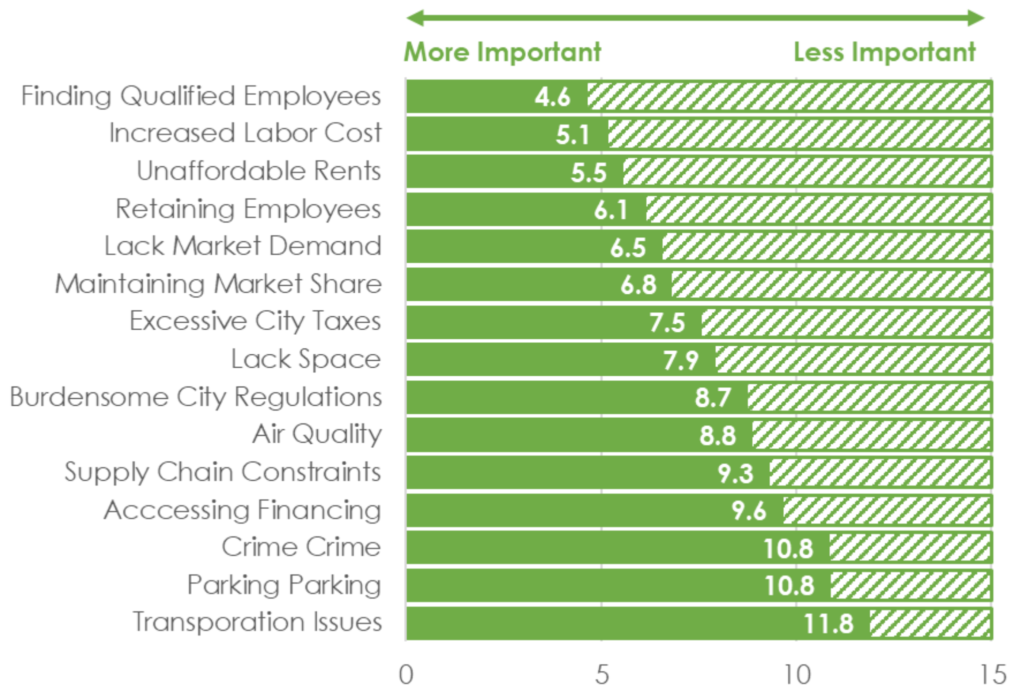
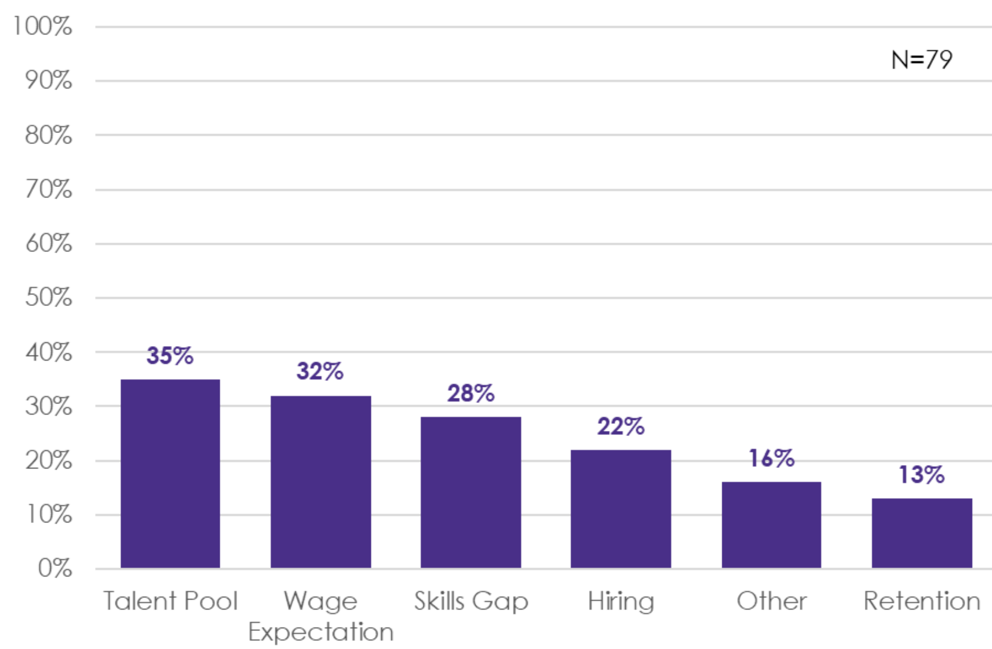


Exhibit 20. What are your biggest workforce challenges? (Ashland Business



Respondents)

Other responses largely included businesses which did not relate to having workforce-related challenges. Some example responses include, "we have excellent people and pay them well", "we are family owned and operated only", and "I am a solo practitioner with no workforce challenges".

Exhibit 21. What economic factors (local or broader) have the most significant impact on your business? (e.g., inflation, taxation, real estate costs, labor costs, supply chain, etc.) (Open Ended) (Ashland Business Respondents)

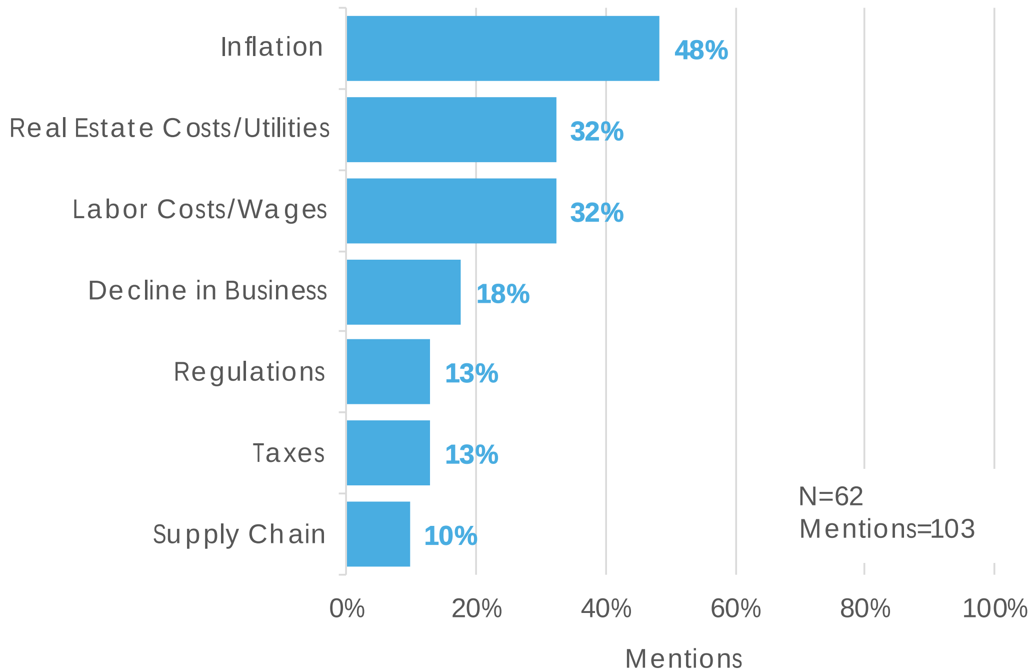
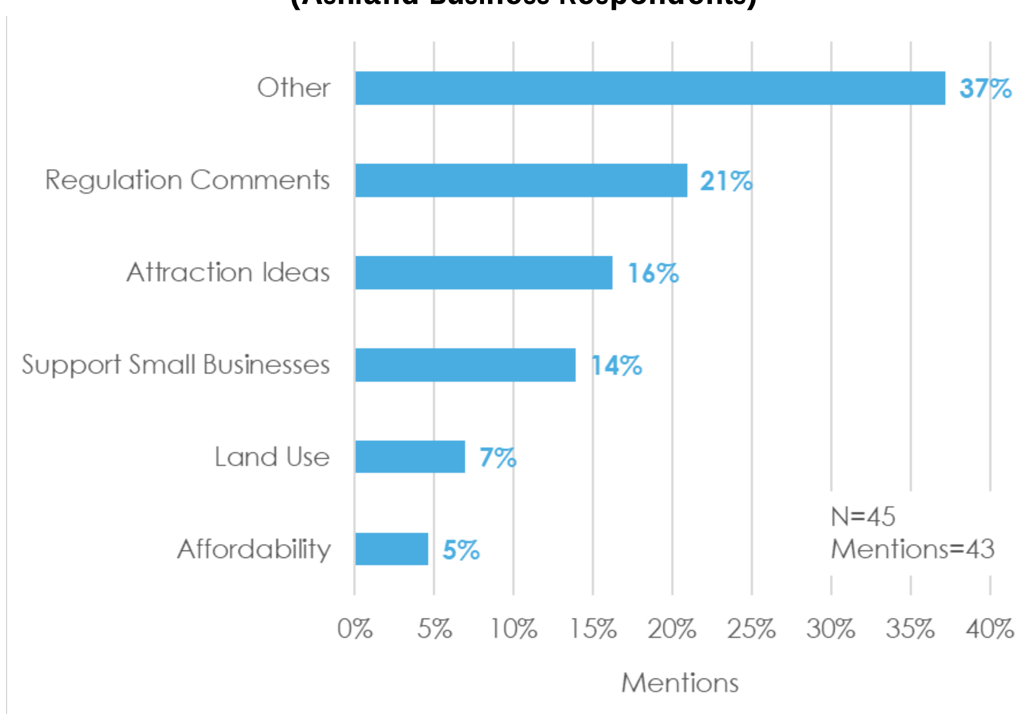


Exhibit 22. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your business's needs, challenges, or future opportunities in Ashland? (Open Ended) (Ashland Business Respondents)



Other comments include comments on public services, Ashland's economy, and various areas where business owners have felt support was lacking. Responses to this question included;

- Some stability would be huge relief! In the 8 years I've had the business we have had to contend with 2 of the worst smoke summers, lack of snow in winter, construction impeding business access, COVID-19, the Almeda fire, a fire in my building causing business closure for 2 years, moving to a new location after struggling to find one, starting over with new staff, and funding 2 commercial build-outs of a retail space. I was also personally homeless for a year.
- Post office in this city overwhelmed and subpar.
- City needs to clean up or bus out the homeless population.
- need more technology skills coming out of the local university
- Our business property is located at the north entrance of the city, and is highly visible to incoming visitors. One of our major desires is to landscape this visible front bank, but (after some considerable research) we see that to do so is totally unaffordable, what with the cost of landscaping and subsequent water demands.
- After my initial introduction (self initiated) I never felt any kind of support from our local Chamber. No reaching out to see what kind of help or support. No follow up after my initial introduction and phone calls. No support on local special events such as the 4th of July Parade, Halloween Parade or Mystery Fest. Felt I was pretty much left to my own devices and the support I was able to garner from other small local businesses.
- I was looking towards the Ashland area as a potential place to break ground on a new technology venture, but over the past few years it has wandered away from desirability in this sphere; Medford is potentially in reach, but there is less and less to attract me away from more urban technology center such as Portland, Seattle or San Francisco, and there are less of the incentives normally found in secondary tech hubs such as Boise , Raleigh etc.
- City has done no improvements to the downtown core. There are no public restrooms for our tourists to use. We have 1000's of acres of parks and no restrooms are ever open for tourists to use. City keeps stealing public parking for its employees along Winburn way and none for people using Lithia park.
- We would like to expand our business into more high end wedding and events. Ideally we would like to open another shop in Medford.
- Summer is very slow sometimes don't have enough money to pay
- Wheelchair and mobility impaired accessibility is a big problem. Office space with these features tends to be prohibitively expensive for small practitioners.
- I want to quit this survey. There is no queer-owned or Black-owned or Indigenous options on the previous screen. Yes, I see you had an

option for minorities and women, but the lack of diversity in this survey is indicative of why I'm struggling with keeping my business in the Rogue Valley. The lack of diversity here, and how it's reflected in every facet of business, leaves me feeling very isolated and discouraged.

- We look forward to continued growth.
- The sky is the limit for film and media production in Southern Oregon
- We are selling and investing in Vancouver Canada and not this country or this climate
- Better regional transportation is a primary driver for our business. This is both locally in Ashland for a tourism-focused transportation option, but also regionally to connect Medford with tourism options in the south end of the valley for locals.

Current Perceptions of Ashland

Respondents were asked if they wanted to answer questions for Medford, Ashland or both. The following exhibits include responses that were indicated for Ashland or both.

Exhibit 23. Consider these features in the City of Ashland. Please indicate on the following scale whether each is an economic advantage (on the right) or disadvantage (on the left). [Scale 1 – 5] (N=289) (Ashland Respondents)

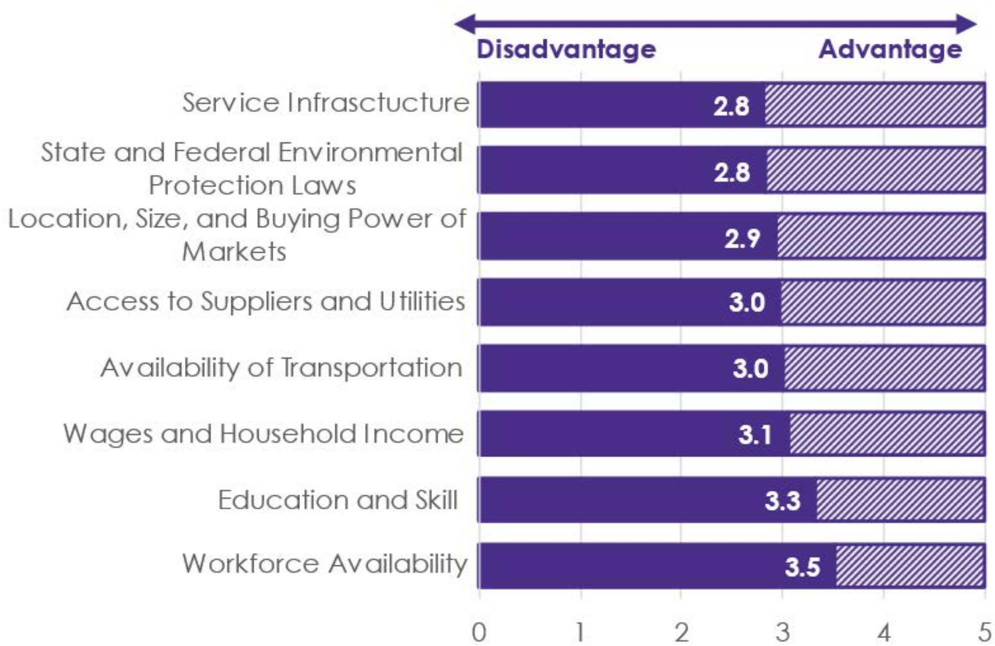


Exhibit 24. Please rank these strengths and assets in order of their importance for Ashland's economic future (N=281) (Ashland Respondents)

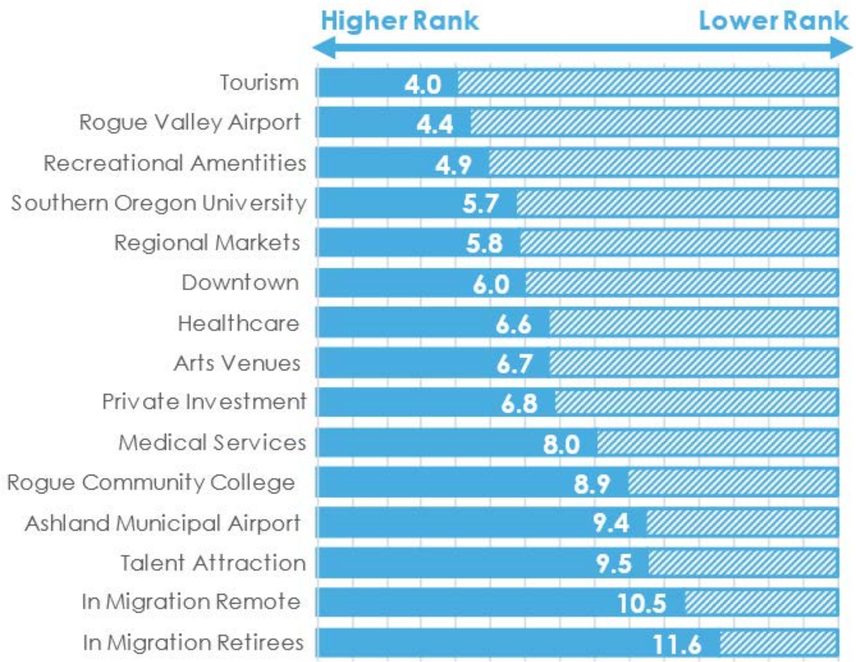


Exhibit 25. How supportive is the local government in helping businesses thrive? (Ashland Respondents)

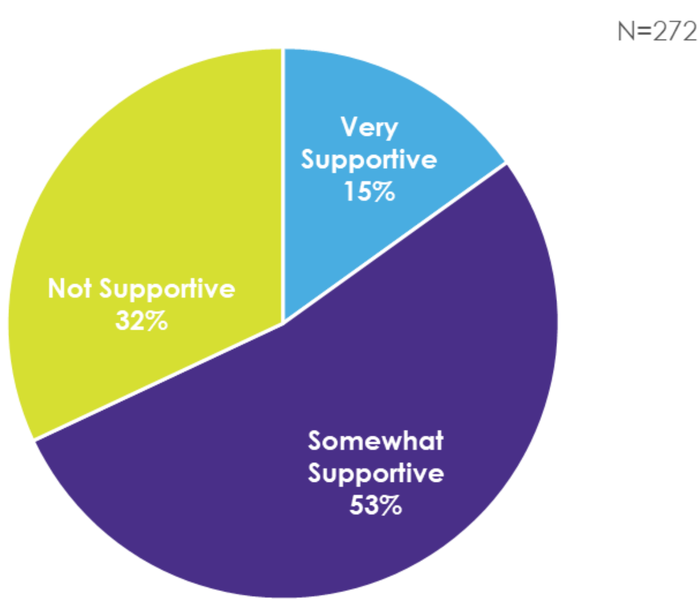
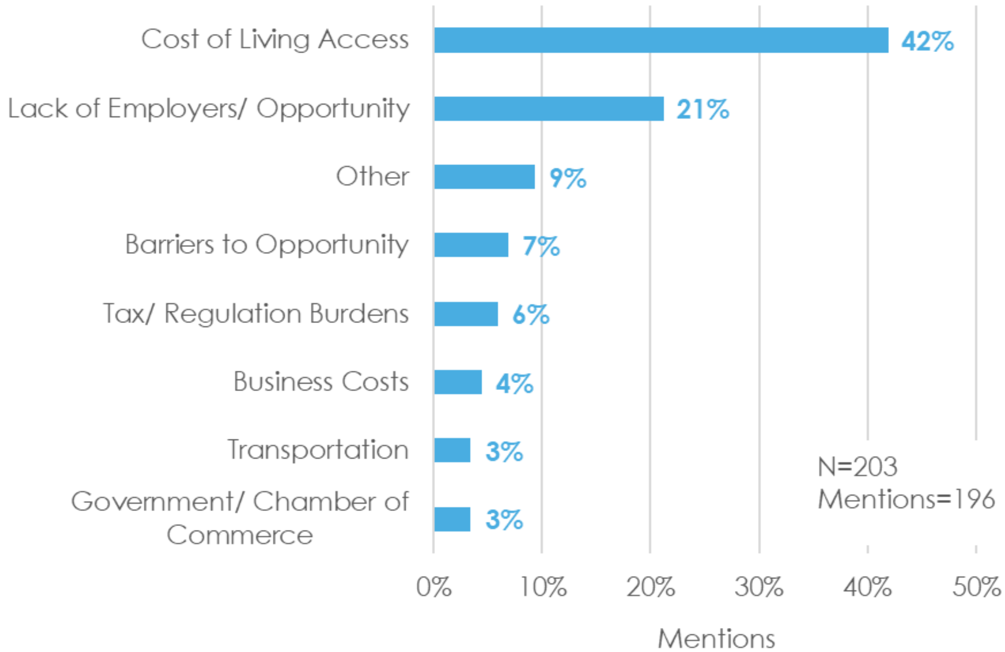


Exhibit 26. Thinking of Ashland, what concerns do you have, if any, regarding equity in the economy or in economic development? (Open Ended) (Ashland Respondents)



Economic Vision and Opportunities

Respondents were asked if they wanted to answer questions about Medford's economy, Ashland's economy or both. The following exhibits include responses that were indicated for Ashland or both.

Exhibit 27. Thinking of the City of Ashland, please rate the listed economic opportunities and/or strategic consideration from an economic development perspective on a scale of 1-10 (low to high priority). (N=298) (Ashland Respondents)

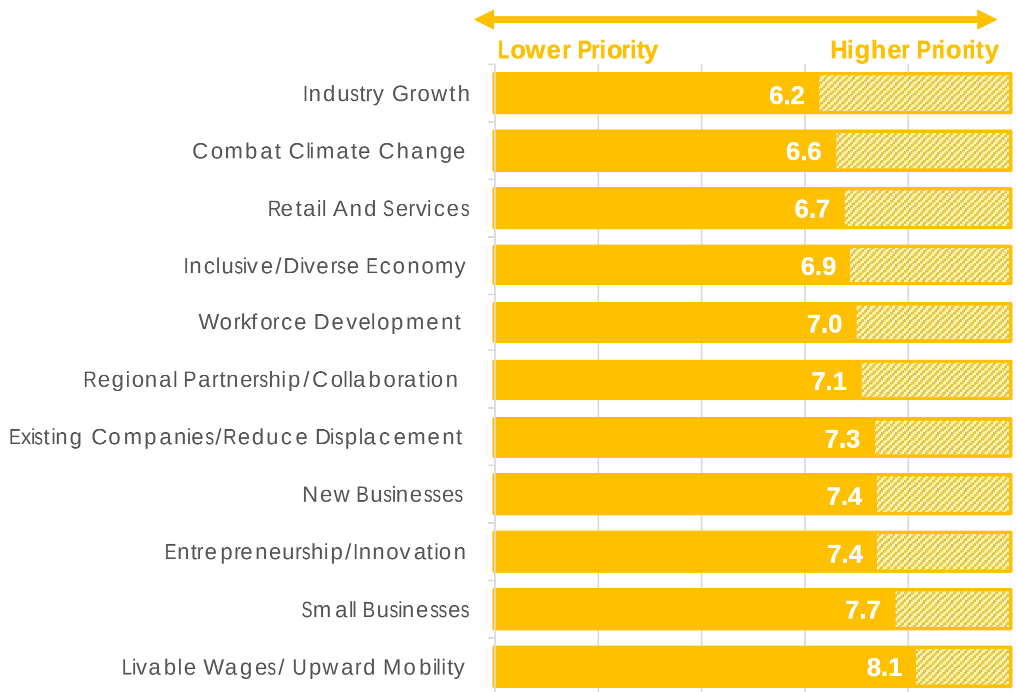


Exhibit 28. What changes or improvements would you like to see in Ashland's business environment? (Open Ended) (Ashland Respondents)

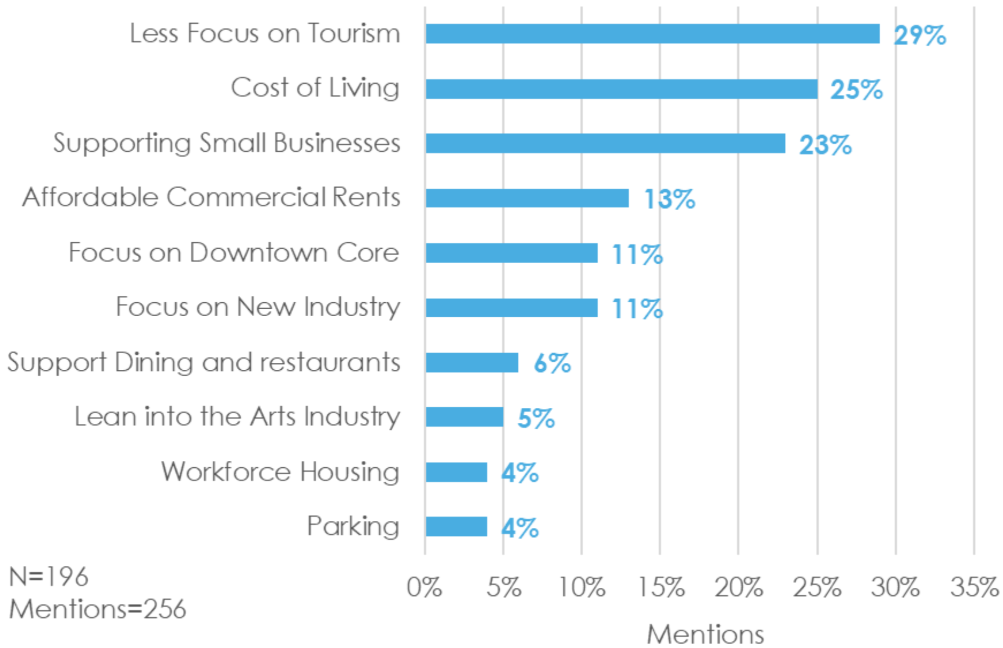


Exhibit 29. What is your vision for Ashland's economy of the future? (Open-Ended) (Ashland Respondents)

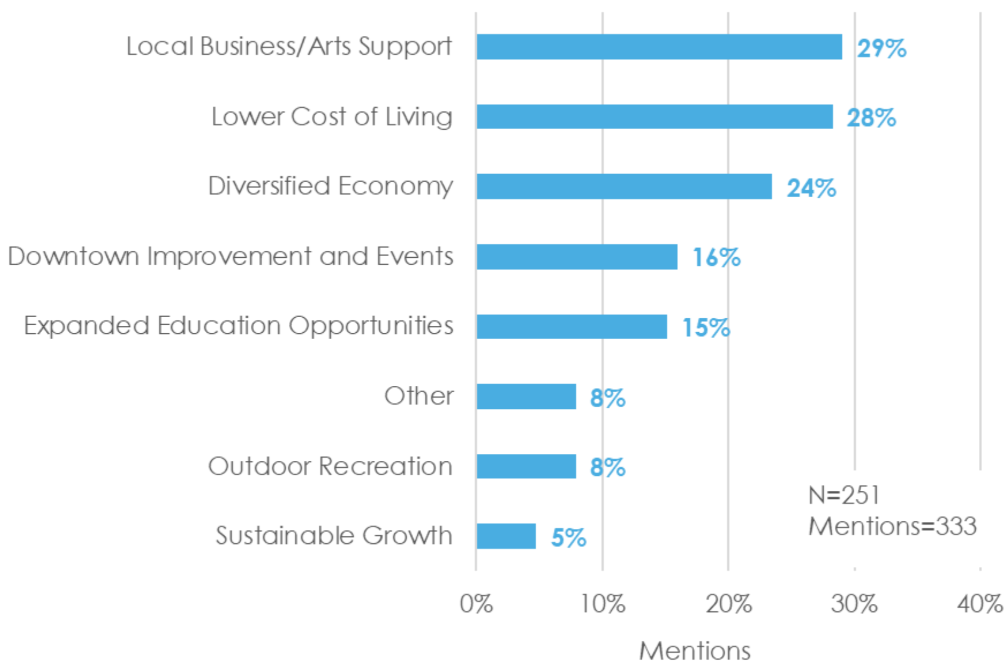


Exhibit 30. What is one 'big idea' you have for Ashland? (Open Ended) (Ashland Respondents)

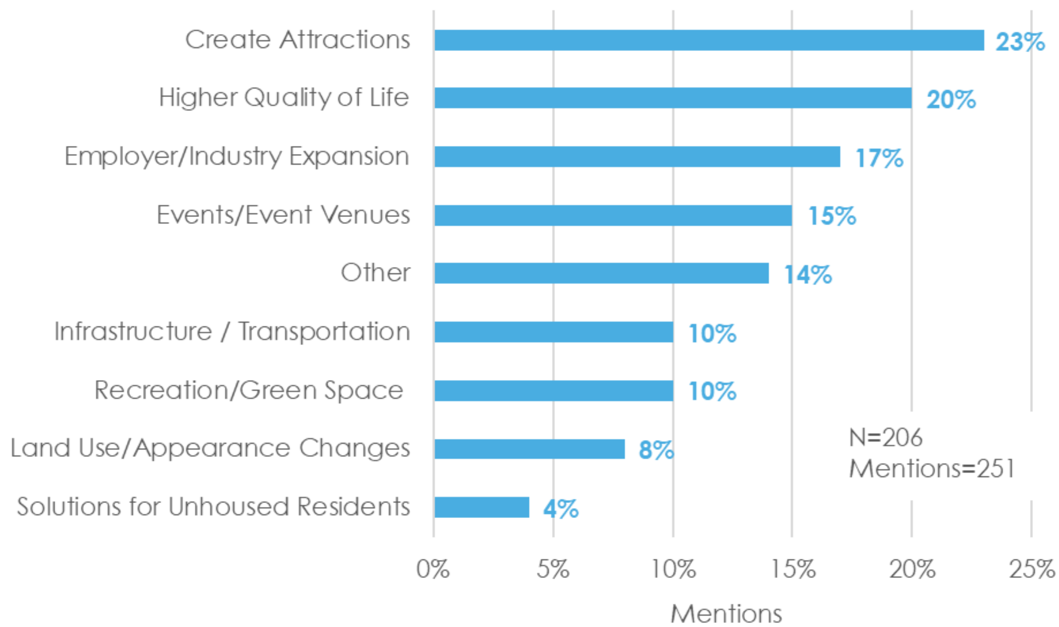
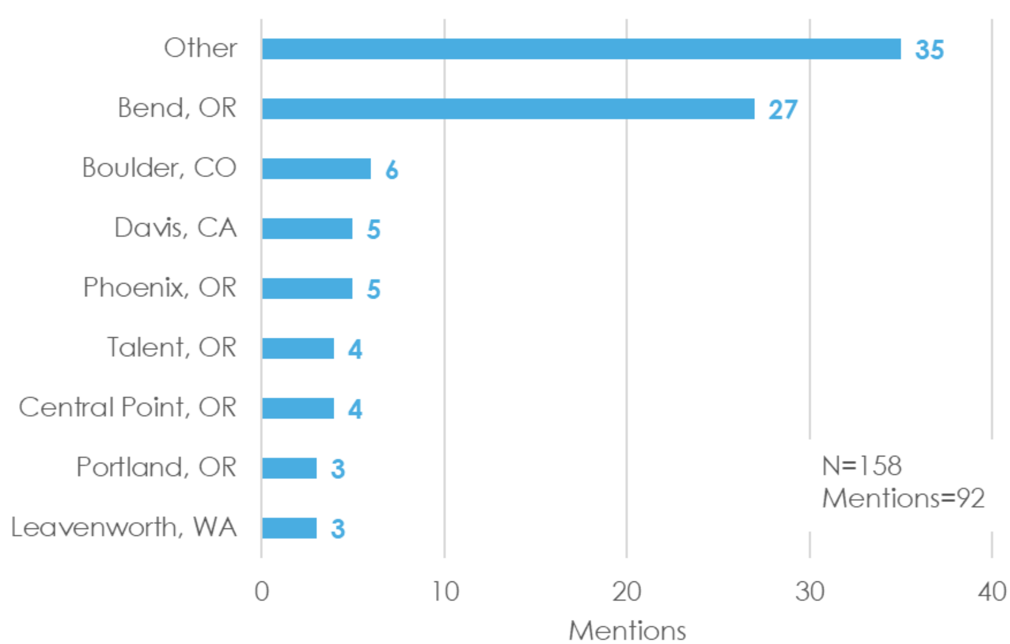
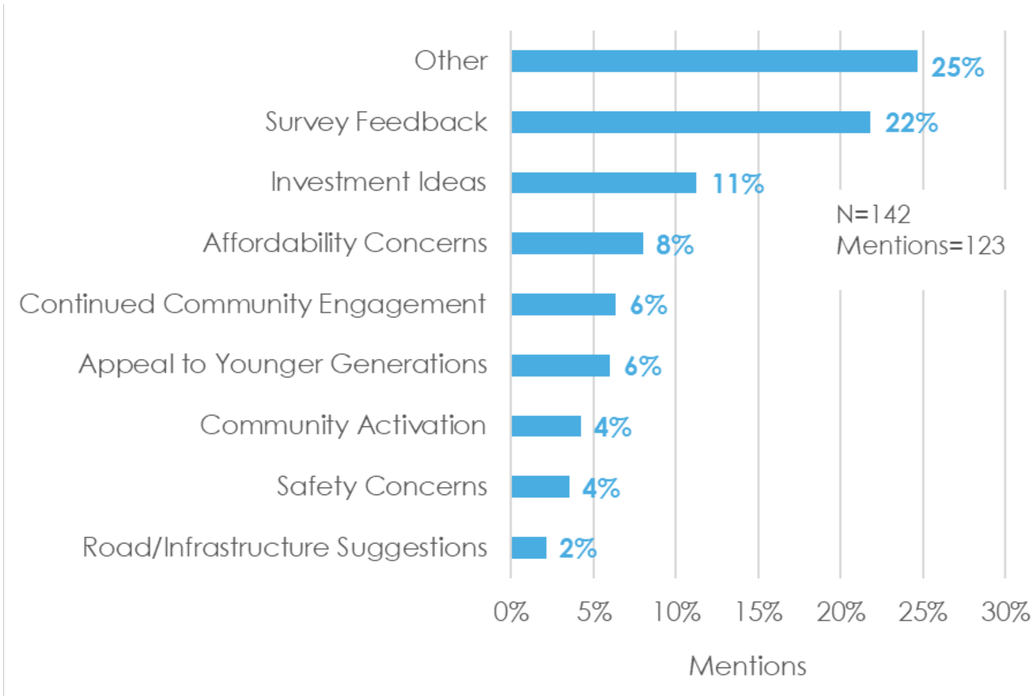


Exhibit 31. Is there a different city that you wish for Ashland to take lessons from? What are the characteristics of that city that appeal to you? (Open Ended) (Ashland Respondents)



Other cities mentioned included places across several continents, but other cities in Oregon, California and Washington were mentioned most frequently.

Exhibit 32. Do you have anything else you would like to share with us? (Open Ended) (Ashland Respondents)



Other responses largely included either appreciation for Ashland or complaints about political scenarios in Ashland or about questions in the survey surrounding diversity.

- Cronyism doesn't work
- Diversity is killing this town. Why to liberal. We need to take down the bird feeders. Support our police and fire more!
- Get city employees back to offices. Get code compliance officer to do job take a look at ads for short term rentals make it fair for licensed businesses
- Get the religious/conservative/elitist thinking people out of local government
- Getting permit to make home office to build company in Ashland was a pane in the neck they did not understand how small start ups grow into larger companies and employ people at a higher pay rate than service workers
- Hire more recreation staff!!
- How soon can we elect new council or recall present one. It’s pathetic stop spending money that isn’t yours
- I HATE that you're asking about stupid things like gender and ethnicity for a business survey. The fact that you ask at all reveals

that you believe in some kind of racisim that doesn't exist out here in the real business world. This is completely out of touch with what actual business think about. Wake up please.

- I have a medical practice in Medford and I have a license that I can't use in Medford so I have to drive Ashland to service clients there. I am thankful we can help people but Medford needs to get it's priorities straight.
- I have a small business that doesn't depend on local sales or local people, except a bit in the area of film - talent and crew. So my responses are not probably that helpful.
- I hope nobody is mad or offended by my answers. Please don't make my life hard by retaliation.
- I love Ashland so much, for its culture/nature balance and being a University town. I collect all the mentions we get on Best-of lists.
- If Jackson County does not increase its healthcare access; the future is very bleak. So OR is on the brink of turning into a healthcare desert.
- I've never met anyone who started a 'multicultural' business (page 3). And I'm unclear if the question about a '..broadly inclusive and diverse...' economy is asking about types of businesses or someone's skin color. Perhaps a little less woo and a little more recognition that we should simply be looking at all types of business will make for a better conversation and, fingers crossed, produce good results.
- The above suggestions are relatively inexpensive, can be implemented without delay, and will pay handsome returns to both the city's business community and the community itself.
- Let's work against misinformation, especially health misinformation based on pseudoscience. This is not a healthy thing for our local culture.
- No more parades or events in ashland please.
- North Mountain Park could be an attractor to locals and tourists alike, but many beat-up cars and shady people allowed to hang out there. People walk their dogs there thinking it's okay because they're not right next to the nature center. Neighbors use it as a parking lot for their cars. It's hard to get in and out of the parking that runs from Hershey to the nature center, because there are no stop signs and cars travel on North Mountain Ave at a high rate of speed. It could be so much better.
- "One city's motto of Better Together is a joke. If you are on one side of the fence, then you can be together, but if you are on the other side of the fence you are evil, part of the problem, a bigot, transphobic, racist, fascist pig.
- The Center of It All., well that is telling the truth. You can be on either side of the fence in that town, and not be called names that divide people. Maybe the one city's motto should be We, the City, Can Do Better. It sure ain't together."

- Perhaps you should have some questions about taxes.
- Please get your heads out of your ass and use some common sense when planning projects for the city. Get rid of diverse hires and promote people who know how to do the job.
- Please refrain from any references to climate change, that is a fraud.
- Recallcouncil
- Thanks for asking. We need a regional economic development strategy and EDO.
- The city should be better at following their own rules — for example, the new sidewalk signage pilot program says we cannot use plastic, but the city's sandwich boards are plastic!
- The energy of volunteers in and for the city of Ashland and for nearby cities is admirable.
- The political and ideological biases of the people that created the survey are showing. I think that the city needs to examine that and make some decisions on whether or not those ideologies are really helping advance, southern Oregon economic interests or harming them.
- The Rogue Valley has incredible potential, but I think people are so busy trying to get by that they don't realize how much more it could be if there was a focus on something more than short-sighted short term solutions.
- The Rogue Valley is an awesome place to live but it could be better
- The survey was quite interesting.
- The Valley seems like it is about to fall into the same issues that bigger cities do. We can change direction now and maybe make some good things happen! Thank you for all of your hard work.
- There are plenty of affordable/cheaper places to live in the United States. Stop attempting to provide "affordable" housing. If it's too expensive to live here, look for a place that's less expensive.
- We should have more interaction with the police department.
- Why is Russian an option for spoken language? Seriously?
- Let all the food-trucks use the Rogue Valley Mall parking lot(s) for at least 1 day out of each month and get people out and rubbing elbows with one another. That needs to happen.
- Yeah you should really ask myself or stop listening to the people that have gotten you all here and think about those you have decided to listen to without checking there work
- I've witnessed so much waste of money from private and government money all supposed to help the citizens and I have been threw and seen what's happening what actually help and what is a total scam and theft of money