



# Planning Commission Minutes

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.

## May 27, 2025 SPECIAL MEETING Minutes

### I. **CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice-Chair KenCairn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street. Commissioner Perkinson attended the meeting via Zoom.

#### **Commissioners Present:**

Kerry KenCairn  
Eric Herron  
Gregory Perkinson  
Russell Phillips  
John Maher

#### **Staff Present:**

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director  
Derek Severson, Planning Manager  
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant

#### **Absent Members:**

Lisa Verner  
Susan MacCracken Jain

#### **Council Liaison:**

None

### II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **1. Staff Announcements:**

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman made the following announcement:

- The Planning Commission's approval of the project at 231 Granite Street, PA-T2-2025-00053, was appealed and will go to the City Council for review at its June 17, 2025 meeting.

#### **2. Advisory Committee Liaison Reports – None**

### III. **PUBLIC FORUM** – None

### IV. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **1. Walkable Design Standards**

##### **Consultant Presentation**

Consultants Pauline Ruegg and Jamin Kimmell of Cascadia Partners detailed how their organization had developed a Walkable Design Standards Guidebook in coordination with the Department of





## Planning Commission Minutes

Land Conservation and Development (DLCD,) which includes a model code for cities to achieve compliance with the state's Climate Friendly & Equitable Communities rules OAR 660-012-0330 and OAR 660-012-0405. They stated that these design standards would only apply to land use regulations and presented on the following recommended code changes:

- 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.

Ms. Ruegg also outlined some code changes that the City could voluntarily implement, such as increasing requirements for nonresidential uses in the Basic and/or Detailed Site Overlay to improve pedestrian-orientation, or requiring frequent entries, transparency, and transitions from public to the private realm (see attachment #1).

### **Discussion**

The Commission was generally supportive of the required policy changes, but was hesitant to adopt changes that were not required by state law that could inhibit or unnecessarily increase the cost of development.

### **2.—Transportation System Plan (TSP) Public Engagement Plan**

In the interest of limited time remaining, the Commission determined to remove this item was the agenda and instead discuss it at the June 10, 2025 Regular Meeting.

## **V. LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING**

### **A. Economic Opportunity Analysis**

Mr. Goldman stated that the Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) is a technical support document to the City's Comprehensive Plan, is required by Statewide Planning Goal 9, only creates a factual basis for future land use decisions and does not create policy or regulations, and that its adoption would replace the previous EOA from 2007.

Consultant Chris Mefford of Community Attributes Inc. (CAI) provided a brief overview of the EOA, outlining the scope of the study, its methodology, salient focal points such as population growth, economic composition, interest rates, and the City's economic development priorities (see attachment #2). He then detailed the six Strategic Themes identified in the study below:

- Theme 1: Strengthen Economic Resilience through Diversification





## Planning Commission Minutes

- Theme 2: Foster Inclusive, Forward-looking Community
- Theme 3: Unlock the Potential of Local Talent and Institutions
- Theme 4: Make Space for Business Growth
- Theme 5: Build Regional Partnerships to Scale Impact
- Theme 6: Activate Ashland's Lifestyle Advantage

Mr. Mefford concluded with next steps, which culminate with the EOA's adoption by June 30, 2025.

Vice-Chair KenCairn closed the Public Hearing and Public Record at 8:43 p.m.

### **Deliberation and Decision**

The Commission discussed which shareholders were consulted with over the course of the study, the potential for repurposing buildings or redevelopment, and potential changes in development over the next 20 years.

**Commissioners Herron/Perkinson m/s that the Commission recommend that the City Council approves PA-L-2025-00017 adopting the 2025 Economic Opportunity Analysis. Roll Call Vote: All AYES. Motion passed 5-0.**

### **IV. OPEN DISCUSSION**

The Commission discussed ex parte contact. Mr. Goldman stated that ex parte contact could potentially occur before the Commission receives the meeting packet, but that ex parte contact should merely be disclosed prior to the Public Hearing where that item is discussed.

### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

*Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.*

*Submitted by,  
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant*





# Ashland Walkable Design Standards Code Amendments

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May 27, 2025 Ashland Planning Commission Presentation



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# OUR TEAM



**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.

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# 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | ic        |
| Division 12                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | to        |
| TRANSPORTATION PLANNING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | s. A      |
| 660-012-0330                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | it        |
| Land Use Requirements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | e         |
| (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.                                                                                                                                                                               | estrian   |
| (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: | ed to     |
| (a) Topography or natural features;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | ycle      |
| (b) Railroads, highways, or other permanent barriers;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | impact    |
| (c) Lot or parcel size, orientation, or shape;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | ycle, and |
| (d) Available access;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | ing       |
| (e) Existing or nonconforming development;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | > people  |
| (f) To provide for accessibility for people with disabilities; or                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | a be      |
| (g) Other site constraints.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | sens      |
| (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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | or        |
| (e) Large sites must be designed with a connected network of public pedestrian facilities to meet the requirements of this section.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | -ian      |
| (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.                                                                   | ies, to   |

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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                     |
| Chapter 660                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                     |
| Division 12                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                     |
| TRANSPORTATION PLANNING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                     |
| 660-012-0330                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                     |
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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

Frontages



Compact Development



Connectivity

Access



Parking Lots

Entrances

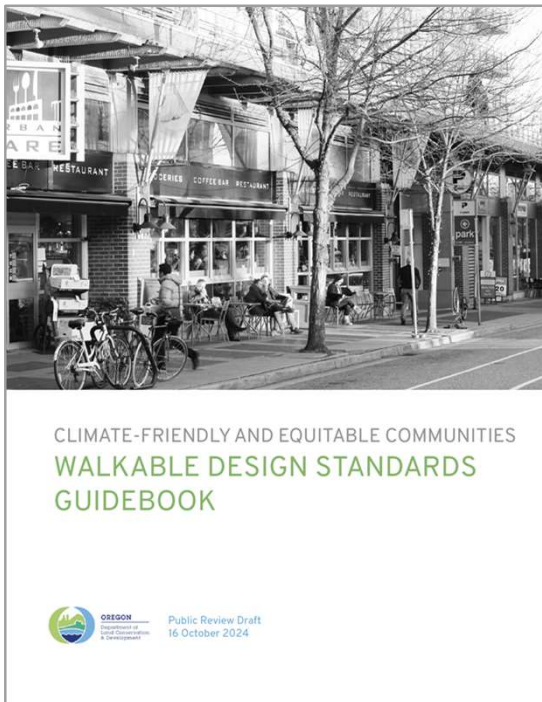


Transit Orientation

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:

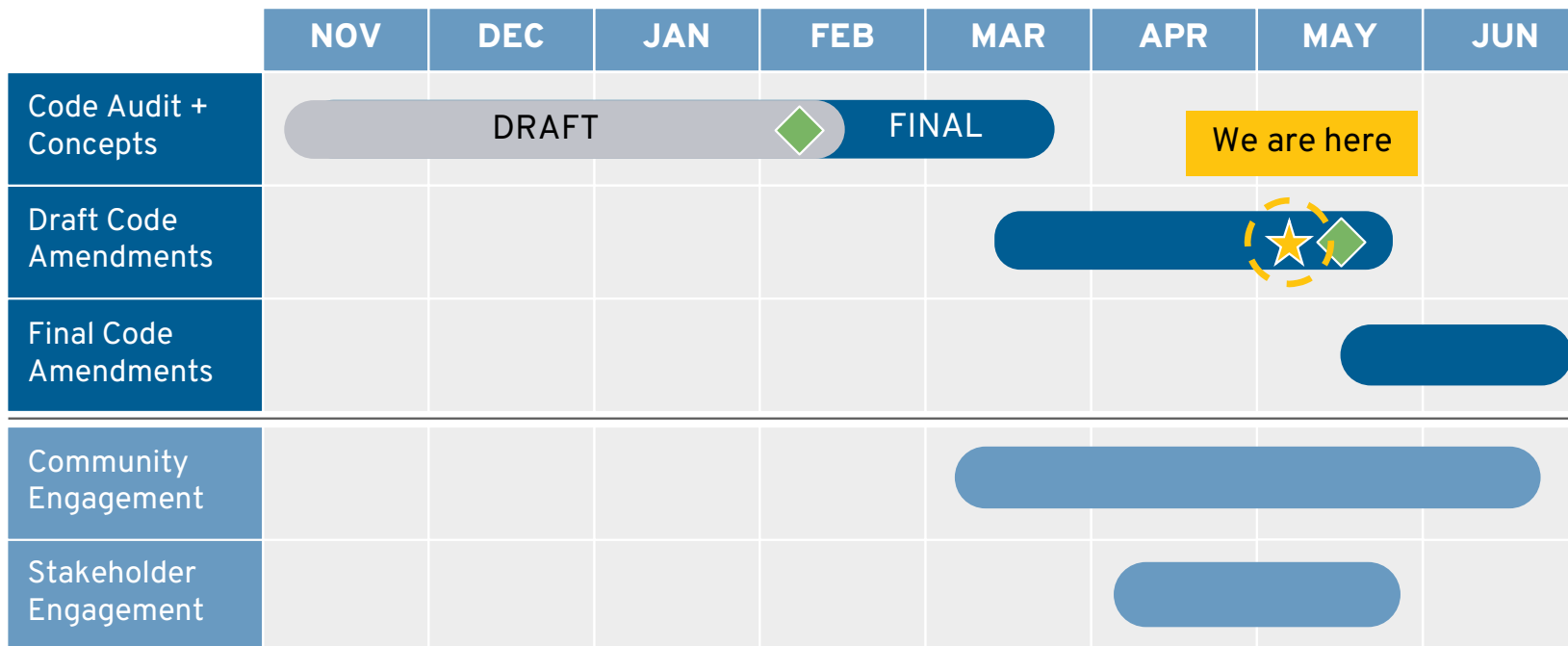


## WHAT ARE OARS TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

- 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

◆ Planning Commission Work Session      ★ City Council Work Session

# 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.

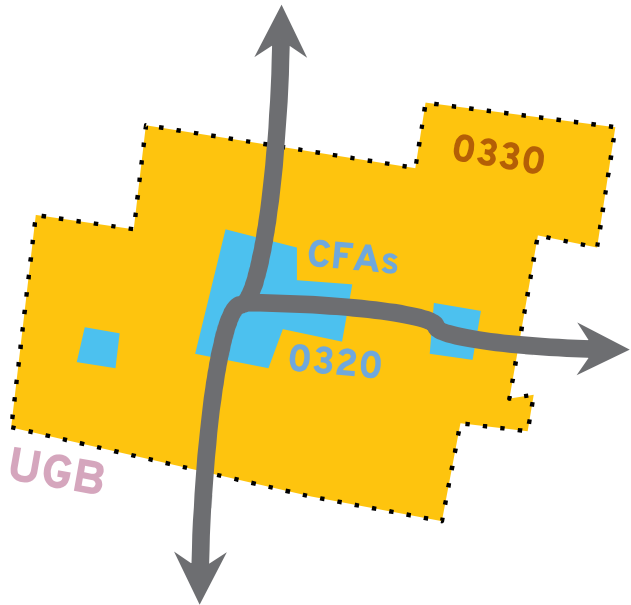
### Public-Right-of-Way

(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:



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



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



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.



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

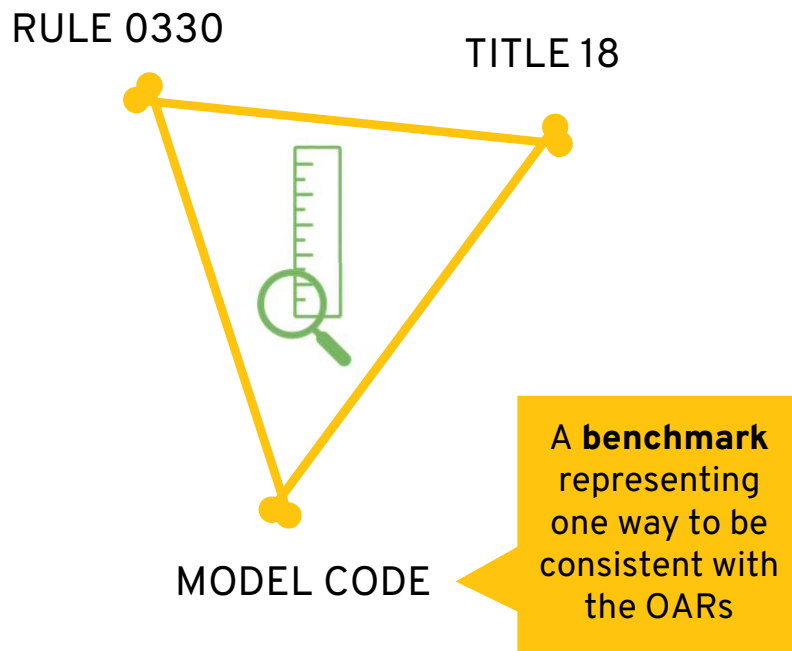


Code continues to get more complicated, not more simple. Should be easy to understand.



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



- 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**

TODA  
Y



## 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



- 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 **Must Have**
- Additional standards require 3+ contiguous garage entrances to be setback. **Nice to Have**

TODAY



## Concept 2: Policy Choices

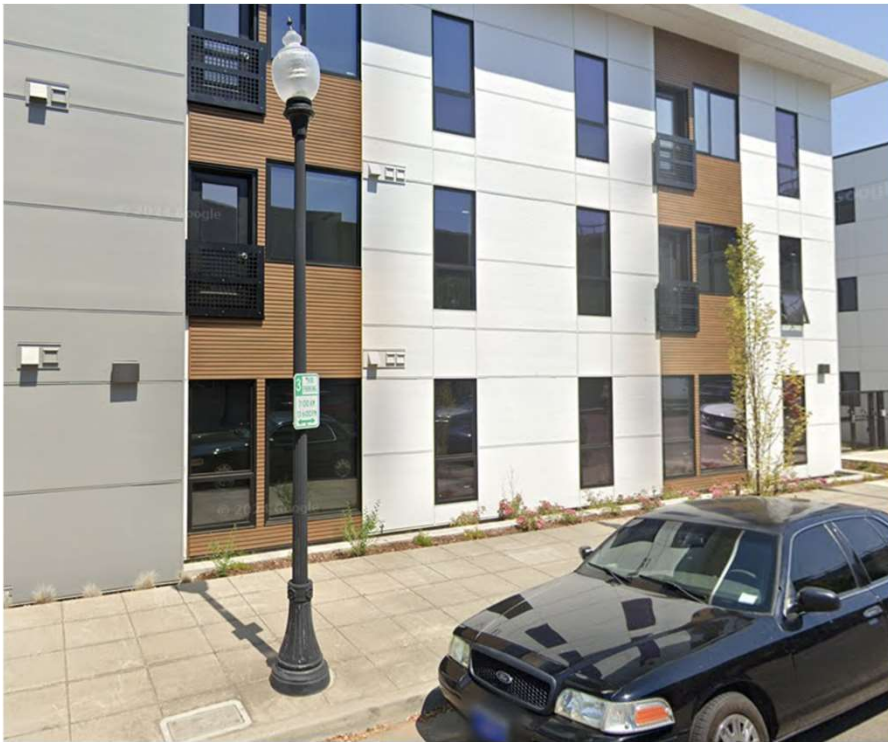


A garage entrance shall not be closer to the street lot line than the front façade. The maximum allowed width of a garage opening is 22 feet or 50% of the width of the street-facing façade, whichever is less.

- 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



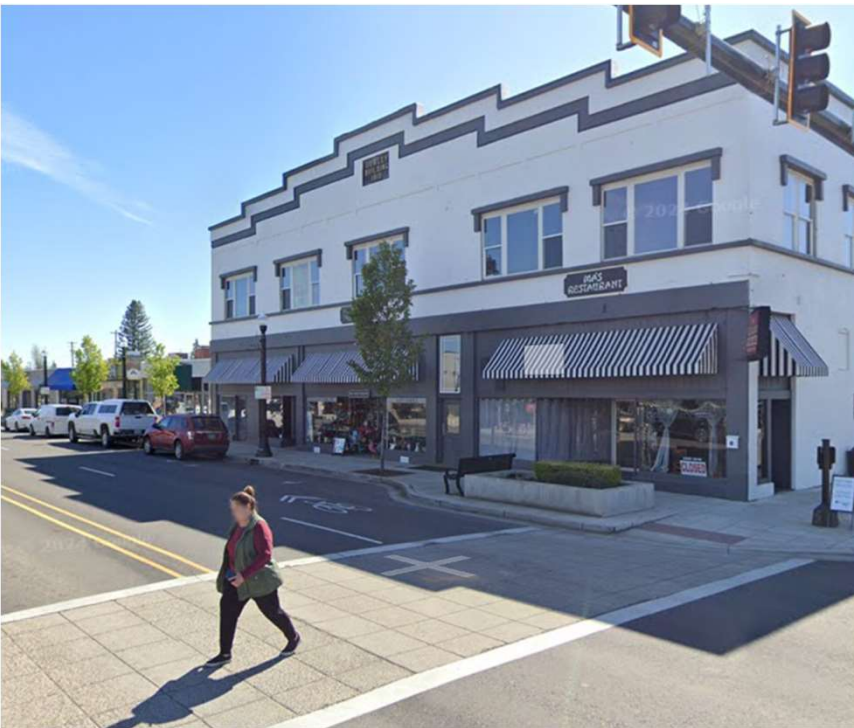
- Code audit found that while Title 18 has transparency and weather protection standards, they could be enhanced.
- Increase requirements for non-residential uses in the Basic and/or Detailed Site Overlay to improve pedestrian-orientation.
- Amendments would increase requirements for commercial uses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

Nice to Have

TODA  
Y



## 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.

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## 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.

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CITY OF ASHLAND

# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

PLANNING COMMISSION

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May 27, 2025



# CONTENTS



Introduction  
And Purpose



National, Regional,  
and Local Trends



Employment  
Land Sufficiency



Community Economic  
Development Priorities



Strategic  
Considerations



# INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

## What is an Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA)?

- A **State-required analysis** under **OAR 660-009-0015** that evaluates future land availability for employment uses.
- **Compares projected demand** for employment land (industrial, commercial, etc.) with the **existing land supply**.
- Typically **adopted as a technical appendix** to the comprehensive plan, to provide the foundation for updated economic policies.





## Elements of an EOA:

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



# NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL TRENDS

# RECAP OF FINDINGS PRESENTED 4/22

## LOCAL TRENDS



### Growth Rate

- Ashland's population grew at a CAGR of 0.5% from 2010 to 2024
- Jackson County grew at a CAGR of 0.6%, and Medford grew at 12% in the same period.



### Demographics

Compared to the region, Ashland's population is

- Older
- More educated
- Whiter



### Household Size

- 78% of households in Ashland have one or two people (2023).



### Tenure (2023)

- 45% of households are homeowners (61% county)
- 44% are renters (33% county)
- 11% of units are vacant or partially vacant (6% county)  
*(includes short-term rentals and second homes)*



### Housing Inventory

- Ashland had 11,500 housing units in 2023
- 59% are single-family homes

# RECAP OF FINDINGS PRESENTED 4/22

## LOCAL TRENDS



### Jobs-to-Housing Balance

- Declined from 0.78 (2013) to 0.74 (2023)
- Lower than the regional average (0.85 for the Rogue Valley and 1.08 for Oregon); likely defined by a higher share of retirees



### Regional Labor Flows

- 37% of Ashland's working residents work in Ashland; others commute to Medford and other areas
- 31% of jobs in Ashland are filled by local residents; the remainder come in from elsewhere in the region



### Top Inflow Industries (2022)

- Accommodation & Food Services (+638)
- Educational Services (+596)
- Retail Trade (+354)



### Land Use

About 17% of Ashland's land is zoned for employment-uses

- Employment-zoned land makes up 8%
- Commercial zoned land is 4%
- Industrial land is 1%
- The remaining 4% is made up of special districts like the Croman Mill District and the Health Care Services District.



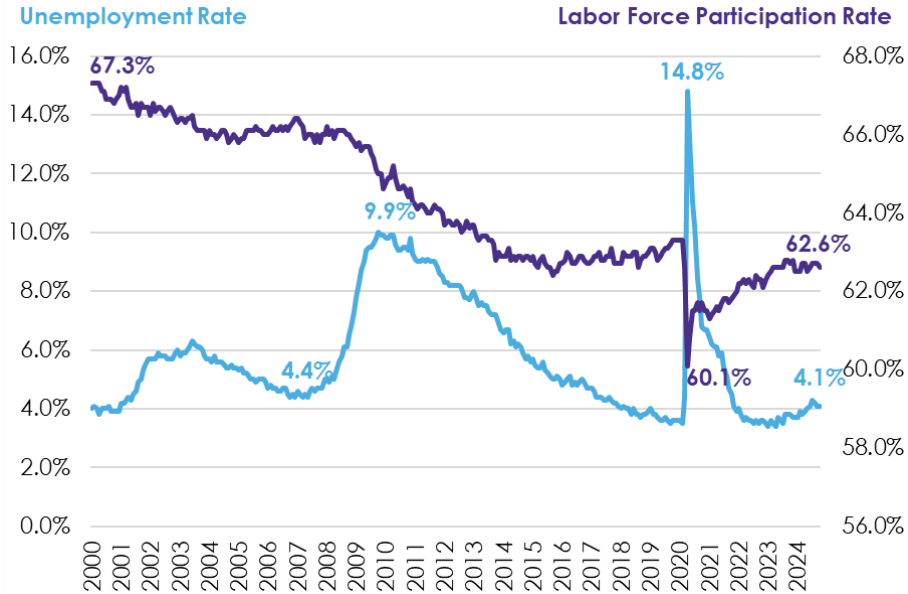
### Climate

Hazards rated as high-probability, high-vulnerability in Ashland per the 2024 hazard mitigation plan include

- Wild fire, Drought, Air quality, Extreme heat, Earthquakes

# NATIONAL TRENDS

**Exhibit 1. U.S. Unemployment Rate and Labor Force Participation, 2000-2024**



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

## Unemployment

- National unemployment fell to 4.1% in 2024, returning to pre-pandemic lows.
- Labor force participation rebounded to 62.6%, though still below early 2000s levels.

## Inflation

- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation is at 2.4%, up from 16% in 2019.
- Inflation has been generally steady for 9 months.

## Interest Rates

- Federal fund borrowing rate is at 4.3%
- Interest rates have been fairly steady since Dec 2024

# SOUTHERN OREGON TRENDS

## Population Growth

- From 2010 to 2023, Oregon's population grew by 0.9% per year (12% total), with Jackson County growing by 0.7% (10% total) and Josephine County by 0.5% (7% total).
- Both counties ranked mid-range among Oregon counties.

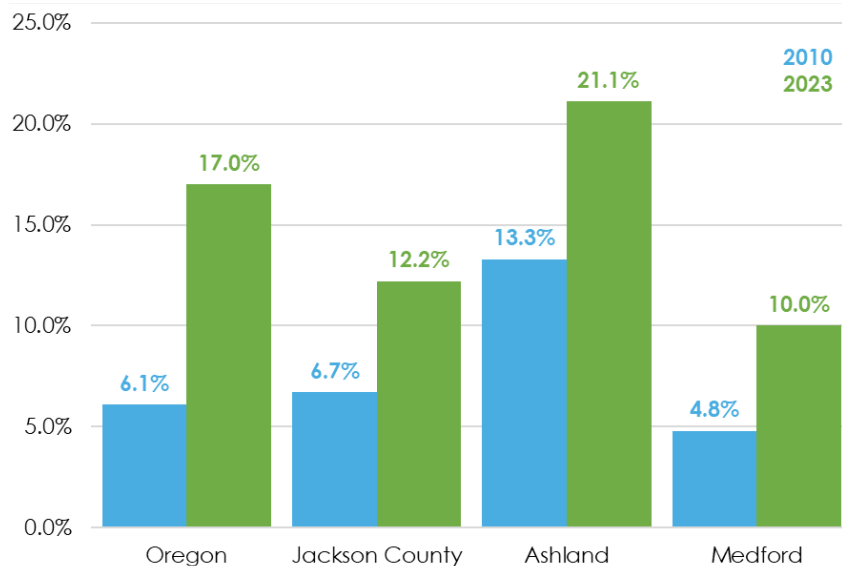
## Economic Composition

- The regional economy is largely service-oriented, with Services, Retail Trade, and Education & Health each composing 21–24% of private sector jobs in the Jackson and Josephine 2-County Region as of 2022.  
*(Note: Private employment excludes public sector, including some government and public school jobs.)*

## Remote Work

- Regional trends toward more workers reporting working from home are more pronounced in Ashland.
- In 2023, 17% of Oregon's workers report working from home, compared to 12% in Jackson County and **21% in Ashland**.

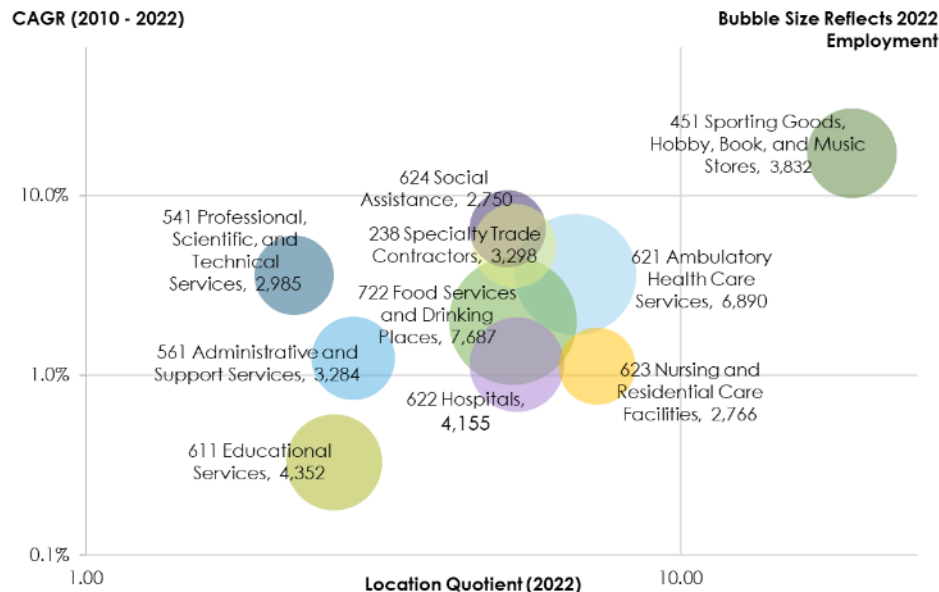
**Exhibit 2. Proportion of Workers 16+ Who Work from Home, Oregon, Jackson County, Ashland & Medford, 2010 & 2023**



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

# SOUTHERN OREGON TRENDS

**Exhibit 3. 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.

Jackson County added 14,000+ private jobs from 2010 to 2022 (CAGR of 15%).

These sectors show both strong local employment and growth in Jackson County from 2010 – 2022.

- Sporting Goods Manufacturing (NAICS 451)
- Healthcare Services (NAICS 621, 622, 623 & 624)
- Food & Beverage Establishments (NAICS 722)

# ASHLAND'S ECONOMY

**Exhibit 4. Total Employment by Industry, Ashland, 2010 & 2022**

| Industry                                         | Ashland Jobs (2010) | Ashland Jobs (2022) | Share of Jobs (2022) | CAGR (2010-2021) |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Accommodation and Food Services                  | 1,387               | 1,620               | 18%                  | 1%               |
| Retail Trade                                     | 1,163               | 1,379               | 15%                  | 1%               |
| Educational Services                             | 115                 | 1,362               | 15%                  | 23%              |
| Health Care and Social Assistance                | 1,187               | 1,129               | 12%                  | 0%               |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation              | 691                 | 674                 | 7%                   | 0%               |
| Manufacturing                                    | 410                 | 589                 | 6%                   | 3%               |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 287                 | 480                 | 5%                   | 4%               |
| Other Services (excluding Public Administration) | 233                 | 377                 | 4%                   | 4%               |
| Administration & Support, Waste Management       | 152                 | 320                 | 4%                   | 6%               |
| Information                                      | 179                 | 244                 | 3%                   | 3%               |
| Public Administration                            | -                   | 188                 | 2%                   | 55%              |
| Construction                                     | 104                 | 179                 | 2%                   | 5%               |
| Wholesale Trade                                  | 128                 | 143                 | 2%                   | 1%               |
| Finance and Insurance                            | 207                 | 140                 | 2%                   | -3%              |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing               | 98                  | 118                 | 1%                   | 2%               |
| Transportation and Warehousing                   | 28                  | 64                  | 1%                   | 7%               |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises          | 68                  | 51                  | 1%                   | -2%              |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting       | 11                  | 40                  | 0%                   | 11%              |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction    | -                   | 7                   | 0%                   | 18%              |
| Utilities                                        | -                   | -                   | 0%                   | 0%               |
|                                                  | <b>6,448</b>        | <b>9,104</b>        |                      | <b>2.9%</b>      |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), 2022; CAI, 2025.

## Total Employment (2022)

9,104 total jobs, with strengths in

- Leisure & Hospitality
- Retail
- Education
- Health Care

## Private Sector Growth Trends (2013–2023)

- Private employment growth of 516 jobs over this time (CAGR of 0.6%)
- Fastest growth in Construction (+9.9%)  
(Private employment excludes public sector jobs)

## Forecast (2025–2045)

Private employment is projected to grow from 8,644 to 10,045.

- +654 in Leisure & Hospitality
- +422 in Health Care
- +165 in FIRE

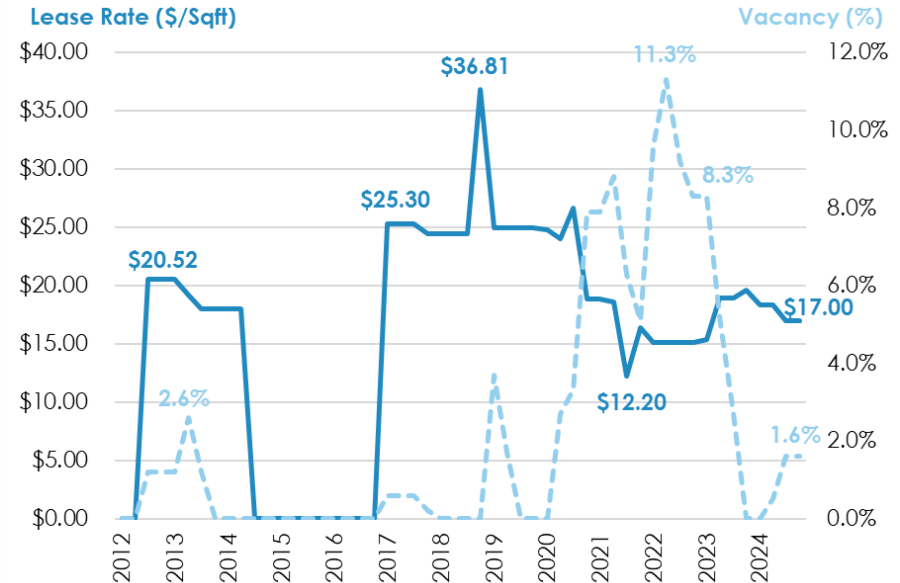
## Retail

- Citywide: lease rates dropped from \$29.73/sf (2018) to \$20.99 (2024); Vacancy as of 2024 is 2.0%
- Downtown: Lease rates at \$17.00/sf (2024) & vacancy down to 1.6% from 11.3% (2021)

## Office

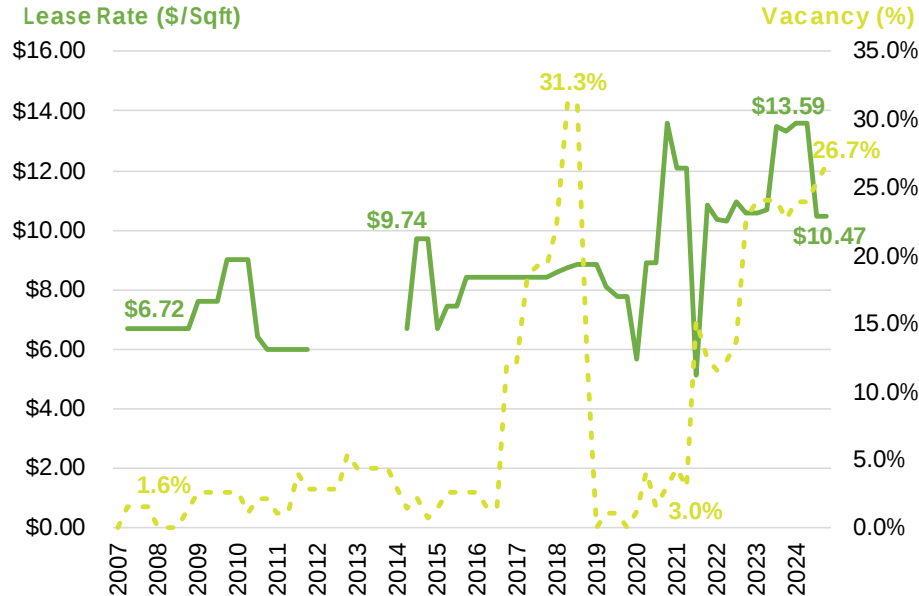
- Most recent delivery was 8,000 sf in 2021.
- Lease rates declined from \$22.68 in 2021 to \$18.96
- Vacancy rates at 2.5% as of 2024.

**Exhibit 5. Downtown Retail Lease and Vacancy Rate, Ashland, 2012-2024**



Sources: Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

**Exhibit 6. Industrial Lease and Vacancy, Ashland, 2007-2024**



Sources: Costar, 2024; CAI, 2025.

## Industrial Trends

- Vacancy reached 26.7% in 2024; likely affected by new supply (delivery of 28,000 sf in 2023), business disruption, and/or regional competition
- Lease rates fell to \$10.47/sf, down from \$13.59 (2023)

## Hospitality Sector

- Lost some inventory post-covid (-123 rooms)
- Occupancy rates have since recovered to pre-pandemic levels (62.0% in 2024)

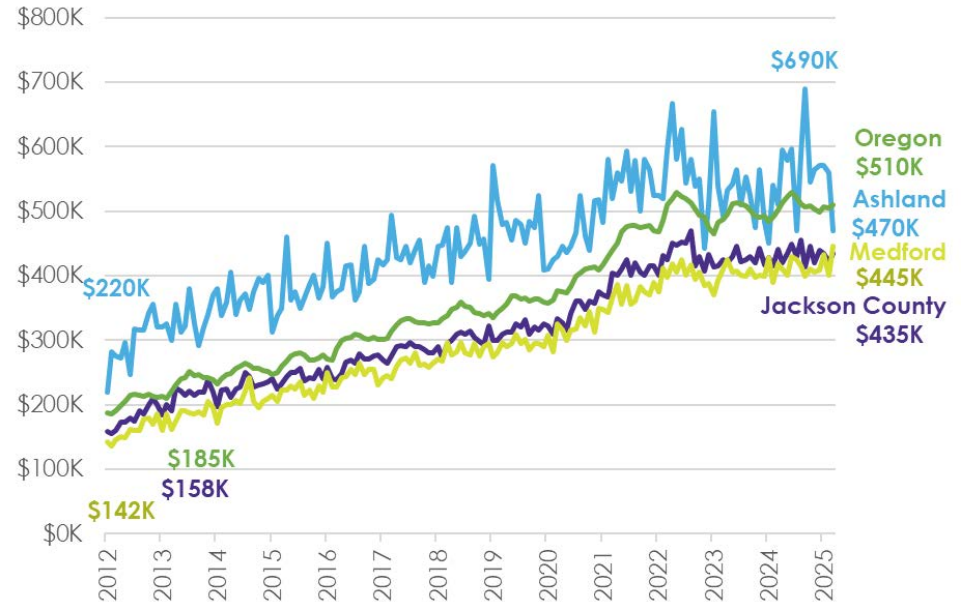
## Housing

- Median home sale price peaked at \$690,000 (Sept 2024)
- 43% of listings in Ashland sell within two weeks (March 2025).

## Income & Cost Burden

- Household income in Ashland grew at 4% CAGR (2010–2022)
- Cost-burdened households declined at -2% CAGR (2010–2023)
- 26% of households in 2021 earned less than 50% AMI (which was \$73,100); only 12% of housing units were affordable at that income level

**Exhibit 7. Median Home Sale Price, Ashland, Medford, Jackson County and Oregon, Jan 2012 – March 2025**



Sources: Redfin, 2025; CAI, 2025.



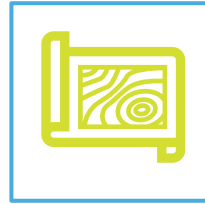
# EMPLOYMENT LANDS SUFFICIENCY

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# M E T H O D O L O G Y

## 1. SUPPLY

CAI isolates and extract the supply of buildable employment (commercial + industrial) land from the 2024 BLI.



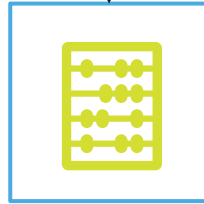
## 2. DEMAND

Using a detailed employment forecast, demand in total and by category is modeled for employment land.



## 3. RECONCILE

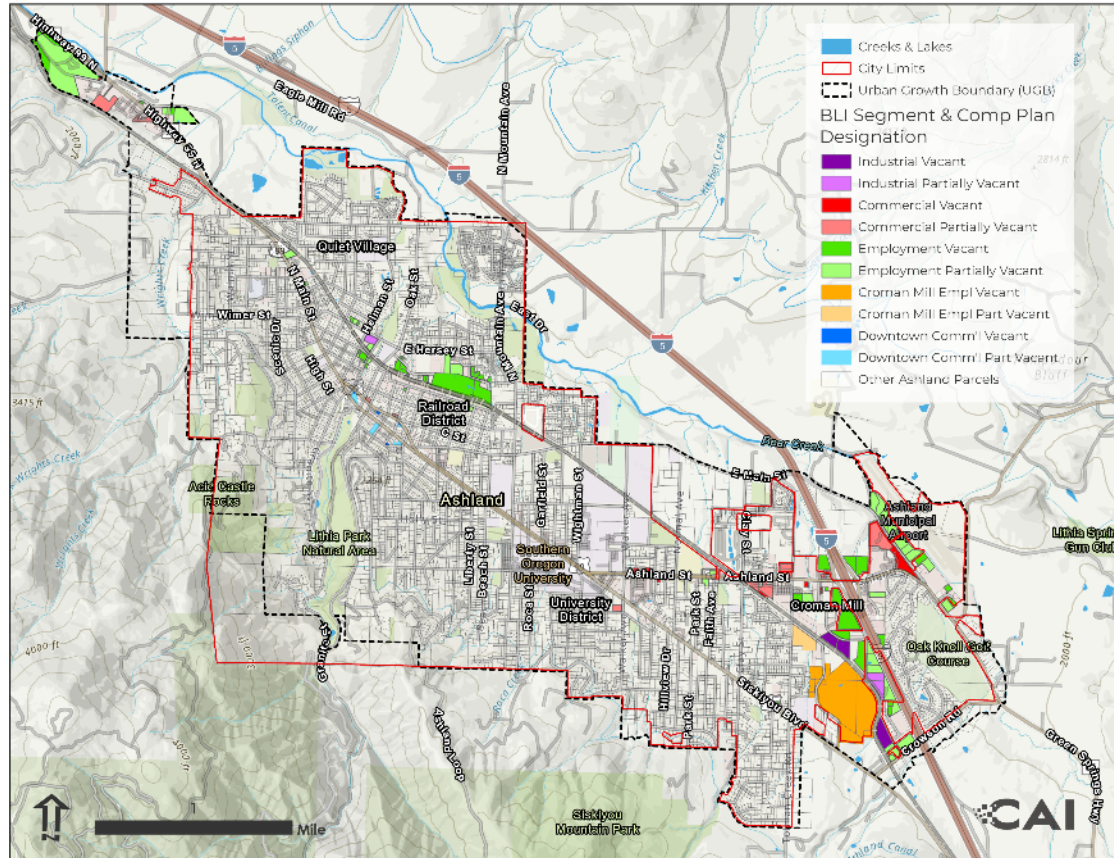
Supply of employment land is reconciled with demand in aggregate and by category.



## 4. SITE TYPES

Site types that may be needed by Ashland's target industries is characterized.

# EMPLOYMENT LAND SUMMARY FINDINGS



## Ashland's Employment Land Supply

- According to Ashland's Buildable Lands Inventory (2024), Ashland has **181 acres** of net buildable employment land, compared to **76 acres** of forecasted demand
- This is an estimated surplus of more than 100 acres within the city and UGB.

# EMPLOYMENT LAND SUMMARY FINDINGS

## Accommodating Future Growth & Sector Opportunities

- Ashland has capacity to accommodate stronger-than-forecast employment growth over the next 20 years.
- Despite the overall surplus, there may be a shortage of small, centrally located commercial sites—particularly in or near Downtown.
- Some demand could be met through underutilized Employment-zoned (E-1) lands, but businesses tied to foot traffic (e.g., OSF-oriented retail) may continue to prefer downtown locations.

| Comp Plan Category                  | Number of Vacant Tax Lots |               |           |          |                    | Total      |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------|----------|--------------------|------------|
|                                     | Less than<br>.5 ac        | .5 to 1<br>ac | 1-5 ac    | 5-20 ac  | More than<br>20 ac |            |
| 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          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>56</b>                 | <b>23</b>     | <b>51</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>2</b>           | <b>140</b> |

# EMPLOYMENT LAND SUMMARY FINDINGS



## Key Development Considerations

- Croman Mill and the Railroad District offer the largest contiguous development opportunities—this land is largely controlled by two landowners
- 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.
- Opportunity: Enhance visibility and access between E-1 areas and Downtown through pedestrian connections, wayfinding signage, and brand alignment.
- Opportunity to target development on value-aligned industries, such as outdoor recreation equipment manufacturing, craft food and beverage production

# COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



# ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



## Interviews and Focus Groups (9)

Businesses, Stakeholders, and  
Technical Experts



## Student Forum

Southern Oregon University



## Regional Survey

Of Residents and Businesses

- 472 survey responses across Jackson County
- 174 live in Ashland
- 125 work in Ashland
- 79 own/manage a business in Ashland

# COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



- Tourism anchors exist and residents wish to diversify Ashland's tourism economy. Leverage assets like recreation and plan proactively for challenges like wildfire smoke and rising cost of living.
- Businesses are challenged by inflation, finding qualified employees, labor costs, and high cost of living locally for workers.
- Barriers to accessing Ashland's many amenities exist, especially for younger and economically disadvantaged families and individuals; cost of living is the primary barrier.

# COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

- **Student retention.** Students seek more integration into the community and want more inclusive, affordable entertainment—especially for those under 21 or without a car. Lack of high-wage jobs and limited career opportunities deter long-term retention.
- **Development hurdles.** While there is support for growth which honors Ashland's identity, perceived difficulty developing may act as a barrier.
- **Downtown.** There is support for further investment in downtown and Bend, OR, was most often described as a city Ashland can emulate.





# STRATEGIC THEMES



**THEME 1.** Strengthen Economic Resilience through Diversification



**THEME 2.** Foster an Inclusive, Forward-looking Community



**THEME 3.** Unlock the Potential of Local Talent and Institutions



**THEME 4.** Make Space for Business Growth



**THEME 5.** Build Regional Partnerships to Scale Impact

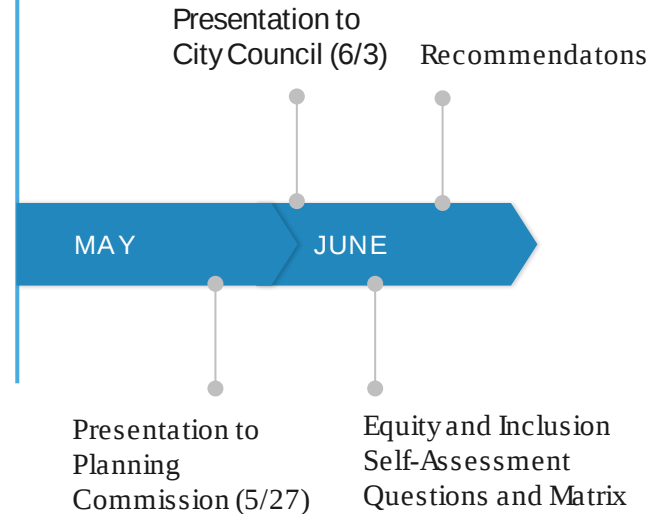


**THEME 6.** Activate Ashland's Lifestyle Advantage

# NEXT STEPS

- Present to City Council on June 3
- Equity and Inclusion Self-Assessment
- Recommendations for the updated Economic Element
- All materials must be complete, via DLCD grant, by June 30

## Upcoming Milestones

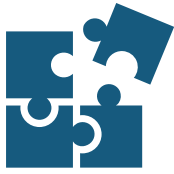


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# THANK YOU!

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## THEME 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.

There is also interest to expand other sectors; This could include light manufacturing, tech, food production, wellness, and specialty industries—particularly those aligned with Ashland's lifestyle values and small-town character.



## THEME 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



### THEME 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.



## THEME 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.



## THEME 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.



## THEME 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.