



# Climate and Environmental Policy Advisory Committee (CEPAC) Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CEPAC)

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Community Development Building, 51 Winburn Way

5 - 7 pm

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Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/95222451718?pwd=hapb836WZRFTvsgCfoNYXZplvaFzBb.1>

Public testimony will be accepted for both public forum items and agenda items. Please complete the CEPAC contact form no later than 10:00 a.m. the day of the meeting to request electronic testimony or submit electronic comments only. In person testimony can be done by filling out the Speaker Request Form at the meeting prior to the agenda item.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. CONSENT AGENDA**

**III. PUBLIC FORUM**

15 minutes – Public input or comment on City business not included on the agenda.

**IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Liaisons (Staff and Council) and CEPAC Members

**V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

a. Expand Awareness of City Incentives

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Adaptability and Resiliency

- Presentation by Chris Chambers - City of Ashland Division Chief, Forestry Division

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

*If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Chad Woodward at [chad.woodward@ashlandoregon.gov](mailto:chad.woodward@ashlandoregon.gov) or 541.488.5357 (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.*



## Development Process Management Advisory Committee

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### Report to the City Manager

May 8, 2024



City Staff, under the direction of the City Manager, established a management advisory committee tasked with reviewing and discussing the city's development process. The primary objective of this committee is to streamline service delivery and reduce uncertainty within the development process. While the management advisory committee is actively providing recommendations to the staff, its role extends beyond internal advisory.

The intention behind forming this ad-hoc committee was also to bridge communication between the development community and the City. By doing so, the committee serves as a critical conduit, relaying the perspectives and experiences of developers to inform and guide the council's decisions on future urban planning and development policies. This structured approach ensures that both operational improvements and stakeholder insights are considered in shaping the city's developmental strategies.

## Introduction

The Development Process Management Advisory Committee (DPMAC) was a limited duration ad-hoc committee appointed by the City Manager of Ashland. The committee's primary goal was to examine potential ways to streamline the development process in Ashland while ensuring it aligned with Oregon State Law and local objectives for meaningful public involvement.

## Background

Over the last six months, the committee has convened four times to achieve its objectives. In these meetings, the committee concentrated on a comprehensive evaluation, including reviewing a customer survey to assess customer experiences with the department. This review aimed to uncover patterns in the clarity and responsiveness of City Staff's interactions with applicants, leading to recommendations for enhancing customer service and the overall application process.

Moreover, the committee investigated development costs in nearby cities to provide a comparative analysis. This examination was geared towards identifying potential areas for efficiency improvements and cost reductions in Ashland's development process without compromising legal and public participation standards.

The committee examined the City's new online permitting software, Citizen Self Service, to understand its capabilities and potential to enhance efficiencies and the customer experience. This online system, a new introduction to the application submission and processing landscape in Ashland, was reviewed by the committee shortly before its launch. Their assessment aimed to recognize the system's contribution to streamlining procedures and improving service levels for applicants. Some ad-hoc committee members participated as initial beta testers of the online system. Their involvement provided valuable insights into the system's functionality and user experience. This feedback helped identify minor adjustments to refine the system, ensuring it was well-positioned to offer an improved permitting experience upon its public release. Their role was instrumental in validating the system's readiness and its potential to positively impact the application process.

Additionally, the committee delved into the various planning action types to ascertain if there were opportunities within the land use code to expedite or simplify the approval processes. This effort included assessing the thresholds for public hearings and considering the feasibility of designating certain actions for ministerial or staff approval.

By leveraging diverse expertise and insights, the Ad-Hoc Development Process Management Advisory Committee aimed to recommend strategies that would lead to a more streamlined and effective development process in Ashland, all while adhering to regulatory mandates and emphasizing the importance of public engagement.

**Membership of the Committee**

- **Committee Composition:** The DPMAC consisted of individuals familiar with Ashland’s development process, including planners, architects, builders, developers, and real estate professionals.

**APPOINTED MEMBERS**

<p><b>Matt Small</b>  <i>Architect</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:matts@kswarchitects.com">matts@kswarchitects.com</a></p> <p><b>Brian Druihet</b>  <i>Catherine Rowe Real Estate Team</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:roweteam@johnlscott.com">roweteam@johnlscott.com</a></p> <p><b>Kerry KenCairn</b>  <i>Planning Commissioner                  Landscape Architect/Planner</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:kerry@kencairnlandscape.com">kerry@kencairnlandscape.com</a></p> <p><b>Christopher Brown</b>  <i>Architect</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:arkitek@arkitek.us">arkitek@arkitek.us</a></p>	<p><b>Ben Treiger</b>  <i>Builder</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:ben@benthebuilderinc.com">ben@benthebuilderinc.com</a></p> <p><b>Jim McNamara</b>  <i>Southern Oregon University Facilities</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:mcnamaraj@sou.edu">mcnamaraj@sou.edu</a></p> <p><b>Ray Kistler</b>  <i>Architect</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:raymondk@kswarchitects.com">raymondk@kswarchitects.com</a></p> <p><b>Dan Jovick</b>  <i>Builder</i>                  Email: <a href="mailto:dan@jovickbuilt.com">dan@jovickbuilt.com</a></p>
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**STAFF LIAISONS**

Brandon Goldman, *Community Development Director*  
 April Lucas, *Development Services Coordinator*  
 Phone: 541-488-5305  
 Emails: [brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us](mailto:brandon.goldman@ashland.or.us)  
[april.lucas@ashland.or.us](mailto:april.lucas@ashland.or.us)

## Overview of DPMAC Meetings

### Meeting Schedule

**Meeting dates:** The DPMAC met four times over the course of six months as follows:

- October 18, 2023
- November 29, 2023
- March 6, 2024
- April 24, 2024

On the following pages meeting notes are provided for each meeting, which include an overview of the discussions, highlighting the main topics discussed and comments from the committee members. Meeting Notes including specific member comments are attached in the Appendix.

### October 18, 2023 Meeting Summary

During the inaugural meeting of the Development Process Management Advisory Committee (DPMAC), the members were introduced and discussed the objectives of the committee. The session served as a platform for committee members to voice their initial thoughts on the challenges facing Ashland's development and planning efforts.

Development Process Management Advisory Committee members shared their experiences and observations including the demographic shifts in Ashland, which they perceived as becoming more of a retirement community and less attractive to young families and workers.

During the discussion it was noted that while some believe other jurisdictions may be easier to deal with, personal experiences suggest that this is not necessarily the case for everyone, although a negative perception about Ashland continues to exist in the development community. In Ashland, projects often face significant delays when compared to other communities. This is not due to city processes but because of strong neighbor and community opposition to development. This neighborhood resistance, which typically falls outside the control of the City, leads to detailed application preparation, high legal costs, and lengthy appeals processes, which can result in compromised outcomes even when projects receive City approval.

City Staff presented the findings of the 2022 Ashland Community Development Department Customer Satisfaction Survey. Conducted in December of 2022, the survey targeted individuals who had engaged with the city's planning and building services during the prior four years, garnering responses from 71 out of 1,200 contacted. This survey, which also included questions from previous surveys conducted in 2016 and 2011, provided insights into trends and changes in customer satisfaction over time (Survey attached in appendix).

The DPMAC reviewed the survey feedback and noted that the survey results generally indicated that both the Planning and Building Departments were responsive and available to applicants. Many survey respondents praised the staff for their helpfulness and efficiency. However, there were also calls for improvements, such as reducing the high fees and streamlining communication processes affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Suggestions from respondents included revising and clarifying codes, enhancing online resources, and simplifying the application process. These points from the survey informed the committee's discussion on how the departments could further improve their services to better meet the needs of the community.

The session served as a platform for committee members to voice their initial thoughts on the challenges facing Ashland's development and planning efforts and to begin shaping the direction of future policies and regulations.

### **November 29, 2023 Meeting Summary**

During this second meeting of the DPMAC, Staff provided the committee with a summary of building permit fee comparisons as was requested at the prior meeting. The building fee comparison provided detailed Ashland's fee structures compared to 13 other jurisdictions across three categories: new single-family dwellings, new multi-family development, and new commercial office space. This comparison aimed to offer transparency and context on how Ashland's fees align with those of other regions.

Addressing questions and suggestions regarding enhancements to Ashland's online resources for Building and Planning, April Lucas, Ashland's Development Coordinator, showcased the new features of the new Building and Planning Permit portal, known as EnerGov Citizen Self Service. At the time of the presentation the self-service portal was in Beta and had not been widely released. Members of the DPMAC were "beta testers" of the site to ensure the online portal was both useable and readily accessible. This new online resource allows customers to apply for various permits and plans, enhancing operational transparency and streamlining the permitting process. April Lucas highlighted future features the City expects to roll out, including the ability to pay invoices online.

During the discussion led by Brandon Goldman, an in-depth presentation was given on the various types of land use actions—Type I, II, and III—complete with flowcharts that detail the respective approval processes. The dialogue that ensued focused on the potential inefficiencies of requiring certain projects to undergo Planning Commission review. This step in the process can often result in lengthy and expensive delays, particularly when opposition to the project is minimal or unsubstantiated.

Participants expressed a desire to optimize the review process by reclassifying certain decisions from Planning Commission review to administrative approval. Such a shift would not only streamline procedures but also reduce the bureaucratic hurdles associated with development projects. This approach aligns with the broader objective of the DPMAC to refine planning processes in a manner consistent with statewide planning goals.

The balance between ensuring public involvement and facilitating development expedience is a delicate legislative issue. By forwarding recommendations that propose modifications to the planning action types, the DPMAC aims to enhance the efficiency of the planning application review process while still adhering to the necessary legislative frameworks. These recommendations will seek to strike an equitable balance between public engagement in the planning process and the expedited execution of development projects, recognizing that the ultimate decision lies within the legislative purview.

### March 6, 2024 Meeting Summary

During the third session of the Development and Planning Management Advisory Committee (DPMAC), updates on the city's planning and development processes were provided, with significant emphasis on the advancements in digital tools. April Lucas reported on the launch of Ashland's new online permitting portal, Citizen Self Service, which is now fully operational and accessible to the community. Since its launch, the system has already seen engagement from 80 users applying for permits without any substantive difficulties reported, marking a smooth transition and adoption of the new digital service.

Brandon Goldman then outlined proposed adjustments to streamline the development process within Ashland. His presentation included a variety of recommendations designed to simplify and expedite planning actions and land use code amendments. The committee discussed reducing discretionary processes for common actions, such as adjusting requirements for tree removals, combining steps in the subdivision review process, and streamlining the review process for manmade steep slopes. The DPMAC members expressed general support for these adjustments, recognizing the potential for these changes to facilitate quicker and more predictable development activities.

During the deliberations of the Development and Planning Management Advisory Committee (DPMAC), there was a shared understanding among members that any proposed changes to the land use process would aim to enhance clarity and predictability in the approval procedures. However, the committee recognized that since these changes would involve legislative amendments, it was crucial to maintain a careful balance between streamlining processes and ensuring adequate public involvement. The members underscored the importance of public engagement in the legislative process to ensure that the amendments reflect the community's needs and values while also enhancing the efficiency of development activities.

Staff highlighted that while the list of potential land use code amendments (see attached) discussed by the committee could be considered, the long-range planning division is currently engaged with other ongoing code amendments. They noted that while some minor adjustments might feasibly be undertaken within the coming year, more substantial amendments, such as those addressing hillside development standards, would necessitate a lengthier review process. These larger changes would require explicit direction and prioritization from the City Council to ensure they align with broader city planning goals and resource allocations.

The meeting concluded with an overview of the forthcoming steps, where it was announced that the DPMAC would convene one final time to review and finalize their recommendations.

### April 24, 2024 Meeting Summary

The Development and Planning Management Advisory Committee (DPMAC) convened on April 24th to review the report and finalize their recommendations. This session allowed the committee to ensure that their insights and proposals are effectively communicated to the city's executive leadership.

Discussions covered several major areas for recommendations to the City Manager, including streamlining permit processes, modifying land use codes to encourage development, enhancing public engagement in planning, and improving the online permitting and inspection processes.

In the meeting, members briefly discussed the new Citizen Self Service portal and supported various other initiatives, including the guide and pre-approved plans for accessory residential units (ARUs). There was discussion regarding certain permit requirements and potential relaxation of specific requirements to make the development process more efficient. However, it was pointed out that some recommendations might not align directly with the goal of streamlining the development process but were more about changing the code to facilitate development. Discussions along these lines included potential adjustments to the Maximum Permitted Floor Area (MPFA) regulations in historic districts, which were influenced by Senate Bill 1537. This bill allows for increased height and expanded lot coverage to facilitate more housing.

The meeting concluded with an update regarding the ongoing collaboration with local designers to offer pre-approved plans for ARUs, which will be available to residents free of charge but will likely require consultation for any modifications.

Overall, the DPMAC's discussions and forthcoming recommendations, set to be presented to the City Manager in this report are geared towards enhancing city planning and development processes for the future.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The Development Process Management Advisory Committee discussed potential actions that the City could take to streamline the development review process and reduce the burden of application requirements. The committee did not rank these actions in order of priority; however, there was a consensus on the importance of certain initiatives.

### Key Areas of Discussion

- Members of the Committee particularly highlighted the need to enhance public online access to the permitting process. This improvement was seen as a significant advancement, and there was a strong advocacy for the City to continue expanding these efforts. The online enhancements discussed included:
  - Upgrades to Online Permitting: Continued improvements to online permitting processes, including the introduction of online payment options, were seen as vital for making the system more user-friendly and efficient.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): The Committee emphasized the importance of providing educational materials to the public on the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), also known as ARUs. It was recommended to create a how-to guide for ADUs and offer pre-approved ARU building plans at no charge to property owners interested in adding units.
- Simplifying the Tree Removal Permit Process: Efforts to simplify this process were supported to make it less cumbersome for property owners and developers.
- Extended Permit Timelines: Given the challenges related to supply chain interruptions and fluctuations in financing, there was a suggestion to address the expiration of permit timelines by allowing for more extended periods.

### Legislative Considerations

The Committee was informed by staff that many of the proposed actions would require legislative changes. Prior to initiating any new legislative actions, staff clarified that the the Department's focus would remain on long-range projects already underway, including, Climate Friendly Area Zoning, Manufactured Home Park Zoning, Housing Production Strategic Actions, Economic Opportunities Analysis.

Longer term legislative changes that were discussed and could be considered in the future included:

- Considering Land Use Ordinance changes that promote administrative approvals for common actions with clear and objective criteria.
- Fence Permit Requirements: Removing the requirement that a fence permit be obtained for fences that comply with Ashland's standards for height, location, and materials.

- Residential Density Increases: Considering increases in residential density in R-2 and R-3 zones to allow triplexes and quadplexes outright, similar to how accessory dwelling units are treated in R-1 zones.
  - This may include reevaluating the maximum permitted house size ordinance in Historic Districts to adjust square foot thresholds for multifamily developments.
- Conversion of Commercial Space: Allowing the conversion of existing commercial space to residential use without a planning review, requiring only the issuance of building permits.
- Simplification to the subdivision process for developments to reduce steps in the review process for smaller developments (12 or less units).
- Solar Access ordinance amendments to allow increased shading arrangements for homes within a discrete subdivision without impacting properties outside the subdivision.

The Committee did put forward several actionable strategies that could be implemented in the shorter term:

- User Guide for Business Owners: Creation of a user guide for business owners for change of use/code analysis, which would include steps and code references to facilitate understanding and compliance.
- Community Development Staff Consultations: Retaining the availability of Community Development Staff for phone and walk-in consultations to assist developers and property owners.
- Flexible Policy on Permit Expiration: Implementing a more flexible policy regarding the expiration of land use approvals and the process for requesting extensions. Currently, the approval expires 18 months after initial approval, with an allowance for a one-time 24-month extension.

These strategies represent a balanced approach to enhancing the development process, focusing on both immediate improvements and long-term planning to ensure a more streamlined, efficient, and accessible system for all stakeholders involved.

## Appendices

- **Appendix A**
  - Potential Land Use Amendments for Streamlining
  
- **Appendix B**
  - Customer Survey December 2022
  
- **Appendix C**
  - Planning Action Types
  
- **Appendix D**
  - Development Fee Comparisons
    - Single Family
    - Multifamily
    - Commercial
  
- **Appendix E**
  - Meeting Notes**
    - October 18, 2023
    - November 29, 2023
    - March 6, 2024
    - April 24, 2024

## Appendix A

### Development Process Management Advisory Committee Potential Land Use Amendments for Streamlining

Ashland's processes or land use codes could be amended as follows, with a focus on facilitating development while maintaining environmental and community standards:

#### **Tree Removal Permits within Building Footprints as Administrative Actions:**

- **Process Amendment:** Create a fast-track administrative procedure for tree removal permits within a building's footprint. This process would bypass the need for public notice, assuming the removal meets predefined criteria that justify no public input is required (e.g., non-heritage, non-significant trees).
- **Code Amendment:** Amend the land use code to clearly define criteria for trees within building footprints that qualify for administrative action, including tree size, species, and condition.
- **Code References:** Section 18.5.7.020.A. – Applicability and Review Procedure, Ministerial Action.

#### **Emergency Removals for Hazardous or Diseased Trees:**

- **Process Amendment:** Establish a clear, streamlined process for the immediate administrative approval of permits for trees posing imminent hazards or severely infected by disease, or infested by insects, without requiring public notice.
- **Code Amendment:** Update the code to include a list of conditions considered emergencies and a protocol for rapid assessment by a qualified arborist or city official.
- **Code References:** Section 18.5.7.020.A. – Applicability and Review Procedure, Ministerial Action; Section 18.5.7.040.A. – Approval Criteria, Emergency Tree Removal Permit.

#### **Subdivision Processing for Up to 12 Residential Lots:**

- **Process Amendment:** Simplify the subdivision process for developments proposing no more than 12 residential lots by allowing a combined outline and final planning action, reducing steps in the review process.
- **Code Amendment:** Adjust subdivision regulations to permit a unified process for small-scale developments, detailing criteria and standards for approval.
- **Code References:** Section 18.5.3.020.C. – Applicability and General Requirements, Subdivision and Partition Approval Through Two-Step Process; Section 18.5.3.030. – Preliminary Plat Approval Process; Section 18.5.3.070. – Preliminary Subdivision Plat Criteria; Section 18.5.3.090. – Final Plats.

**Manmade Steep Slopes in Physical and Environmental Constraints Permits:**

- **Process Amendment:** Provide clear guidelines for the treatment of manmade steep slopes during the permit review process, differentiating them from natural steep slopes.
- **Code Amendment:** Amend the environmental constraints code to include definitions and standards for the treatment of manmade steep slopes, including mitigation measures and engineering standards.
- **Code References:** Section 18.3.10.090.H. – Development Standards for Hillside Lands, Exception to the Development Standards for Hillside Lands; Section 18.3.10.060 – Land Classifications.

**Private Drive/Street Lot Serving Increases:**

- **Process Amendment:** Evaluate and potentially increase the number of lots that can be accessed by a private drive or street based on safety, environmental impact, and infrastructure capacity.
- **Code Amendment:** Revise the subdivision and infrastructure codes to allow for more lots per private drive/street, incorporating design and safety standards.
- **Code References:** Section 18.4.6.040.F. – Street Design Standards, table; Section 18.4.6.040.G.5. – Street Design Standards, Standards Illustrated; Section 18.5.3.020.A. – Applicability and General Requirements, Applicability; Section 18.6.1.030.P. – Private Drive.

**Solar Ordinance Amendments for Intra-Parcel Shading:**

- **Process Amendment:** Establish a process for evaluating and permitting intra-parcel shading arrangements, ensuring compliance with new standards.
- **Code Amendment:** Amend the solar ordinance to permit intra-parcel shading that does not extend more than 4 feet up the southern wall of a building's ground floor within the parent parcel of the development. Neighboring parcels to the north of the developing property, would retain protections of the existing Solar Ordinance.
- **Address solar ordinance in Climate Friendly Areas**  
As Climate Friendly Areas (CFAs) would allow taller buildings and higher densities, amendments to the solar ordinance may be needed to facilitate the density and intensity of development envisioned for such areas.
- **Code References:** Section 18.4.8.040. – Solar Access Performance Standard (possibly also Section 18.4.8.020.C. – Applicability, Exceptions and Variances; Section 18.4.8.030. – Solar Setbacks)

**Planning Application Expiration and Extensions:**

- **Process Amendment:** Implement a clearer, more flexible policy regarding the expiration of planning applications and the process for requesting extensions.

- **Code Amendment:** Amend planning codes to outline specific conditions under which application periods can be extended, including consideration of lengthening the maximum extension time period (currently 18 months initial approval, with one 24-month extension), and address required documentation.
- **Code References:** Section 18.1.6.030 – Permit Expiration; 18.1.6.040 – Permit Extension.

### **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Permitting:**

- **Process Amendment:** Streamline the ADU permitting process, reducing barriers to ADU development through promotion of permit-ready plans and clear guidelines. Establish website how-to guide, and resource lists for homeowners.
- **Code Amendment:** Not needed – outright permitted.

### **Commercial-to-Residential Conversions:**

- **Process Amendment:** Establish a streamlined process for commercial-to-residential conversions that requires only a building permit, exempting these conversions from more extensive site reviews.
- **Code Amendment:** Amend zoning and development codes to clarify conditions under which commercial properties can be converted to residential uses with minimal procedural requirements.
- **Code References:** Section 18.3.14.040 – Allowed Uses (Transit Triangle); Section 18.2.2.030. – Allowed Uses (Base Zones and Allowed Uses); Section 18.2.3.130 – Dwelling in Non-Residential Zone and possibly Section 18.5.1.010 – Summary of Approvals by Type of Review Procedure (table)

### **Fence Permit Amendments:**

- **Process Amendment:** Remove requirement that a fence permit be obtained for fences that comply with Ashland's standards for height, location, and materials. This amendment would reduce Staff time spent on reviewing, issuing and inspecting fence permits for new and replacement fencing. Failure to build a fence in compliance with standards would trigger code compliance action.
- **Code Amendment:** Update the code to amend permit requirement but retain existing design standards.
- **Code References:** Section 18.4.4.060

Implementing these amendments would require careful consideration of the balance between development efficiency and the protection of community, environmental, and aesthetic values. Each amendment would undergo public consultation and legal review to ensure compliance with broader planning goals and state laws. Then would be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council at public hearings for consideration.

## Appendix B

### Customer Survey December 2022

#### 2022 Ashland Community Development Department Customer Satisfaction Survey

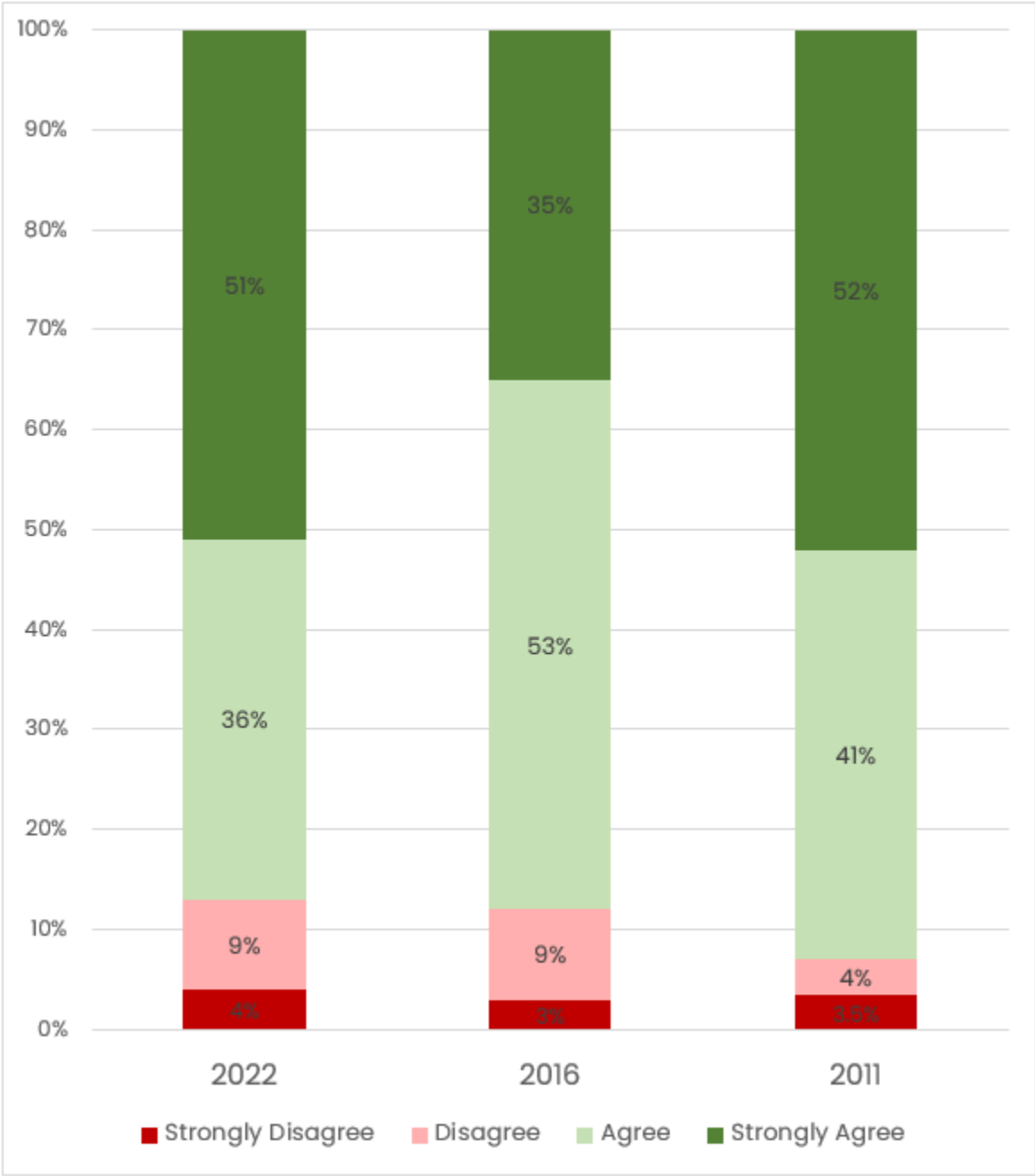
In December 2022, the City of Ashland conducted an online survey targeting a specific group of residents, namely the 1,200 individuals who had applied for either a building permit or planning action within the preceding 48 months. The survey aimed to gauge their experiences and satisfaction levels with the development review process facilitated by the Department of Community Development. Out of the 1,200 recipients, 71 individuals responded to the survey, providing valuable insights into their perceptions and opinions. What makes this survey particularly noteworthy is the fact that it incorporated questions that were previously used in 2016 and 2011, enabling the City to draw direct comparisons and track changes in customer satisfaction over the years. This historical context adds depth and significance to the findings, making the survey a valuable tool for the City to assess and enhance its services.

#### Respondent Distribution

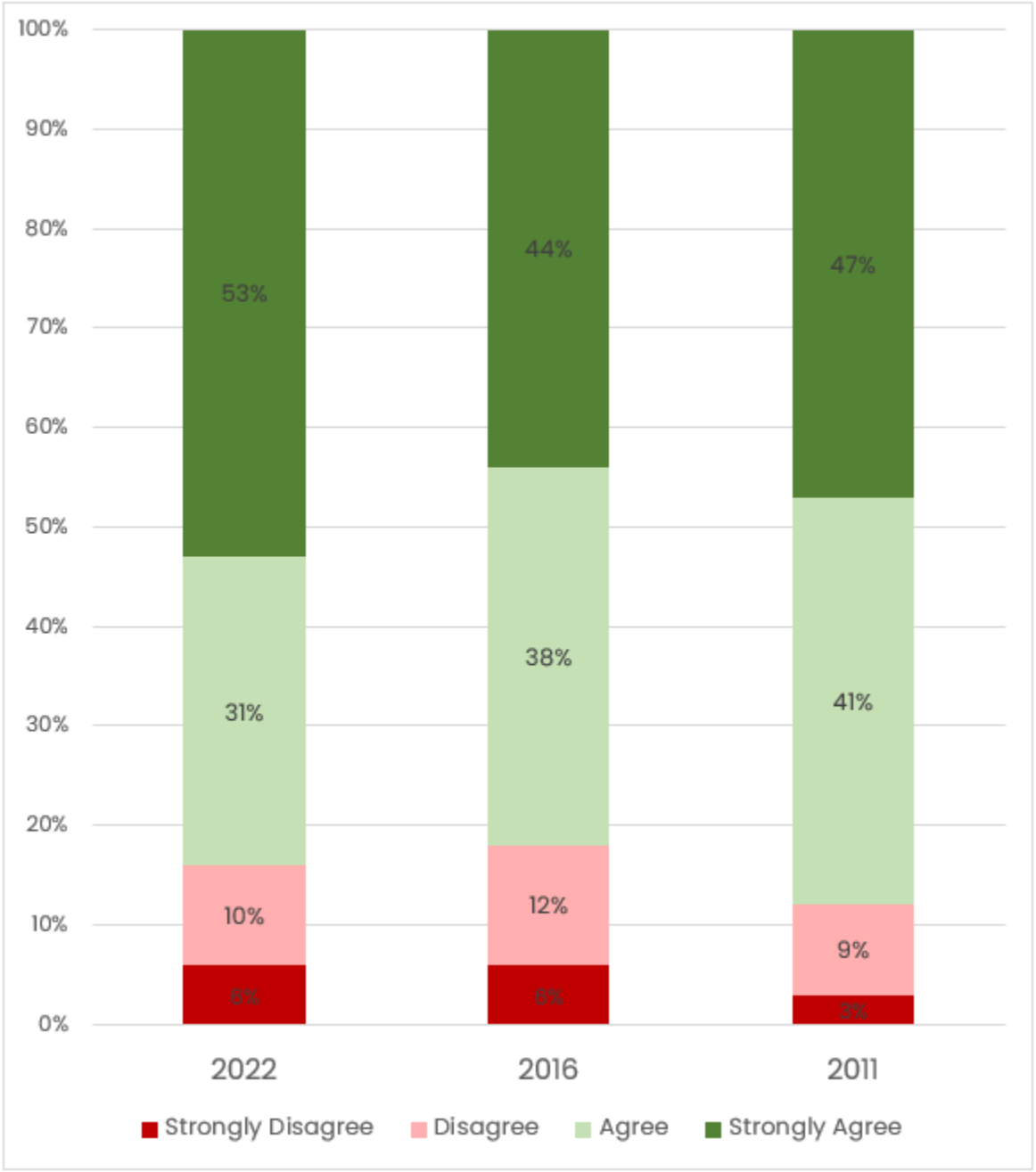
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am the Property Owner	70.42%	50
I am a Design Professional (Architect/Engineer/etc.)	8.45%	6
I am the Property Owner's Agent (Consultant/Attorney/Contractor/etc)	21.13%	15
TOTAL		71

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Building Permit	64.79%	46
Residential Site Review	28.17%	20
Commercial Site Review	15.49%	11
Land Partition/Subdivision	19.72%	14
Conditional Use Permit	14.08%	10
Variance	7.04%	5
Pre-Application Conference	39.44%	28
Tree Removal	32.39%	23
Other (please specify)	16.90%	12
Total Respondents: 71		

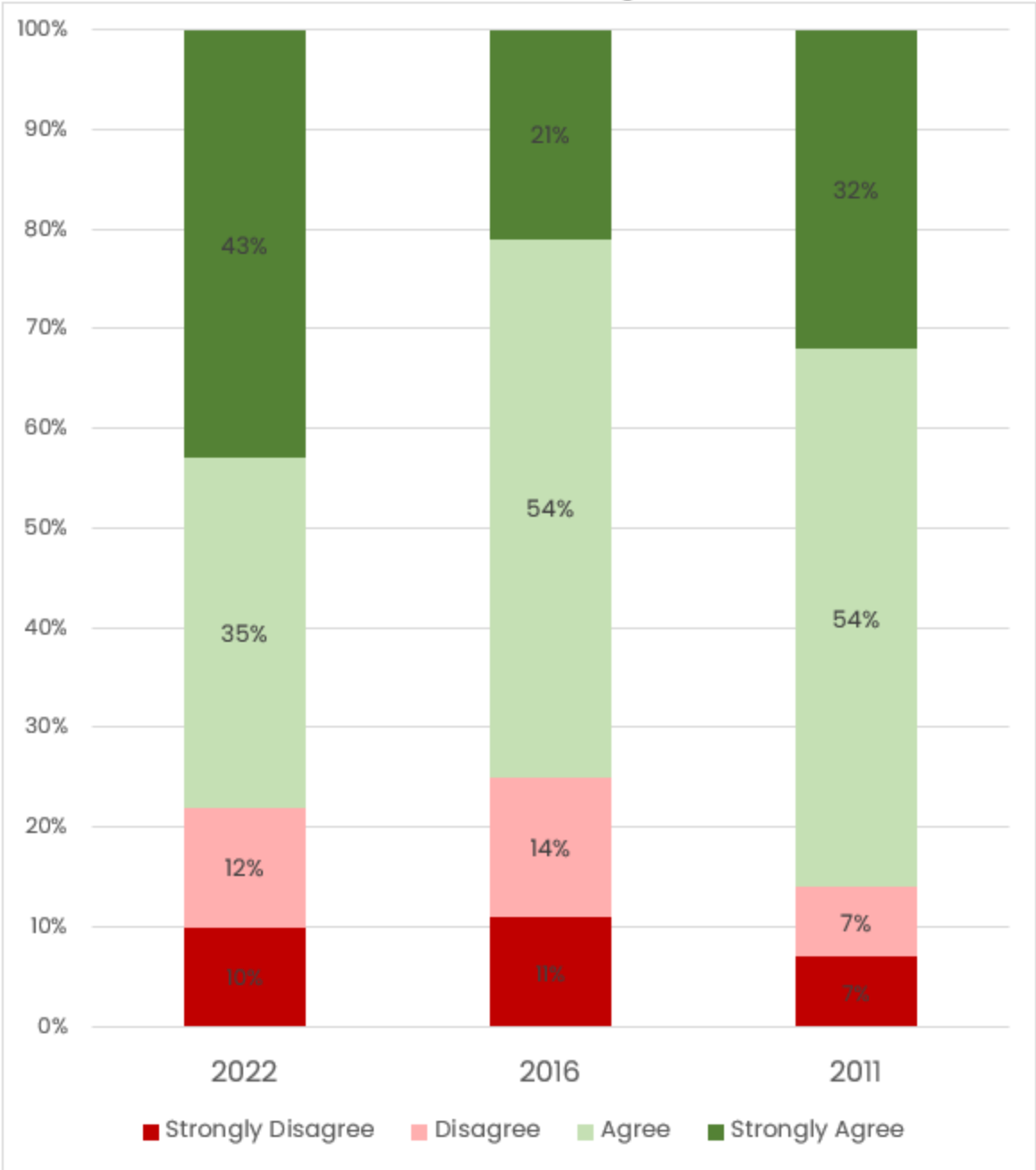
1. When making an application, I have generally found the Community Development staff to be responsive and helpful.



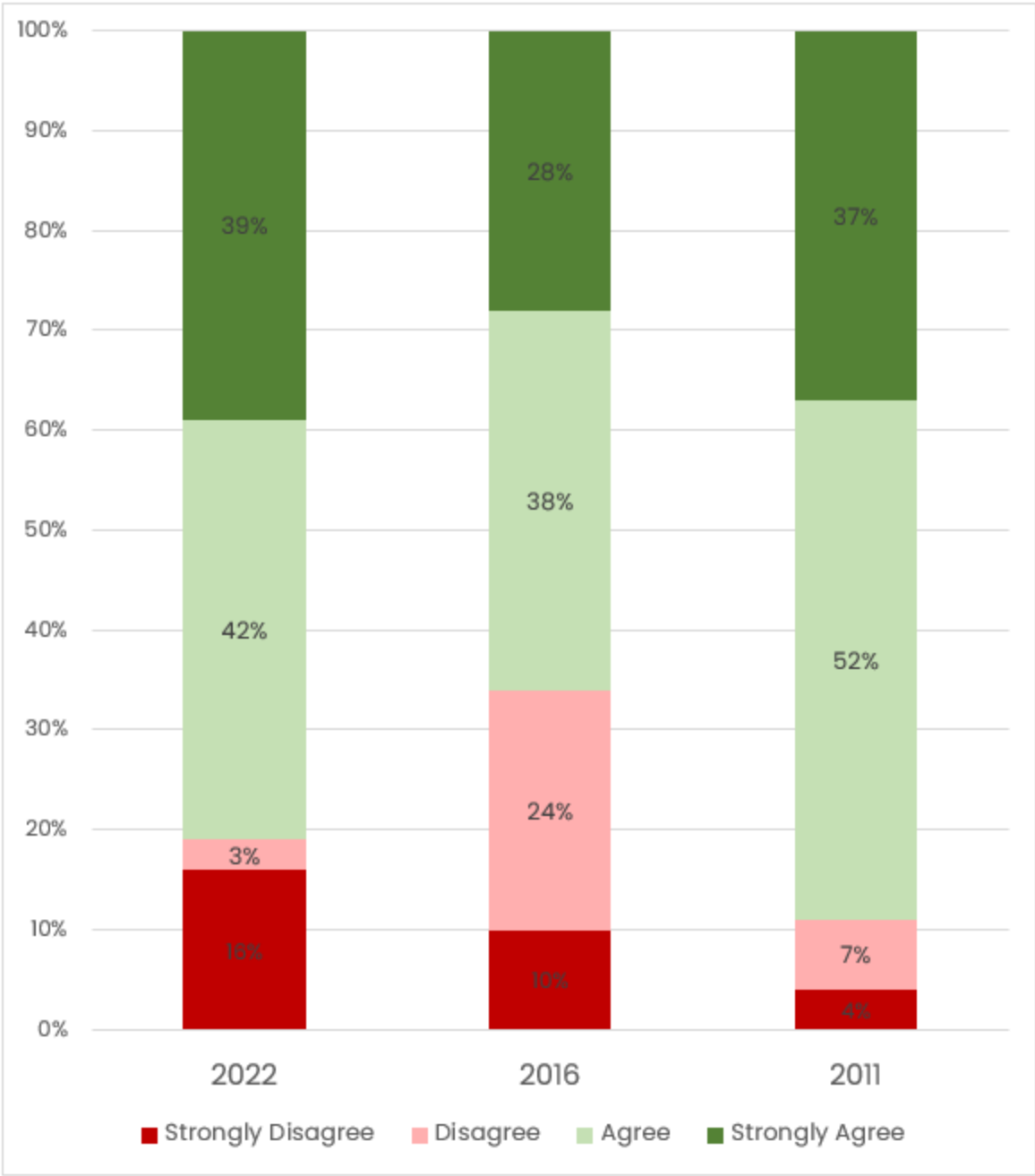
2. In general, the staff has dealt with me in a professional and positive manner, providing options where available, and attempting to help me navigate through the process.



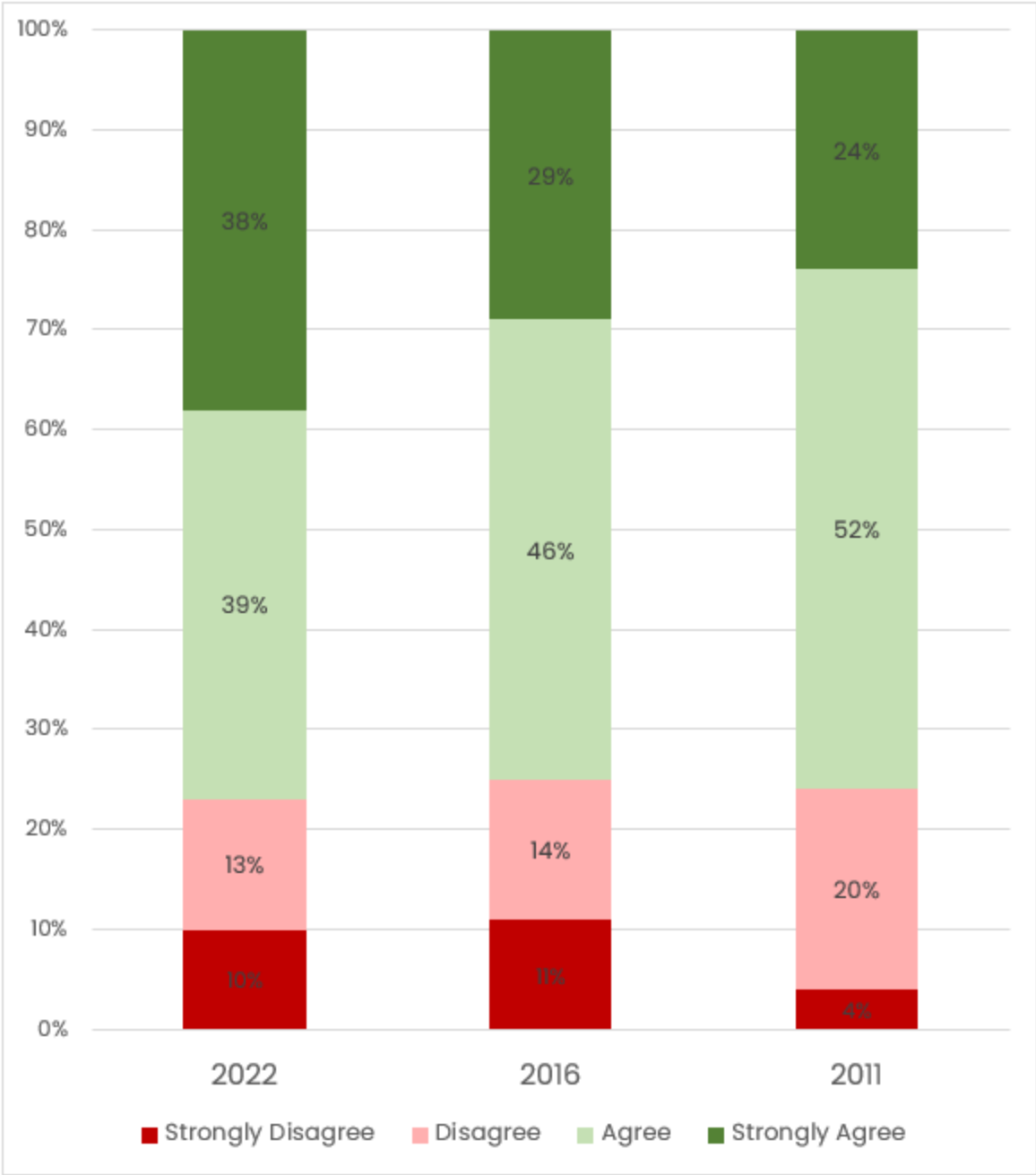
3. Application plan checking is complete and accurate. Additional problems did not surface later that should have been caught in the initial review.



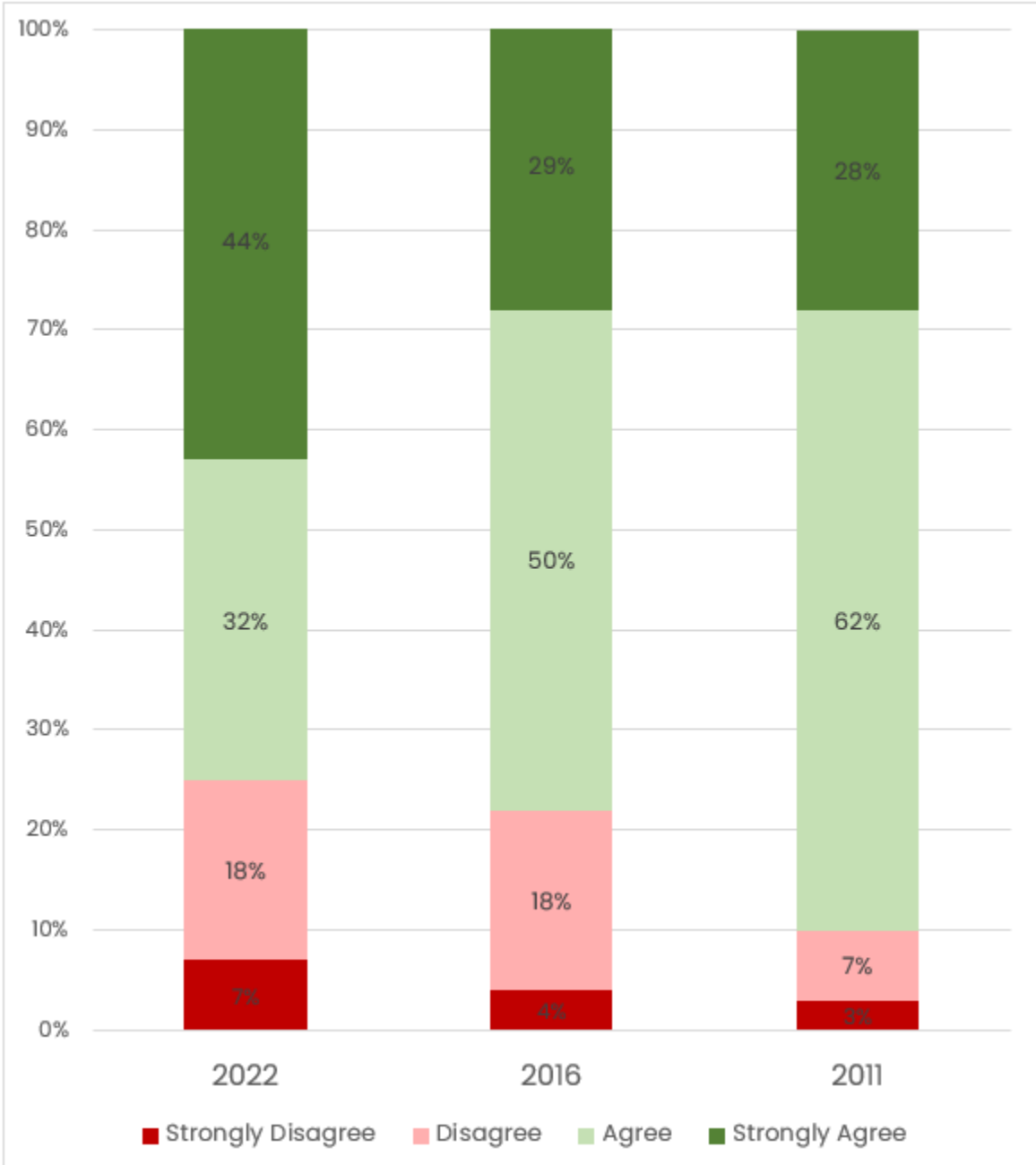
4. Application review turnaround time is acceptable. I did not have to wait an excessive amount of time to get back plans or find out about problems that needed to be corrected.



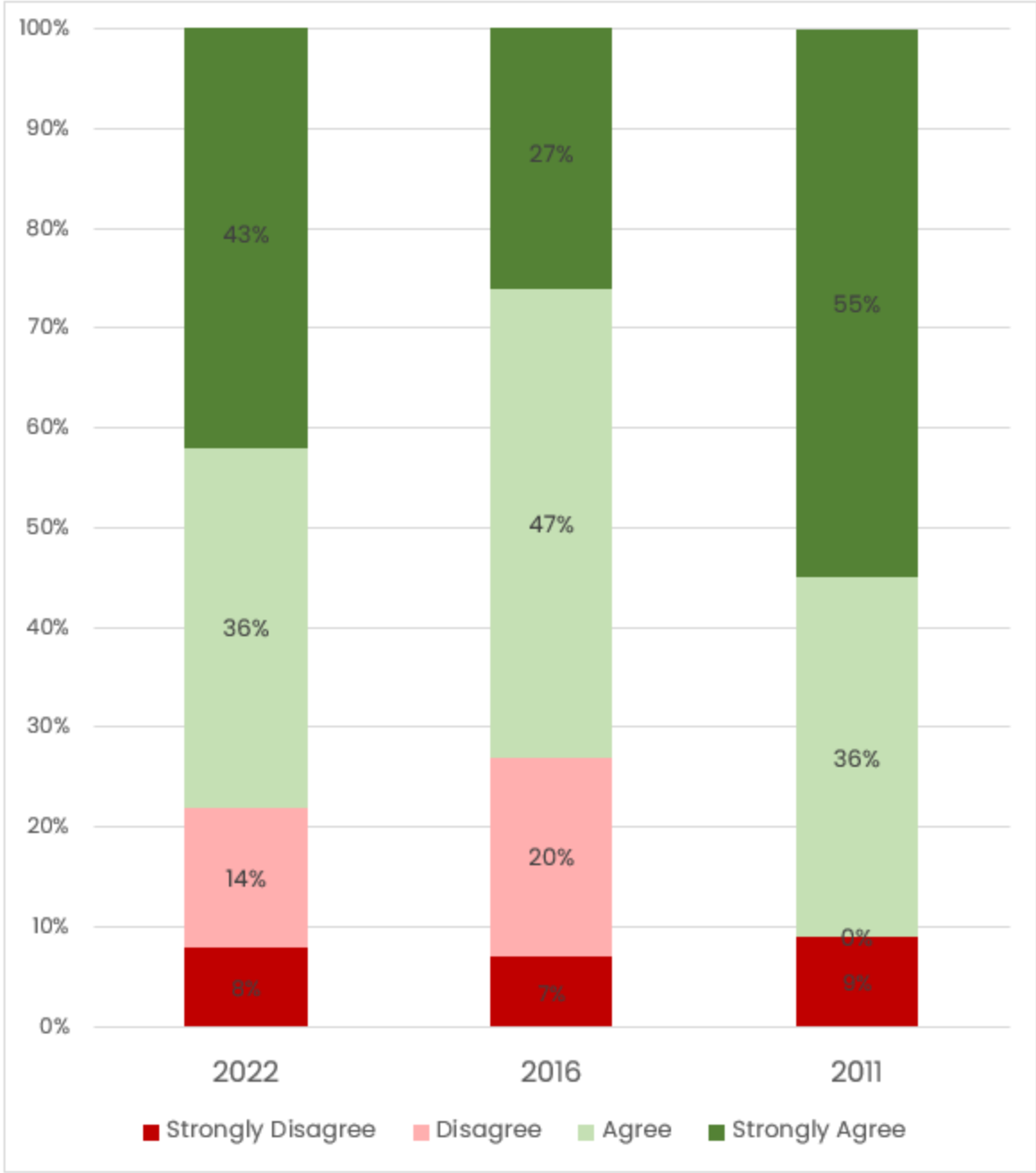
5. Codes and policies are applied by staff in a fair, consistent, and practical manner.



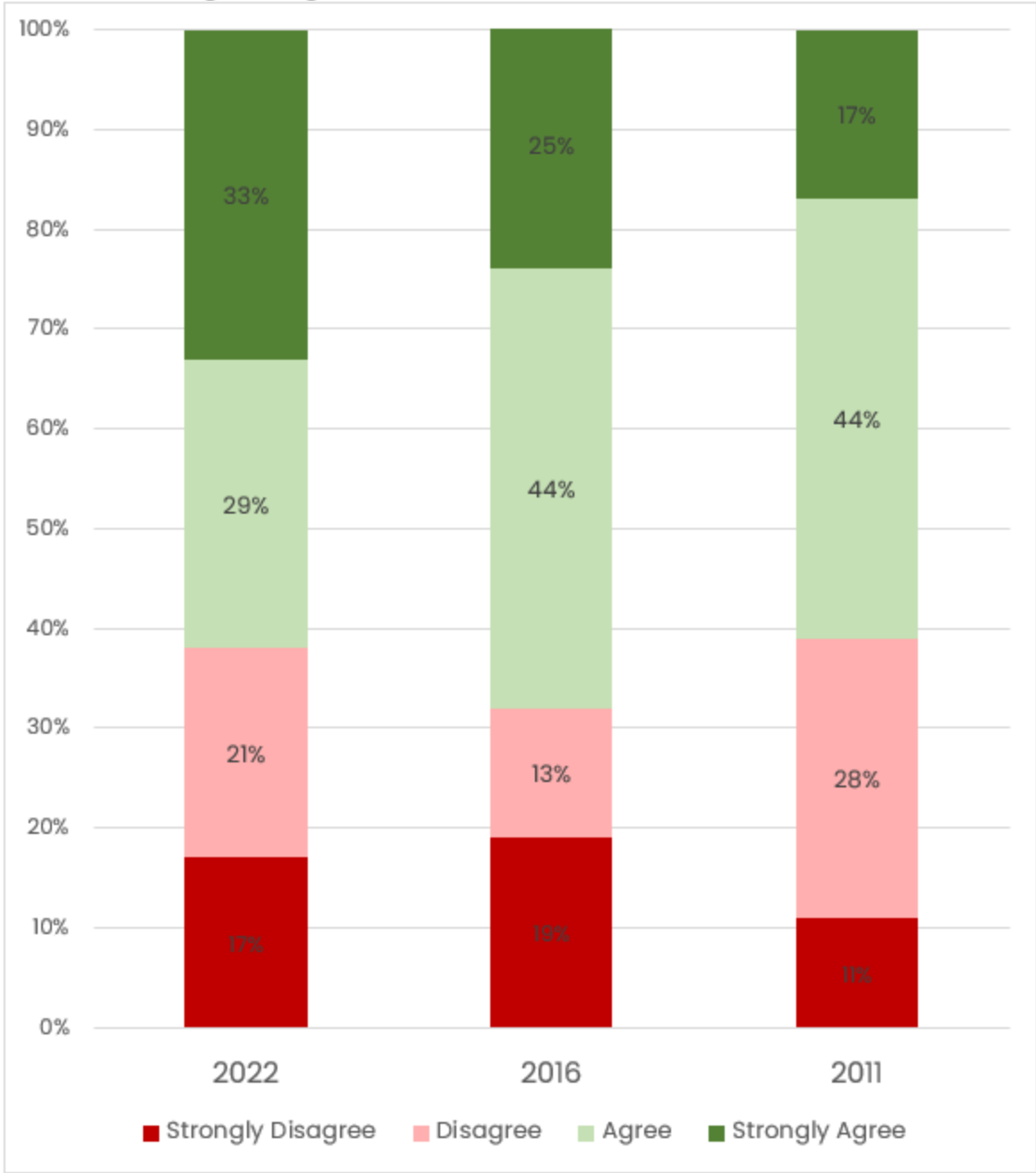
6. Staff explanations regarding the background and purpose of regulations and standards were clear and informative.



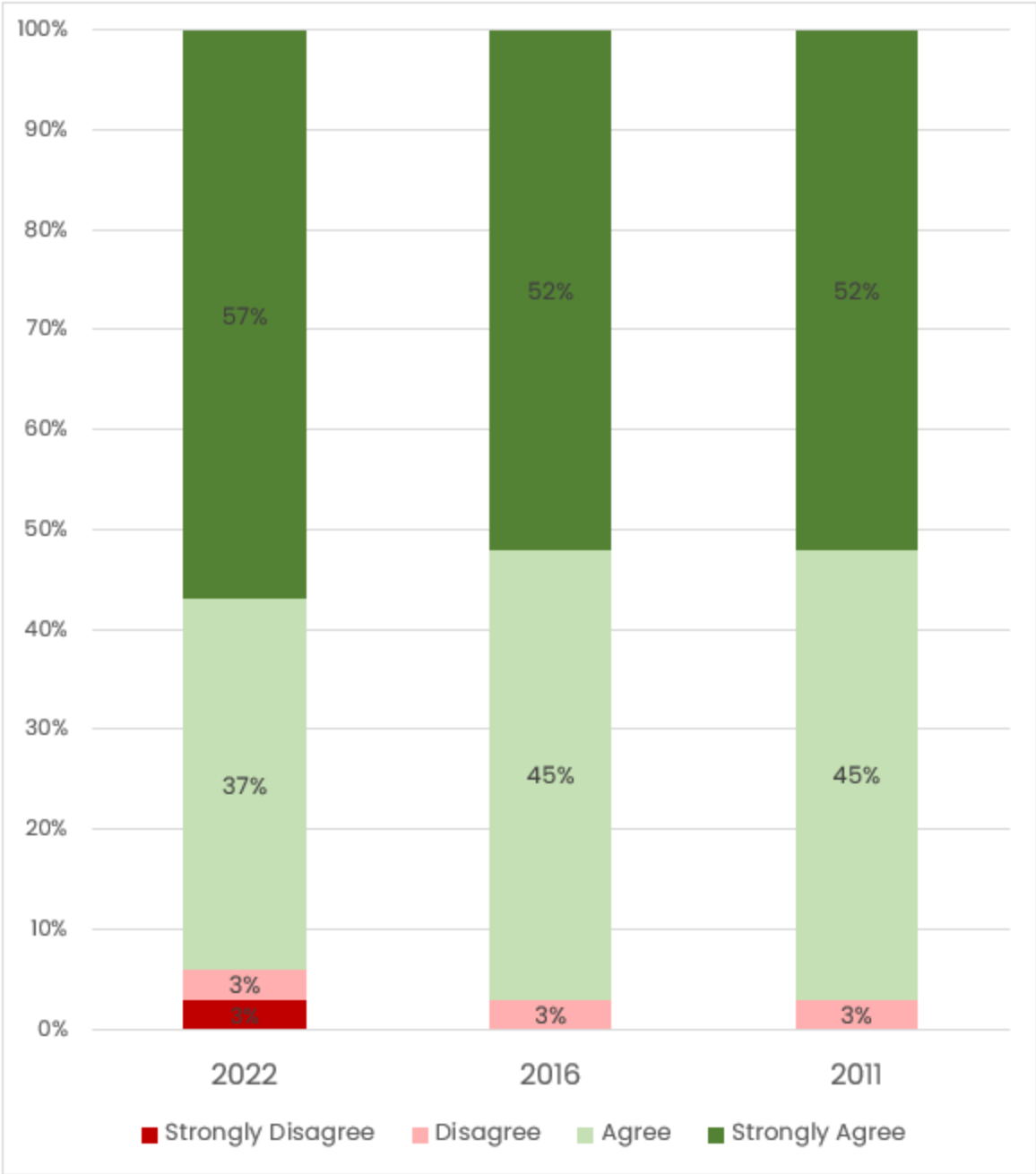
7. The turnaround time for review and approval or disapproval of my application was similar to other cities where I have filed applications.



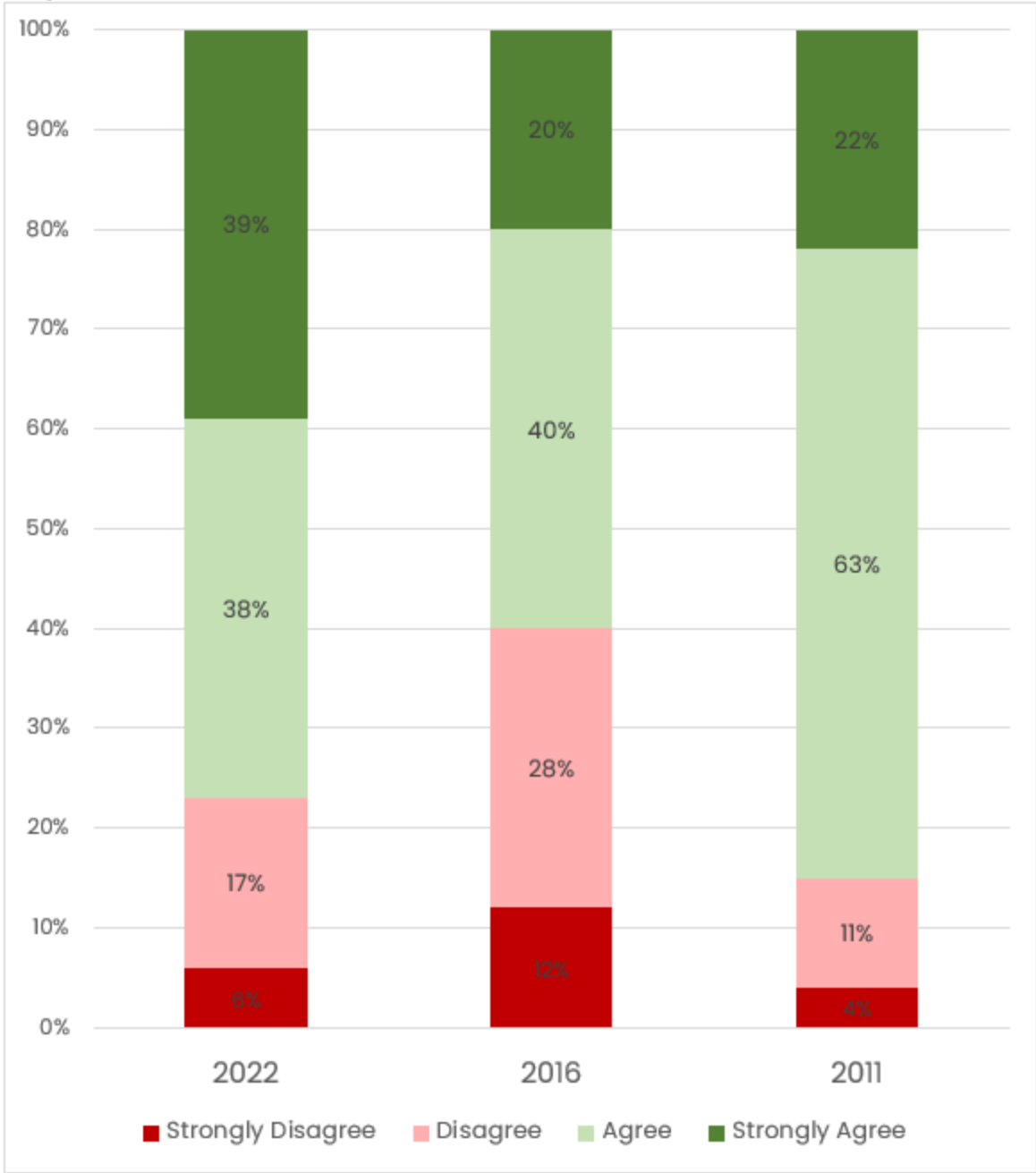
8. Ashland is just as fair, consistent, and practical in its application of regulations as other neighboring cities or counties.



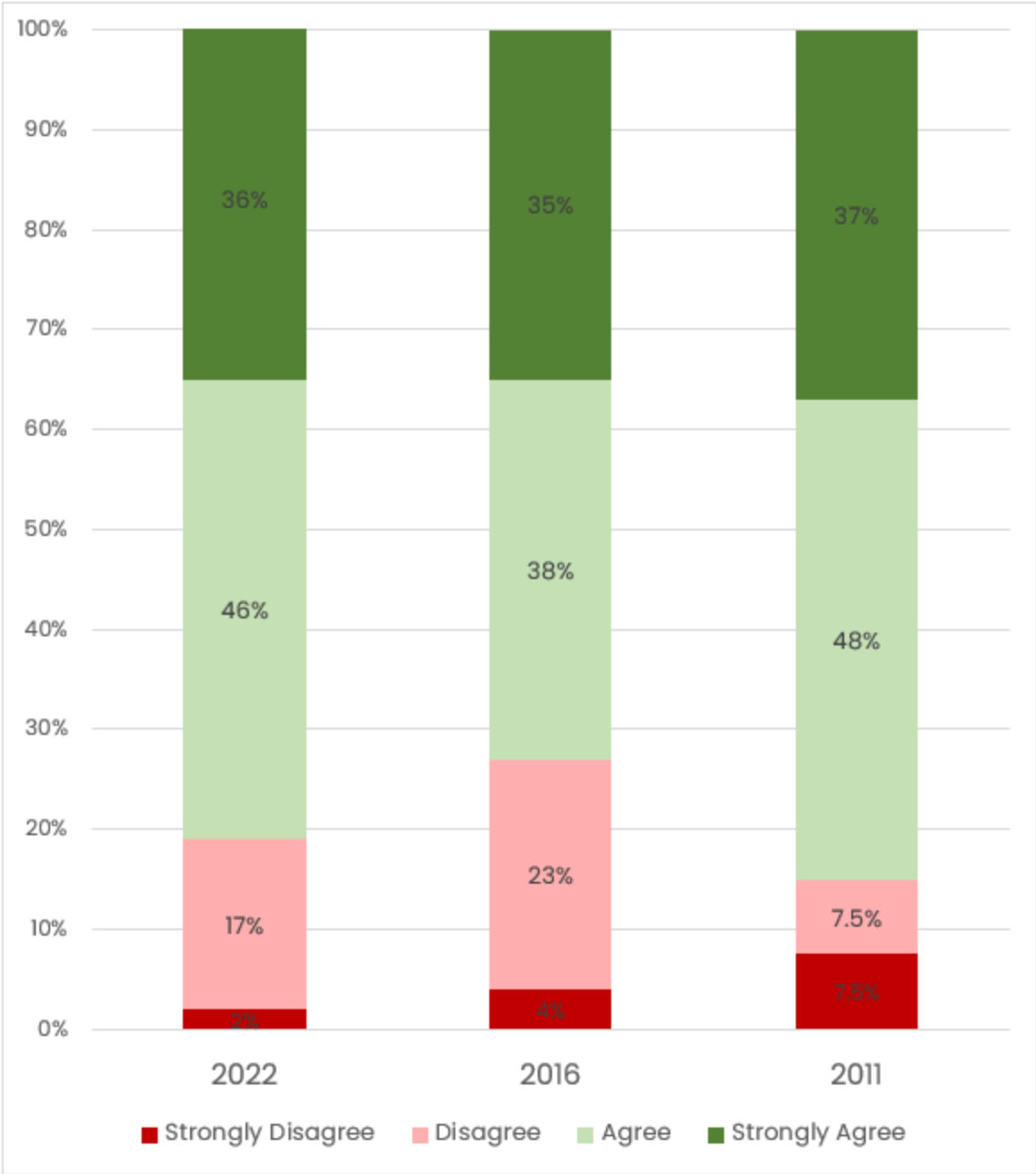
9. Staff was courteous.



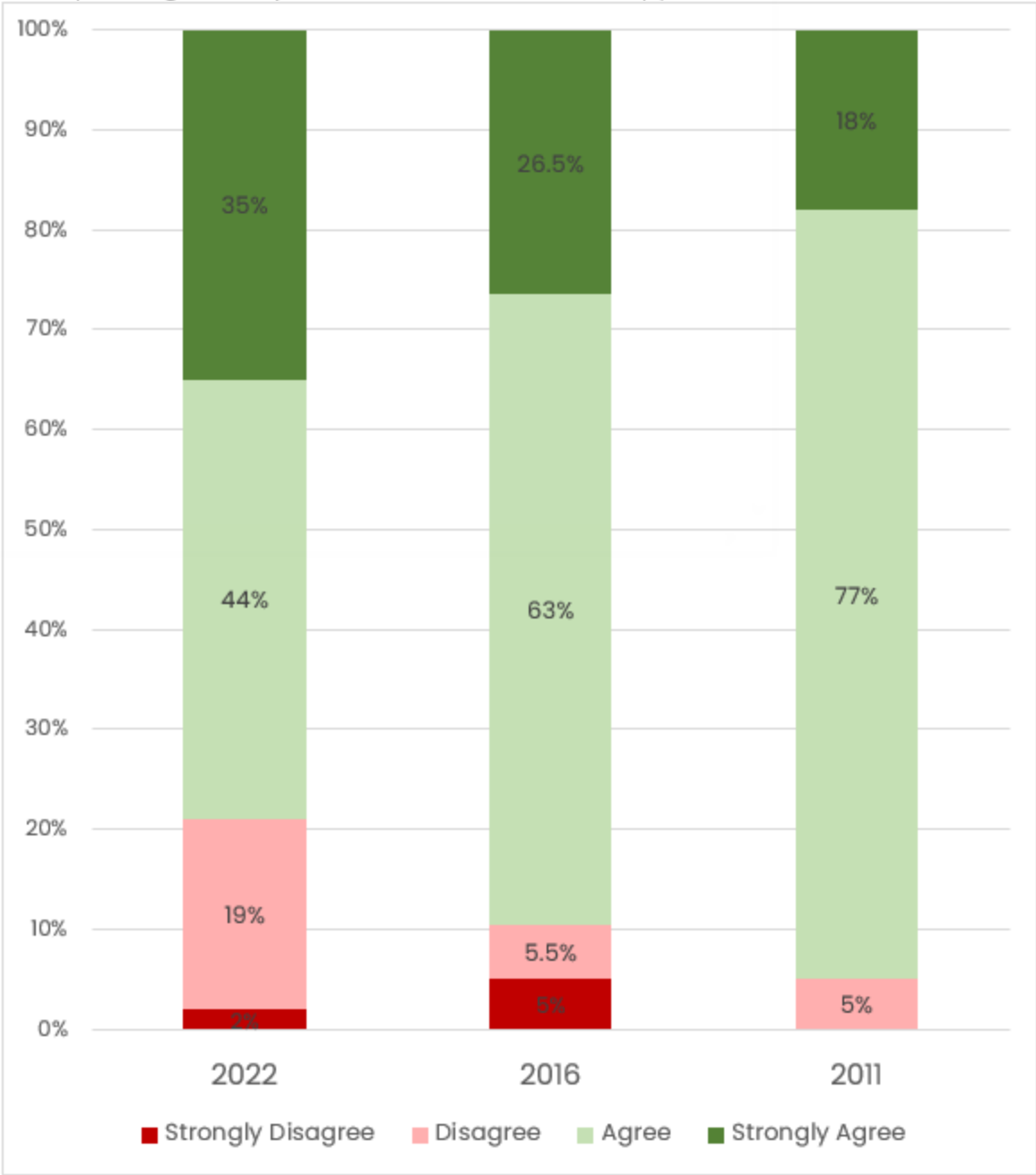
10. The conditions of approval applied to my project were reasonable and justified.



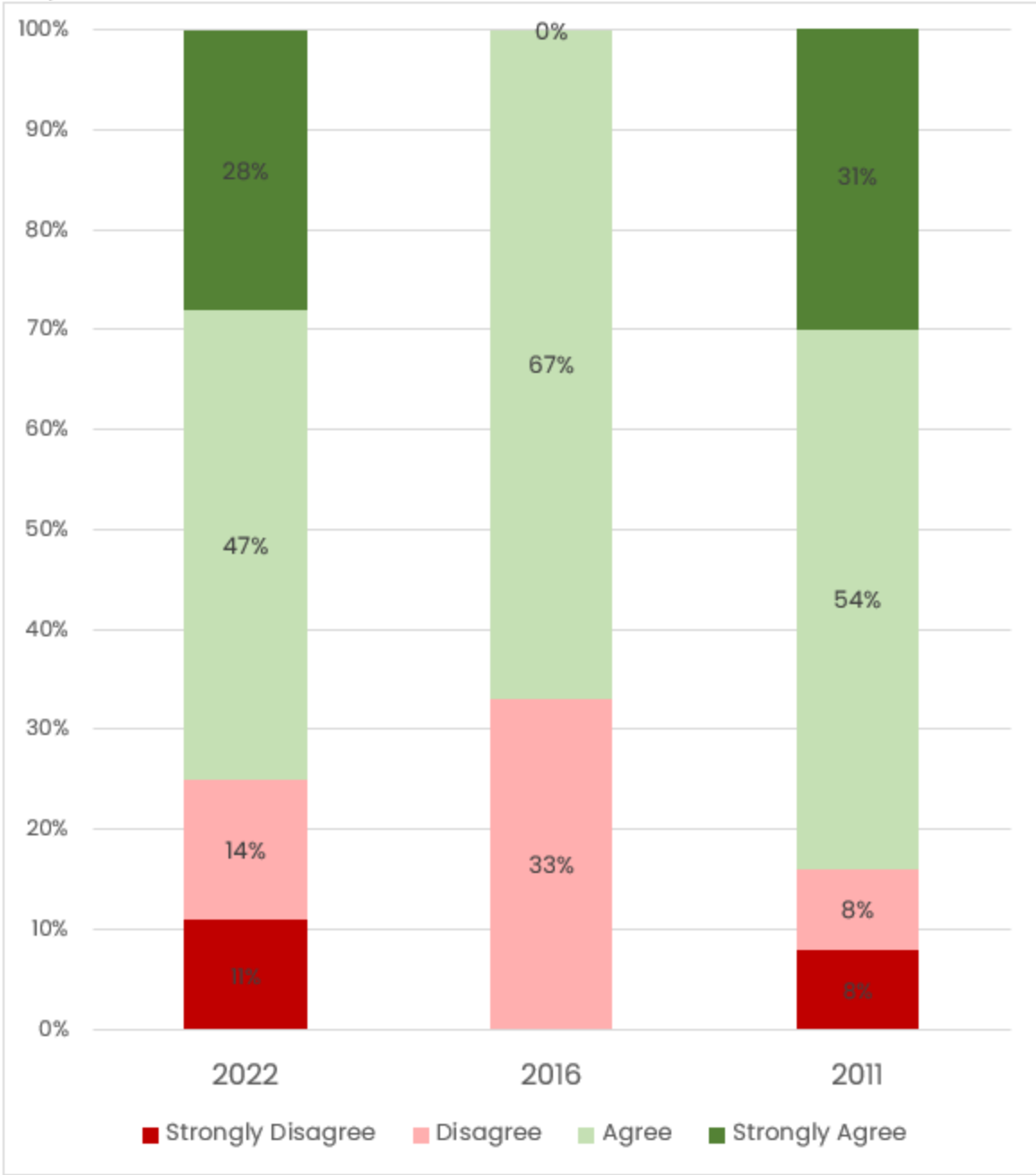
11. Staff was easily accessible when I needed assistance in resolving problems.



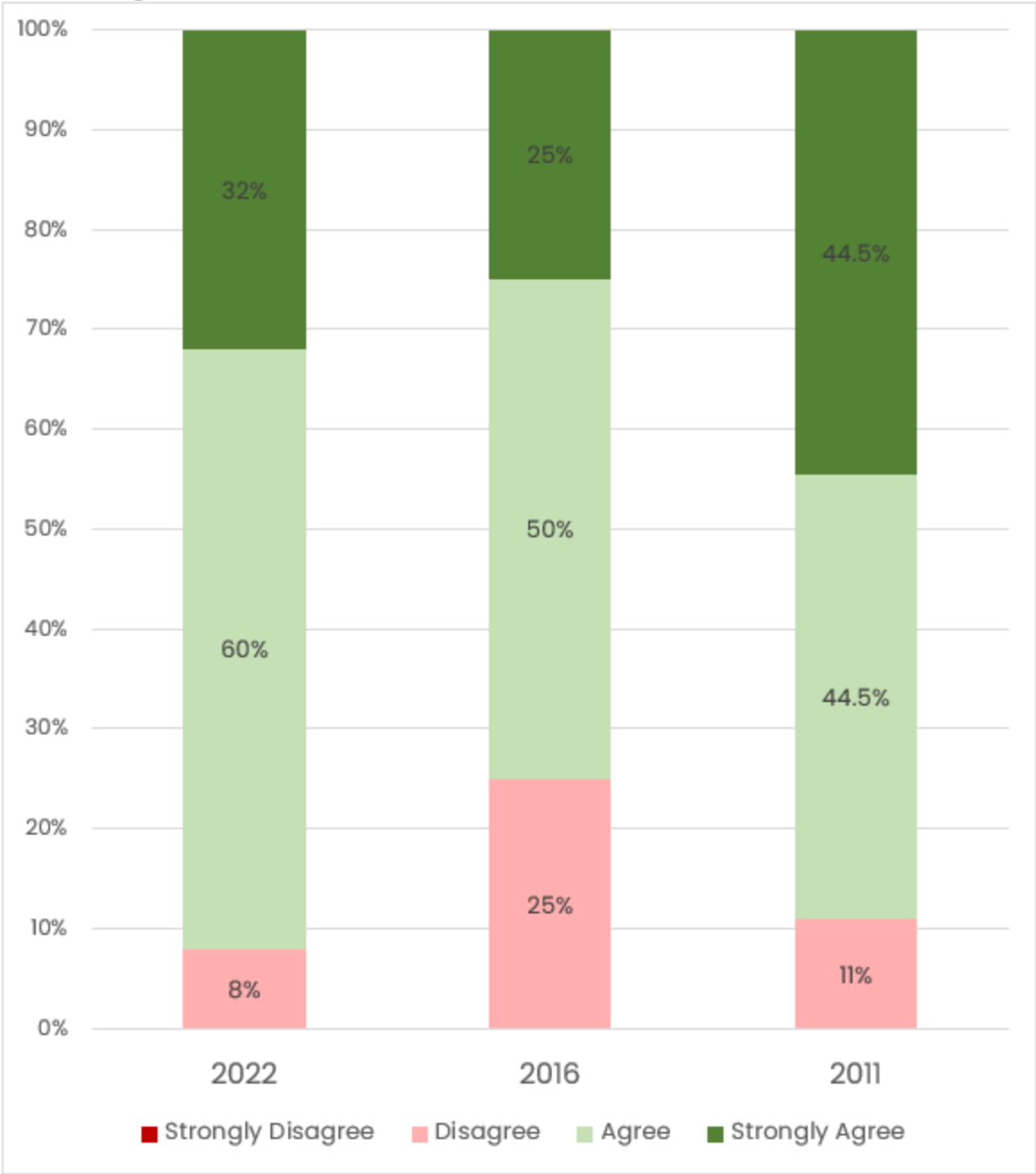
12. I found the handouts supplied by the City to be useful and informative in explaining the requirements I must meet for approval.



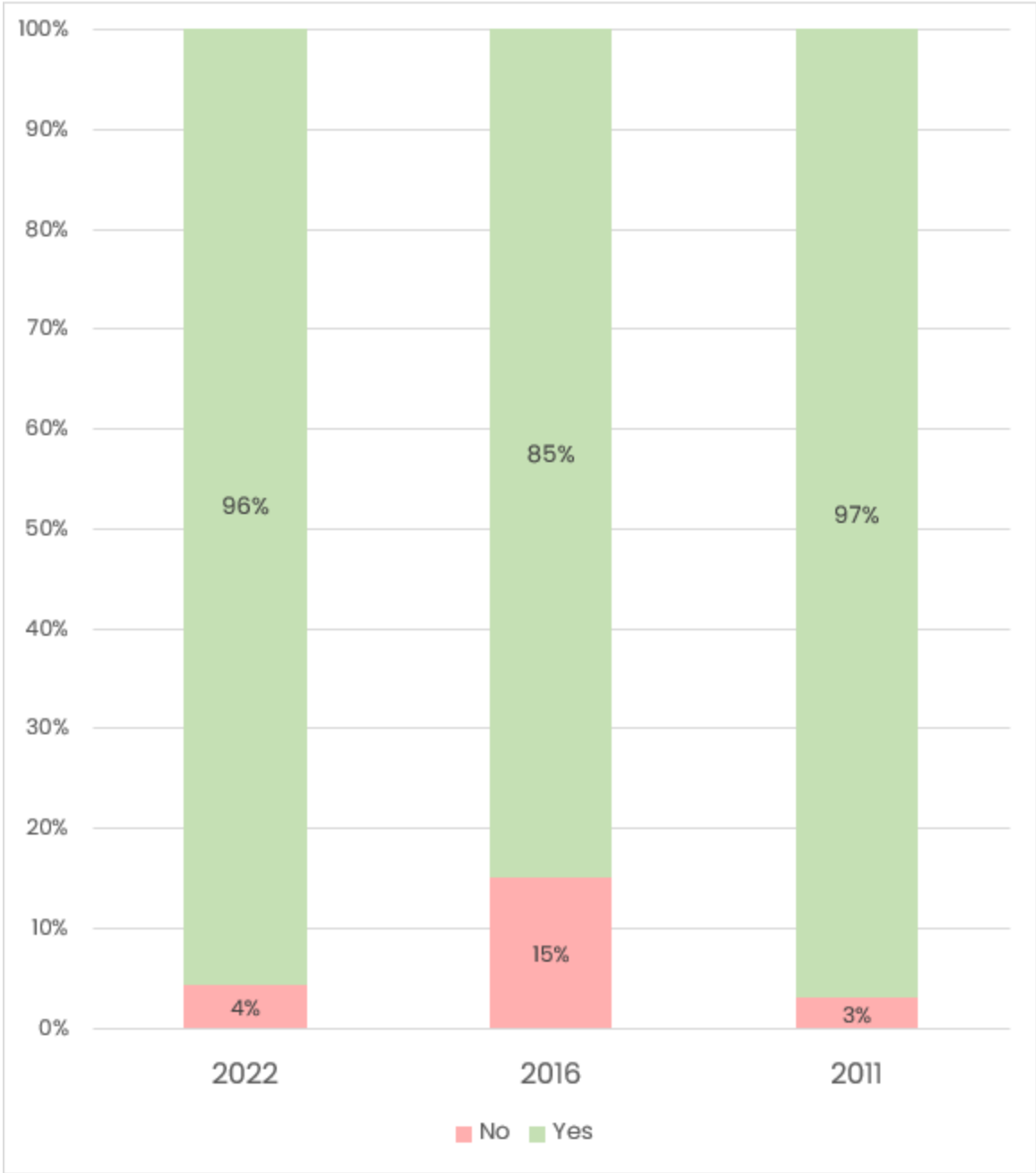
13. The Planning Commission applied the approval criteria in a fair, consistent, and practical manner.



14. The Planning Commission members were courteous and respectful during the hearing.



15. Was your application ultimately approved?



**Written Response sections**

The survey requested final written comments and suggestions from those that completed the survey, and these responses indicate that there were a mix of positive and negative experiences with the development process in Ashland. Some respondents described the process as seamless

and praised the staff as friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful. Others had more negative experiences, with complaints about their difficulty in working through the planning process and staff interactions. There were also a variety of comments about the fees for building permits, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communication, the ability to complete the process remotely, and challenges with the permitting process. There were suggestions for improving the process, including revising and clarifying codes, creating guides and online resources, and streamlining the application process. Some respondents also mentioned the importance of supporting small businesses and affordable housing, and suggested that the city could benefit from more collaboration and cooperation with other agencies and organizations.

The customer survey requested all respondents provide any final comments and suggestions that may help us improve our process or customer service. Specific comments received included:

- My process was fairly seamless. Everyone was helpful and expeditious. I found the fees to be quite high however, especially for a senior citizen, or anyone, I would imagine.
- Friendly, knowledgeable and helpful staff who are advocates for the citizens. Improved timeliness of application and decisions.
- My interactions were very limited: it was just a simple remodel on our home. But I found the staff (mostly dealt with Front Counter Staff) very helpful.
- Your building department and front office staff are great, but your planning department needs change.
- Well done during times of COVID staffing challenges!
- Solutions to the above dilemma would come primarily through revisions and/or clarifications of code, the latter perhaps via a "Builders' and Property Owners' Guide to Medium-Density Development" which would summarize the nexus of salient AMC and ORSC components, and offer examples and diagrams to facilitate the design process. Ashland's capable staff might contribute thought leadership to the evolution of statewide municipal codes and the ORSC in light of increasing--and often conflicting--pressures of urban density and climate change resilience.
- Great experience with the staff and inspectors
- Communication with staff was somewhat delayed due to pandemic, but I was really happy with their effort and clarity in responses.
- During this multiple year process with the City of Ashland, I've spoken to many different professionals in the building industry and Ashland is widely known as excessively difficult to get anything built. We built our previous house in California, and it was a piece of cake compared to Ashland. Another process improvement opportunity is when one of your employees has an unexpected emergency like a death in the family, the policy should be to have another employee monitor that employee's phone and email while they are absent to cover any communications from people that employee is currently working

with. This did not happen in our case, again causing a delay in response from the city because it sat in an inbox unanswered.

- 3rd party reviewers are also slow but predicable.
- “Water heater replacement” needs to be an option. Make it simple for the homeowner to apply. Luckily, Front Counter Staff is excellent at helping beginners. Give Front Counter Staff a raise!
- I have worked as Contractor with the City of Ashland Development Department for over 30 years and find that the current Staff Team is by far the best it has ever been. PLEASE DON'T CHANGE ANYTHING! These people are wonderful.
- If the planning department didn't make it so difficult to work with, many home owners would take the proper channels and get permits. Instead we have a city filled with illegal add-ons and shotty remodels. There is zero incentive to make improvements through the proper channels. I think planners should ONLY have broader say in usage and there should be a quicker path to the building department, building department is a necessary step and reasonable, basing their reviews on code requirements is smart. But planning should not be able to deny a building permit due to their own personal desires.
- First time dealing with Planning Department. It was a good experience and everyone was very helpful.
- Excellent, cooperative city staff! Due to the Covid-19 environment, we were able to navigate the entire approval process via email and photos, which resulted in successful completion and approval of the project.
- This department is really great! Friendly, professional, well-qualified, and efficient. A real asset to our community!
- Always very helpful, and I so appreciate the links to parts of the code which I have difficulty locating.
- The Building department staff are always responsive and pleasant to work with.
- The planning office staff were timely in their responses and the rules in Ashland make it an attractive and livable community
- The staff is friendly and reasonably available and responsive, but the city permit fees are astronomical and make new housing costs unaffordable
- The neighbor input process requires excessive staff time, delays applications, and adds significant costs
- The planning process is challenging, costly, restrictive, and not supportive of development in Ashland, pushing business and development out of the city
- The planning process takes too long and costs too much, making it difficult for people with limited finances and stamina to pursue development projects
- The staff was great, helpful, and knowledgeable

- The approval process for solar PV installations in the Rogue Valley was one of the quickest, and the staff was kind and courteous
- The entire process was handled in a professional and friendly manner, and the staff was excellent.
- It would be helpful to have initial plan intake done in person or over a call to reduce questions in the review process and expedite approval.
- It is difficult to find reasonable contractor help.
- Fees are very high.
- The building department staff were positive during plan reviews and inspections.
- It has been a joy to work with the Community Development Department, which was responsive, professional, and took the time to explain processes and timelines.
- A person-to-person meeting or phone call can resolve issues for a reasonable solution, and it is a pleasure to work with everyone.
- More staff authority is needed to de-escalate situations and find common sense solutions.

As evidenced above, the City of Ashland Community Development department has received a range of feedback about its services. Some commenters have praised department staff for their helpfulness and professionalism, while others have criticized the department for its difficulty in working with applicants. Other commenters have highlighted the challenges the department has faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and praised its efforts in navigating the approval process through email, photos, and electronic plan review. Overall, the feedback suggests that the City of Ashland Community Development department has received mostly positive reviews, with some areas for improvement and suggestions for process improvements.

In addition to the above suggestions and comments, the survey also asked individuals who specifically marked "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" on individual survey questions to provide additional feedback on how the building process in Ashland could be improved. This means that the opinions and complaints generally described in the bulleted list below are likely to be more negative and may not reflect the experiences of all individuals involved in the building process in Ashland.

- Interpretations of municipal and building codes are uneven and may err on the side of the "letter of the law" rather than the "intent of the law."
- Planners should not be involved in city politics and should have high working standards and high ethics.
- Staff provided inaccurate and conflicting advice, was rude, and generally unhelpful regarding building a shed in the flood plain.
- There is a lack of clarity in the process to obtain a conditional use permit on the city website.

- The process to build a retirement home in Ashland was frustrating, opaque, time-consuming, and expensive.
- The building department is slow and often requires multiple visits for inspections.
- There is a lack of communication between departments and outdated calculations for solar shading.
- The planning department is slow and unresponsive.
- There are inconsistencies in the interpretation and enforcement of codes.
- There is a lack of transparency in the process and a lack of information available online.
- The fees for building and development in Ashland are high.
- There are arbitrary decisions made and a lack of justification for certain actions.
- The process for obtaining a traveler's accommodation permit is confusing and contradictory.
- There are barriers to urban growth and housing affordability.
- There is a lack of support for development in the community
- Planning staff have made a considerate effort to help applicants expedite applications, unless they do not meet development standards or criteria. I believe this is due to an understanding of the shortage of housing.

In summary, the trends indicated in the survey questions show consistent improvements over time, particularly in areas of staff responsiveness, professionalism, accuracy, fairness, accessibility, and the overall quality of the application process in Ashland. These positive trends are evident in 2022 compared to 2016, showcasing the city's commitment to enhancing the applicant experience and maintaining high standards.

However, in consideration of the above comments, suggestions and complaints, the Community Development Department can continue to address the issues by ensuring that all community development staff maintain high working standards and high ethics and provide accurate and helpful advice to applicants. The focus on clarity and responsiveness in the process for obtaining permits should continue to improve communication between departments and permit applicants through the use of coordinated plan review processes.

In line with a continuous commitment to bolster transparency and accessibility, the department has been proactively implementing measures to enhance the accessibility of information through online platforms. Simultaneously, endeavors are being directed towards refining and expediting the procedures involved in securing permits and approvals for planning purposes. These efforts are valuable as they facilitate streamlined access to crucial resources, empower stakeholders with readily available information, and pave the way for a more efficient and responsive interaction between applicants, the department, and the broader community.

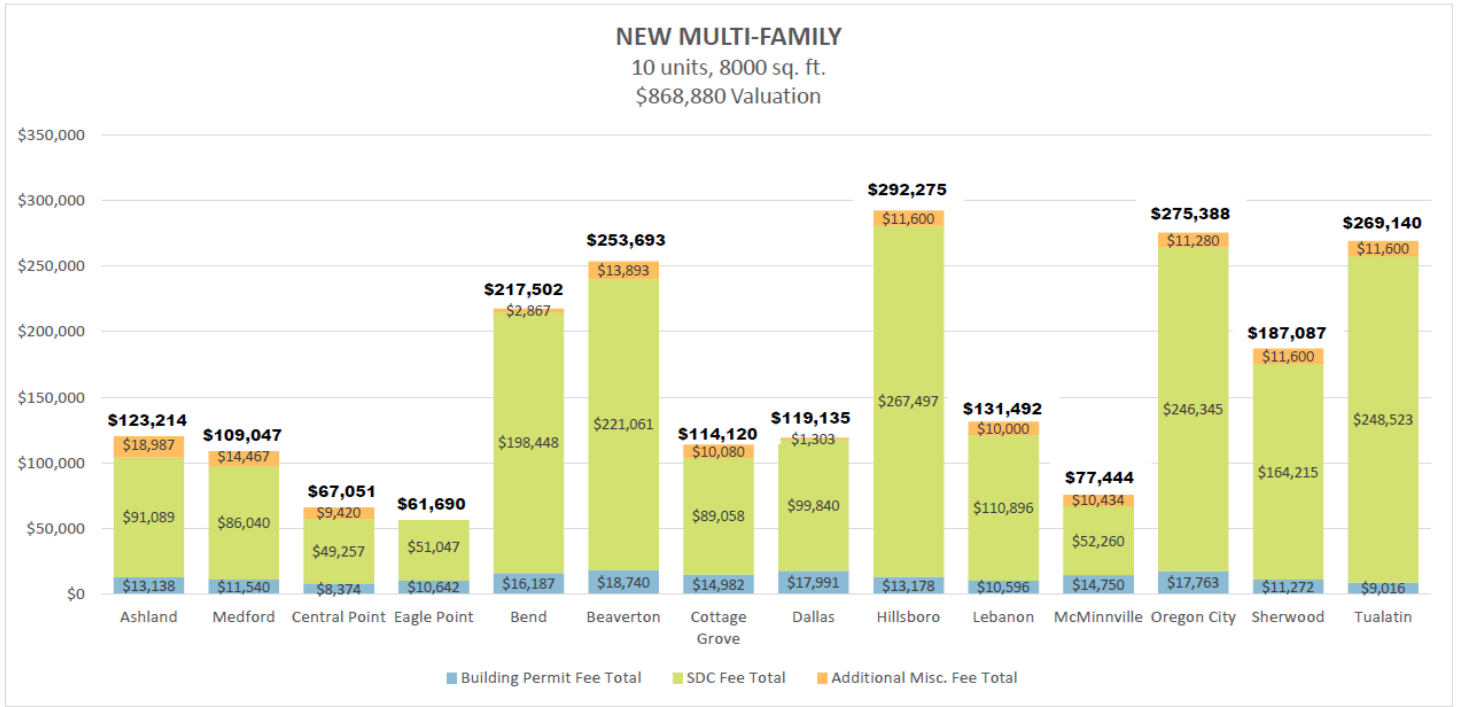
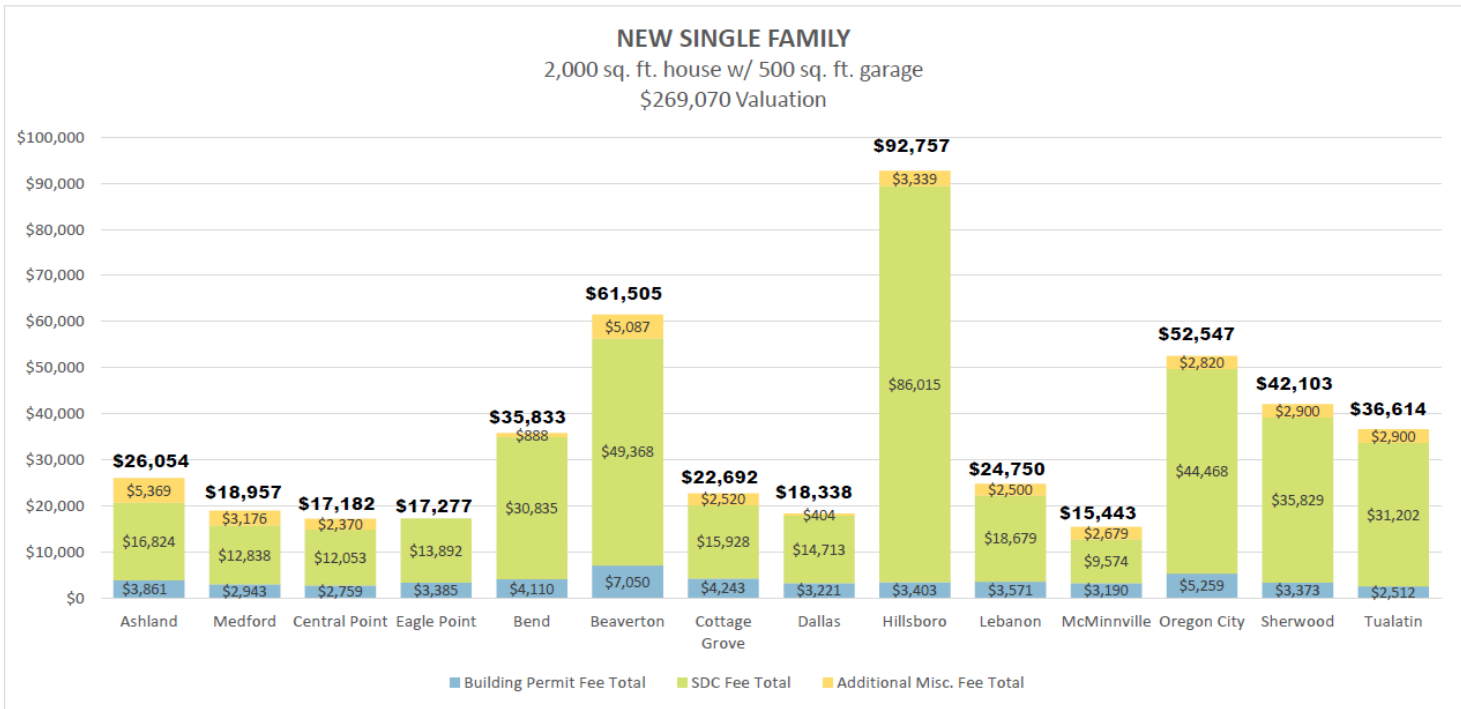
**Appendix C: Planning Action Types**

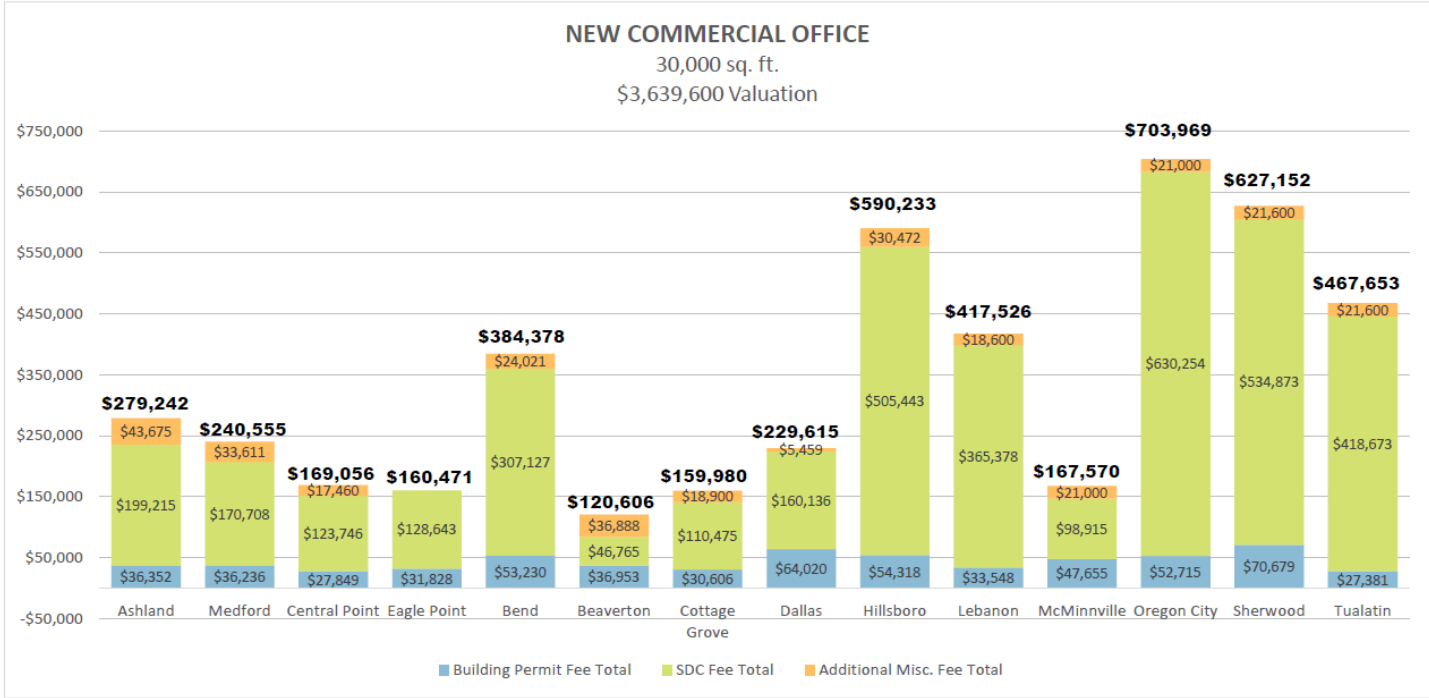
Table 18.5.1.010 – Summary of Approvals by Type of Review Procedure

Planning Actions	Review Procedures	Applicable Regulations
Access to a Street/Driveway Approach	Ministerial	Chapter 18.4.3
Annexation	Type III	Chapter 18.5.8; See ORS 222
Aircraft Hangar with no associated commercial use	Ministerial	Chapter 18.3.7.030
Aircraft Hangar in conjunction with another use	Type I or II	Chapter 18.5.2
Ordinance Interpretation	Type I or II	Chapter 18.1.5
Ordinance Text Amendment	Type III	Chapter 18.5.9
Comprehensive Plan Amendment	Type III	Chapter 18.5.9
Conditional Use Permit	Type I or II	Chapter 18.5.4
Conversion of Multifamily Dwelling Units into For-Purchase Housing	Ministerial	Section 18.2.3.200
Exception to Fire Prevention and Control Plan and General Fuel Modification Area Standards	Type I	Subsection 18.3.10.100.E
Exception to Site Development and Design Standards	Type I	Subsection 18.5.2.050.E
Exception to Street Standards	Type I	Subsection 18.4.6.020.B.1
Extension of Time Limit for Approved Planning Action	Ministerial	Section 18.1.6.040
Fence	Ministerial	Section 18.4.4.060
Hillside Standards Exception	Type I	Subsection 18.3.10.090.H
Home Occupation Permit	Ministerial	Section 18.2.3.150
Land Use Control Maps Change	Type II or III	Chapter 18.5.9
Legal Lot Determination	Ministerial	Chapter 18.1.3
Modification to Approval		
Minor Modification	Ministerial	Chapter 18.5.6
Major Modification	Per original review	Chapter 18.5.6
Nonconforming Use or Structure, Expansion of	Ministerial or Type I	Chapter 18.1.4
Partition or Re-plat of 2-3 lots		
Preliminary Plat	Type I	Chapter 18.5.3
Final Plat	Ministerial	Chapter 18.5.3
Minor Amendment	Ministerial	Subsection 18.5.3.020.F
Performance Standards Option		

Outline Plan	Type II	Chapter 18.3.9
Final Plan	Type I	Chapter 18.3.9
Minor Amendment	Ministerial	Subsection 18.5.3.0100F
Physical and Environmental Constraints Permit	Type I	Chapter 18.3.10
Property Line Adjustments, including Lot Consolidations	Ministerial	Chapter 18.5.3
Sign Permit	Ministerial	Chapter 18.4.7
Site Design Review	Type I or II	Chapter 18.5.2
Solar Setback Exception	Type I	Chapter 18.4.8
Subdivision or Replat of >3 lots		
Preliminary Plat	Type II	Chapter 18.5.3
Final Plat	Ministerial	Chapter 18.5.3
Minor Amendment	Ministerial	Subsection 18.5.3.020.F
Tree Removal Permit	Type I	Chapter 18.5.7
Variance	Type I or II	Chapter 18.5.5
Water Resources Protection Zone – Limited Activities and Uses	Type I	Section 18.3.11.060
Water Resources Protection Zone Reduction	Type I or II	Section 18.3.11.070
Water Resources Protection Zone – Hardship Exception	Type II	Section 18.3.11.080
Zoning District Map Change	Type II or III	Chapter 18.5.9

Appendix D: Development Fee Comparisons





**Appendix E**  
**Meeting Notes**

**October 18, 2023**  
**Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way**  
**4:00 PM – 5:30 PM**

**MEETING NOTES**

Committee Members Present:

Brian Druihet  
Ben Treiger  
Jim McNamara  
Ray Kistler  
Dan Jovich

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director  
April Lucas, Development Services Coordinator  
Steve Matiaco, Building Official  
Derek Severson, Planning Manager

Mr. Goldman provided an overview of the purpose of this advisory group and staff/committee members introduced themselves.

Mr. Goldman noted upcoming changes that are already in the works, including the Climate-Friendly & Equitable Communities rules which state the city cannot require parking within a half mile of transit services, which for Ashland is 80% of the city. In the second phase of implementation, the city can choose to remove requirements for the entire city with the exception of handicap accessible spaces.

Mr. Kistler commented on the Mid-Town Urban Lofts project on the corner of Iowa and Garfield and asked if these rules had been in place would they have been permitted to build additional units or would the parking area be open space. Staff clarified in this scenario since the number of units was already at the max, reducing the parking could have resulted in either more open space or larger unit sizes. It was noted that in the new Climate Friendly designated areas there will not be density maximums set, however this is another year or so out before being implemented. Mr. McNamara noted that Portland does not have parking minimums and it has created problems for residents, especially those located close to arterials. He stated residents have difficulty parking in front of their homes, and it is especially challenging if they have visitors.

Mr. Goldman continued his update on improvements already taking place and noted the city's new Citizen Self Service portal. Ms. Lucas explained this new program allows citizens, contractors, and developers to apply for permits online, track review status, schedule inspections, and see inspection results in real time. It also includes a public records search that allows citizens access to the permit history (dating back to 2018) for properties within the city limits.

Mr. Goldman provided a summary of the Community Development Customer Satisfaction Survey that was completed in December 2022. 1,200 individuals who had applied for either a building or planning permit in the last 4 years were asked to participate to gauge satisfaction levels with the development review process. Mr. Goldman noted the areas where the results showed an increase in Disagree and Strongly Disagree ratings, including “Application Review turnaround time is acceptable” and “Ashland is just a fair, consistent, and practical in its application of regulations as other neighboring cities and counties”.

Mr. Treiger commented that he has heard others make statements that other jurisdictions are easier to deal with, but this has not been his experience. He added there is a negative perception about Ashland that exists.

Mr. Goldman gave an example of a process change that could improve processing times and suggested tree removals could be changed from the Type I review process, which requires noticing and an appeal period, to an administrative decision made at the staff level. A change such as this would reduce the approval process from a month or more down to a few days.

Mr. Kistler commented that building departments seem to be consistent from community to community, but planning requirements vary. He stated Ashland’s population and demographic have resulted in a lot of projects not moving forward because of neighbor objections. He stated citizens have such a large say and control over a persons development that many clients quit or pile up high legal costs navigating appeals. He added if applicants prevail, often times they end up with a less superior project at the end. He stated this happens all the time and this group should focus on what can be done to address this.

Mr. Druihet stated there is a perception that Ashland’s fees are a lot more expensive than other areas and asked if this was true. Mr. Matiaco explained that fees collected by the building division are about 8%-12% of the building permit total, planning collects a similar amount, and they bulk of the fees are in Systems Development Charges collected by the Public Works Department to maintain the city’s infrastructure. Staff noted that a fee comparison with other jurisdictions was done fairly recently and they would bring back this information for the group to review.

Mr. Goldman requested the committee members share their initial expectations, ideas, and comments regarding this committee’s charge.

Around the Room Comments:

- Mr. Treiger asked whether they would be looking at reclassifying what is a Type I vs. Type II planning action.
- Mr. Kistler stated that tree removals are not very scientific and often times when you hire an arborist that will ask whether you’d like their report to say if the tree should stay or go.

- Mr. Jovich stated he is fine with the tree removal process and giving neighbors this outlet to voice concerns.
- Mr. Kistler commented that Ashland has a much different feel than it used to and has turned into a retirement town. He stated it is difficult to attract young workers and residents and it is not attractive to this demographic. He noted in other college mountain towns they saw a large increase in people moving in during covid when people worked remotely, and that did not happen here.
- Mr. McNamara noted at Southern Oregon University freshman enrollments went up, but returning students went down.
- Mr. Kistler stated there has been a loss of families in Ashland and commented that downtown is not healthy. He said he was not worried about too much growth too fast, but rather the other side.
- Mr. Jovich stated it is very expensive to live in Ashland and most families live in the Quiet Village neighborhood. He stated the people who do want to move to Ashland have a difficult time finding what they want here, even those with money. He also commented that neighbors scare people here, and he has heard horror stories.
- Mr. Kistler suggested they look at the maximum house size regulations in the historic district and stated the math needs to be looked at.

Mr. Goldman thanked the group for their input and encouraged members to send any additional thoughts and ideas to Ms. Lucas. He stated staff would be sending out a Doodle poll to determine everyone's availability for the November meeting, and noted staff would be providing a presentation of the city's new Citizen Self Service at that meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 PM.

**November 29, 2023**  
**Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way**  
**4:00 PM – 5:30 PM**

**MEETING NOTES**

Committee Members Present:

Matt Small  
Kerry KenCairn  
Chris Brown  
Ben Treiger  
Jim McNamara  
Ray Kistler

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director  
April Lucas, Development Services Coordinator  
Derek Severson, Planning Manager  
Sabrina Cotta, Interim City Manager

**I. Comparison of Building Permit Fees by jurisdiction.**

The Building Fee Comparison, which compares Ashland’s permit fees with 13 other jurisdictions for new single-family dwellings, new multi-family development, and new commercial office space was presented for review. (see Attachment #1)

**II. EnerGov Citizen Self Service.**

April Lucas provided a presentation on the city’s new EnerGov Citizen Self Service portal, which allows customers to apply for common permit and plan types online, provides operational transparency for customers and citizens, and streamlines the permitting, plan review, and record requests by offering the community fast, intuitive, and self-service access for achieving their needs. (see Attachment #2)

**Comments:**

Support was voiced for paying invoices online, and Ms. Lucas clarified this feature would be made available in the next phase of the roll-out. Mr. McNamara suggested the ability to pay via electric fund transfer rather than by credit card only. Additional comment was made recommending the ability for customers to perform SDC estimates using the Estimate feature on the new portal.

**III. Overview of Types of Land Use Actions**

Brandon Goldman provided an overview of the three different types of land use actions (Type I, II, and III) and provided flowchart handouts outlining the approval process for each type. (See Attachment #3)

Comments:

Mr. Small questioned why some actions are classified as Type II and therefore required to go to the Planning Commission. He questioned if some of these could be approved administratively

instead if all the criteria are met. He added going to the Planning Commission can sometimes open a can of worms and a lot of time and money is spent even though a neighbor in opposition may have no basis for an appeal. Mr. Trieger commented that the Planning Commission has served in a quality control role and if larger projects are approved administratively the city might lose some control over what the final project will look like.

Mr. Goldman noted staff has been looking into moving tree removals from a Type I action, which involves public noticing and comment/appeal periods, to a ministerial decision.

Staff was asked if the city is required by state law to take new development proposals to the Planning Commission. Mr. Goldman clarified Type III actions and those that require discretion require a public hearing.

#### **IV. Committee Recommendations**

Mr. Goldman stated at their next meeting the DPMAC will start developing their recommendations that will be presented to the city council, and stated if they need any additional information to please notify staff. He stated a Doodle poll will be sent out to assess the group's availability and the next meeting will be scheduled after the holidays.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

**March 6, 2024**  
**Lithia Room, 51 Winburn Way**  
**4:00 PM – 5:30 PM**

**MEETING NOTES**

Committee Members Present:

Matt Small  
Chris Brown  
Ben Treiger  
Jim McNamara  
Brian Druihet

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director  
April Lucas, Development Services Coordinator  
Steve Matiaco, Building Official

**V. Citizen Self Service Update & Internal Processing Improvements**

April Lucas provided an update on the roll-out of the city’s online permitting portal, Citizen Self Service, and also highlighted internal processing improvements.

- Ashland’s online permitting needs are now 100% internal and the city is no longer utilizing BCD’s online ePermitting system
- Ashland’s system offers 16 different building permit application types, 5 planning applications, and 3 public works permits – compared to the state’s system which only offered 3. Next steps include offering more complex permit types for online submission, including SFR/ARUs, new Commercial, and Tenant Improvements, as well as online payment options
- Citizen Self Service has reduced processing time for over-the-counter (non-plan review) permits. Instead of same day issuance online permits are processed in as little as 30 minutes.
- Increased efficiency utilizing the software’s inspection management tools. Inspectors can view, re-assign, and result inspections all from their mobile devices and applicants/contractors have instant access to their inspection information.
- Ashland is launching a new website in May 2024, which will be more user-friendly with frequently searched for information more prominently displayed and better search features.

**VI. Development Streamlining – Planning.**

Brandon Goldman reviewed staff’s suggested recommendations to streamline the development process (see Attachment #1), including:

- Create a user guide for businesses owners for change of use/code analysis which includes steps and code references. The matrix would include two paths, one for DIY business owners and one for those working with a design professional.

- Fast track tree removal permits for those located within the building's footprint and/or hazardous trees. Suggestion was made for this to include trees within 10 ft. of the footprint to accommodate foundations and drainage installation and repairs. Staff was also asked if this could include trees whose roots are creating foundation issues but the tree itself is outside the footprint/buffer.
- Allow a one-step combined outline and final plan review for subdivisions up to 12 residential lots in size. Currently this is a two-step process. Support was voiced for this change which would put it in line with the city's cottage housing standards and streamline the process.
- Eliminate the need for manmade steep slopes to go through the city's Physical & Environmental Constraints review process. A Geotech report would still be required to ensure it is safe, but this would eliminate the need for noticing, public comment, and appeal period.
- Increase the number of lots that can be accessed by a private drive based on safety, environmental impact, and infrastructure capacity. Currently if there are more than 3 lots a variance is required. Mr. Goldman stated staff is considering increasing this to 4-6 lots and support was voiced for this change.
- Memorialize Planning Commission's decision that establishes a process for evaluating and permitting intra-parcel shading.
- Implement a more flexible policy regarding the expiration of land use approvals and the process for requesting extensions. Currently the approval expires 18 months after initial approval, with an allowance for a one-time 24 month extension.
- Create a how-to guide for Accessory Dwelling Units and offer pre-approved ARU building plans free to charge to property owners interested in adding another unit. Mr. Goldman noted there is already funding set aside in the department's budget for this endeavor and staff is interested in obtaining three different sets of plans: 1) an energy efficient unit, 2) an ADA accessible unit, and 3) a micro-unit for those with smaller lot sizes. Chris Brown recommended the city contact Pacific Wall Systems for the creation of pre-approved plans and stated this is what the City of Medford uses and the plans were designed by local architect Carlos Delgado.
- Establish a process for commercial to residential conversions that requires only a building permit rather than the more extensive site design review.
- Mr. Druihet inquired about outright permitting additional units in R-2 and R-3 zones and eliminating roadblocks to allow for more units. Mr. Goldman commented that changing the density and zoning is a much bigger process but stated increasing the outright allowance to 3 units could be considered.

Mr. Goldman announced the group will meet one last time to review the committee's final report before it is presented to the city council for consideration in May.

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

**April 24, 2024**  
**Lithia Room, 51 Winburn Way**  
**4:00 PM – 5:30 PM**

**MEETING NOTES**

Committee Members Present:

Matt Small  
Ben Treiger

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director  
April Lucas, Development Services Coordinator  
Steve Matiaco, Building Official  
Derek Severson, Planning Manager

**VII. Review of Consolidated Report**

Given the number of absent members, Mr. Goldman announced that staff would be emailing the group for their final comments, and noted the final report will be presented to the City Manager’s Office on May 6. He stated staff is interested in whether there are specific recommendations the group feels should be prioritized and asked for their general feedback on being apart of a management advisory committee (MAC).

Mr. Treiger commented that at the onset of a MAC it is beneficial for the members to agree on the direction the groups wants to go. He also advocated for a commitment among members in regards to attendance expectations.

**VIII. Discussion on Final Recommendations**

Mr. Goldman noted the draft recommendations were presented at the Planning Commission’s April Study Session and there was some push back on eliminating public notice for tree removals. However, he expressed his support for the recommendation and stated is it somewhat misleading to engage neighbors in the process with the appearance of discretion and influence when the truth is if the removal meets the adopted criteria it will be approved.

Mr. Treiger commented on the wildfire risk reduction project that is currently happening in the Ashland watershed and contrasted the noticing process for the removal of a single tree on a private lot with the hundreds of trees that are being removed without public notice or input.

Mr. Matiaco commented on the recommended changes to the fence permit and clarified that certain fences will still require a building permit.

Mr. Goldman clarified that when the recommended code amendments move forward it will entail a broad legislative process with public input and hearings before the Planning Commission and

City Council. He added given the department's current workplan and the legislative changes mandated by the state, it will likely be January 2025 before any of these actions move forward. When asked if any additional recommendations should be included, Mr. Treiger requested clarification on the Maximum Permitted Floor Area (MPFA) regulations. Mr. Goldman clarified this provision only applies in historic districts and the intent is to ensure what is built in those neighborhoods is consistent with the size and scale of the surrounding homes. Mr. Trieger questioned if it is worth considering raising the density allowance. Mr. Goldman noted Senate Bill 1537 allows outright for increased height and expanded lot coverage. He stated it will make it more financially feasible to increase housing and it also creates some relief from local design standards. He suggested the final report articulate some of the state's streamlining measures that are currently in the process of being adopted locally.

### **IX. Conclusion and Next Steps**

Mr. Treiger stated the new Citizen Self Service portal is excellent and encouraged staff to continue to move forward with enhancements. He also voiced his support for the ARU guide and pre-approved plans. He stated he also supports the removal of fence permits and voiced support for relaxing the MPFA requirements in historic districts. Mr. Small commented that the MPFA recommendation doesn't quite fit into the groups charge, and stated this does not streamline the development process and is more about changing the code. Mr. Goldman noted that staff could break the recommendations into separate categories.

Mr. Goldman provided a brief update on the ARU recommendation and stated staff has already met with several local design professionals who have agreed to prepare plans for city residents to use. He stated staff's goal is to have a gallery of several different unit types for residents to choose from. The plans will be made available free of charge and will be pre-approved for consistency with building code requirements. Homeowners, however, will need to consult with the design professional if they wish to make modifications or customizations and any revisions will need to be reviewed for compliance.

### **X. Adjournment**

Mr. Goldman thanked those in attendance and stated the DPMAC will have until Friday, May 3 to submit their final input.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM.

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## Final Climate Change Addendum to the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan

*Approved by Ashland City Council in April 2023*

### **I. Introduction**

The 2016 Ashland Forest Plan ([AFP](#)) contained a chapter on climate change, but it was general in nature and limited by uncertainty as to the impact climate change would have on the approximately 1,200 acres of forest lands managed by the City of Ashland and Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC). The increased research and rapid rate of climate change induced impacts on Ashland's forest lands over the past six years have added considerably to the Forest Lands Commission's (FLC, now a management advisory committee) understanding of the urgent need to address climate change impacts through recommendations to the Ashland City Council for planning direction and management actions over the next 25 years. Current drought and temperature-related changes to vegetation on municipal forest lands warrant an improved and more comprehensive analysis of climate-adaptive planning and management beyond what was addressed in the AFP. Adaptive management is a key overarching strategy addressed throughout this addendum to assess both new and changing resource conditions and land management goals, as well as those that remain unchanged at this time.

Specific examples of necessary adaptive management updates in planning direction and management actions that this addendum will add to the AFP include:

- Shifting from the restoration paradigm that guided previous forest planning and management to an enhanced adaptive management strategy that incorporates new science and technology to effectively address climate change-induced forest land conditions that are likely without historic reference.
- Utilize existing data from attribute tables and encourage contractors to both review data and update it as appropriate.
- Maintaining and promoting refugia conditions and stand characteristics to buffer against climate change impacts to allow diverse habitats to persist. Develop a finer scale approach to refugia<sup>1</sup> delineation, where appropriate.
- Enhance a variable mosaic of forest structure conditions and fuel loads. For example, creating openings in the forest canopy to reduce potential crown or ground fire intensity from continuous tree canopies or surface fuels. Growing shade intolerant and fire tolerant species would be balanced with higher tree densities and fuel loading in other areas such as riparian areas.
- Managing to promote and maintain healthy, functional, and productive soil conditions. This addendum will add soils as a stand-alone chapter with equal standing with other resources addressed in the AFP.
- Planning for increasing frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events that could negatively impact soils and aquatic resources, resulting in the loss of ecosystem services in Ashland's built environment including road systems, trails, infrastructure, and other downstream assets and values.

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<sup>1</sup> Refugia: Locations that experience less severe or less frequent disturbances than the surrounding landscape.

- Anticipating and proactively treating tree mortality events to reduce excessive fuel accumulations. Additionally, implementing a rapid response for the strategic and timely removal of dead and dying trees will reduce overall costs of treatment, enhance public safety, and contribute to the local timber supply (only as a by-product of ecosystem management).
- Mitigating the increasing impact of habitat loss on wildlife populations from wildfire, weather pattern changes, insects and disease outbreaks, and pressures from recreational use on city forest lands because of climate change while considering adjacent land ownerships.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and regulation of recreation resource users to protect ecosystems from the additive stressors of climate change and to protect the recreation resource itself.
- Improving coordination and partnerships between various city departments, APRC, the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, neighboring communities, volunteer and advocacy organizations, and various stakeholder groups.

## **II. Ashland Forest Plan Climate Change Addendum Development**

The FLC has a long history, dating back to the mid-1990s, of public engagement and the development of professional and implementable planning and management documents listed below:

- [City Forestlands Restoration Phase II \(2004\)](#)
- [Coordination and contribution to the Ashland Forest Resiliency Community Alternative on U.S. Forest Service lands in the Ashland Watershed under the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship project \(2004\)](#)
- [City Forestlands Restoration Phase III for the City's Winburn parcel \(2009\)](#)
- [Ashland Forest Plan \(2016\)](#)

To create this addendum to the AFP for climate change-specific adaptive management recommendations on City and APRC forest lands, the FLC took the following steps to research, author, review, and prepare this document for presentation to the City Council:

- Consultant Marty Main of Small Woodland Services, Inc. compiled and presented an [extensive literature review](#) of predicted climate change impacts on vegetation, wildfire behavior, soils, hydrology, wildlife, recreation, and carbon storage to the FLC, within the context of 25 years of past management. Main suggested changes to the AFP based on his assessment of existing research compared to policy and science in the 2016 Ashland Forest Plan.
- Forest Lands Committee members reviewed and discussed each recommendation to determine if a change to the AFP was needed or if current direction in the AFP was sufficient.
- Planning direction and management actions to adapt or change are described in this addendum.
- A public review period of the draft addendum occurred prior to finalization and presentation to the City Council.

### **III. Ashland Forest Plan Climate Change Addendum**

This section describes recommendations by the FLC for changes to planning direction and management actions for the city's forest lands and resources. Unless otherwise stated, guidance in the [2016 AFP](#) ([www.ashland.or.us/forestplan](http://www.ashland.or.us/forestplan)) remains in effect.

#### **A. Vegetation**

- Increase individual tree and stand-level resilience and diversity of Plant Association Groups (PAGs) more tolerant of climate-induced high-severity disturbance and predicted future conditions.
- Identify unique vegetation types that are currently under stress and implement management strategies to maintain them within a refugia framework. Promote refugia to buffer against climate change impacts and to allow at-risk species to persist and expand.
- Emphasize fuel treatments adjacent to refugia to minimize risk of high severity fire in refugia.
- Consider adding deferred or untreated units to the refugia framework.
- Rate the refugia potential of units based on temperatures, moisture, aspect, and site productivity. Consider refugia subtypes to rate units across multiple refugia categories. Develop a finer scale approach to refugia ratings and delineation.
- Modify silvicultural prescriptions to produce a more variable structural mosaic including more open forests to reduce density-related tree stress and mortality. Emphasize uneven-aged stand structure to encourage vigor in multiple crown classes and seral stages, without compromising hardwood development and ground shading.
- Prioritize pre-emptive treatment of vulnerable and mortality-prone sites to avoid outbreak-level mortality using [Main's risk rating system](#).
- Increase scope and intensity of fuels reduction treatments on and adjacent to AFP parcels for more wildfire management effectiveness, (as referred to in the [Potential Operational Delineations \(PODs\) analysis](#)) during predicted increasing higher-severity wildfire disturbances. Emphasize area-wide treatments taking advantage of control features over linear treatments (fuel breaks) to maximize suppression success and footprint of climate-adapted forests.
- Identify and reduce potential vectors for invasive species. Aggressively monitor, inventory, and manage invasive species using an integrated pest management approach.
- Use prescribed burning to reduce stand density, increase heterogeneity of vertical and horizontal stand structure and fuel loading, and promote tree species and individuals better adapted to predicted climate change and the resulting disturbance regimes.
- When updating the AFP and for future project documents:
  - Define and discuss the term refugia.
  - Define and discuss the term pyrosilviculture.
  - Define and discuss the PODs rating system.
  - Update existing plant list.

#### **B. Soils**

- Add a stand-alone soils chapter to the AFP during the next update.
- Reduce erosion potential by maintaining higher root-holding capacity on sites vulnerable to excessive erosion through increased occupancy of vegetation.

- On sites vulnerable to erosion, consider alternative management such as radial thinning only around vigorous retention trees, thinning in strips across the contour, and creating small openings (< 1 acre).
- Manage for endemic, rather than outbreak, levels of tree mortality to maintain sufficient amounts of Coarse Woody Material (CWM) for soil health while avoiding an excess of snags and CWM which may result in long duration fires.
- Increase protection and enhancement of below-ground soil functions and processes, particularly for enhancement of water and carbon retention.
- Reduce the likelihood of slope failure and landslides by applying site-specific management strategies in areas designated as landslide hazards by the State of Oregon.
- Increase the scale and intensity of prescribed underburning to decrease possibility of soil loss from high-severity fire. Reduce the likelihood of erosion by implementing mosaic burns to retain unburned patches and minimize large areas of bare soil exposure.
- Increase the creation and retention of partially burned CWM and biochar through light underburning.
- Define and discuss biochar when updating the AFP.

### **C. Carbon Sequestration and Storage**

- Consider carbon sequestration and storage as a resource to be managed.
- Develop CWM budgets based on management priorities and PAGs.
- Assign two CWM budgets for PAGs within riparian areas: (1) streamside moist PAG and (2) upland dry PAG.
- Explore options to generate revenue from carbon sequestration and storage while recognizing that lower elevation dry forests are predicted to lose carbon as vegetation type shifts. Carbon storage is more appropriate in the wettest Plant Association Groups in riparian areas and the Winburn Parcel.
- Though the Ashland Climate Energy Action Plan calls for carbon neutrality, we recognize that this may not be possible on City forestlands, where goals of community wildfire safety and maintaining forested ecosystems intact are higher priorities.

### **D. Hydrology**

- Monitor changes in stream condition classes and focus management on perennial and intermittent streams. Update inventory if climate change causes alterations to stream condition classes.
- Evaluate, upgrade, and maintain forest road system (7 lane miles) in partnership with U.S. Forest Service. Improve drainage systems and increase culvert sizes where needed in anticipation of likely increase in peak flows. Minimize sediment discharge from roads and ditches into the hydrologic network.
- Create and maintain more canopy openings for longer retention of snow at the ground surface, where appropriate.
- Manage organic matter amounts, specifically CWM and biochar, to increase water holding capacity.
- The combination of the projected extension of the dry season and the fire season, and more extreme precipitation events during the wet season with higher peak flows, presents an urgent need for adaptive management in Riparian Management Areas (RMA).
  - Target stands for thinning and promote more shade intolerant species higher in hydrologic

- networks (regardless of elevation) in intermittent and ephemeral portions of streams.
- Utilize RMAs as corridors connecting mid- and late-seral habitats across all land ownerships.
- FLC recommends that APRC designate the Ashland Ponds parcel as anadromous fish critical habitat to manage for salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat.
- Manage for terrestrial and aquatic RMA communities, based on PAGs and stream class.
- Prioritize the reduction of fuel continuity adjacent to major riparian areas (especially along Ashland Creek) to discourage high-severity disturbance from occurring within RMAs.

#### **E. Wildlife**

- All management actions, including refugia enhancement, will consider vulnerable and at-risk species and their habitat as identified by federal and/or state agencies such as coho salmon and pacific fisher.
- Increase public awareness of wildlife moving into the city to seek water sources during the dry season. Establish and maintain water sources away from the city to reduce human/wildlife conflicts.
- Maintain landscape level habitat connectivity as ranges shift by implementing broader landscape level analysis and partnerships with adjacent landowners, especially along RMAs connecting with cooler aspects.
- Reduce pressures on wildlife species from additive sources other than climate change.

#### **F. Recreation**

- Protect recreation resources from the additive stressors of climate change.
- Establish and codify the relationship between FLC and APRC to further define roles and responsibilities for planning direction and management actions. Specifically, develop procedures for FLC to maintain AFP consistency and provide advisory input to APRC when modifications or additions to the city trail network is proposed.
- Increase public awareness of potential human-caused high-severity disturbance that can be exacerbated by climate change in order to protect amenity values, user experience, public safety, and access.
- Recommend that city emergency evacuation plans are updated to include trail users in the watershed.
- With higher predicted summer temperatures, expect increased demand for recreational use of city lands in cooler locations and along RMAs. In other areas, higher summer temperatures may modify the amount, timing, or seasonality of some recreation uses.
- Improve user awareness of:
  - climate change
  - wildfire safety
  - potential ignition sources
  - forest management objectives
  - trail etiquette
  - invasive species
  - reducing negative resource impacts

- Through partnerships, manage recreation to reduce negative impacts to vulnerable species, climate refugia integrity, and forest lands stressed by climate change.
- Increase monitoring, inventory, and management of invasive species introduced by recreation, especially along trails and parking areas.
- Plan for increased maintenance of access roads, parking areas, trails, and other recreational infrastructure due to more frequent and intense extreme precipitation events and increased use during the wet season.

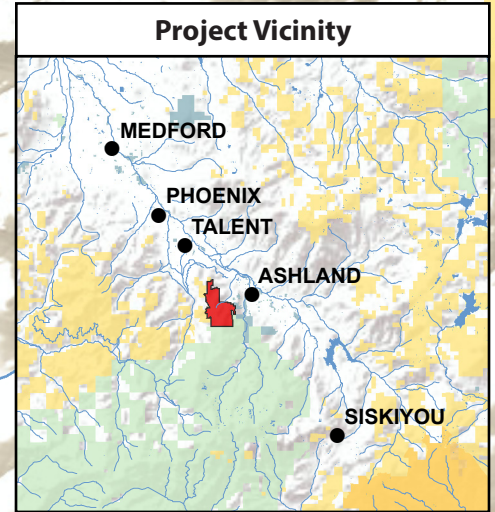
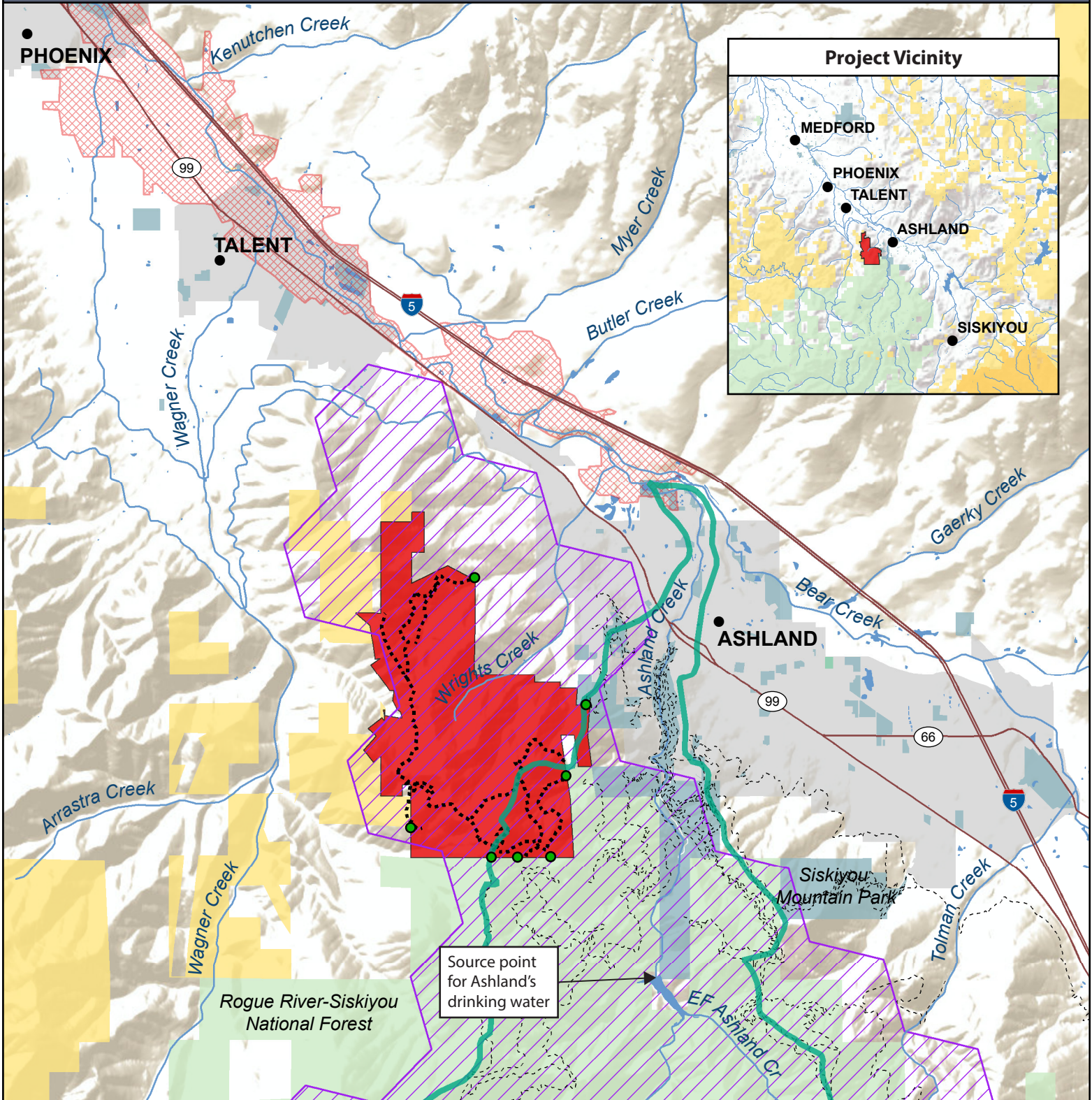
# Madrone Ridge Forest Protection Project

Wrights Creek

Jackson County, OR



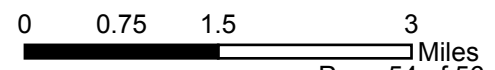
WESTERN RIVERS  
CONSERVANCY



Source point for Ashland's drinking water

- Madrone Ridge Property (1,974 acres)
- Ashland Creek Watershed Boundary
- Oregon Conservation Strategy - Siskiyou Crest Conservation Opportunity Area
- Urban Growth Boundaries
- 2020 Almeda Fire Zone
- Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- BLM Wilderness Area
- City Lands
- Potential Access Points
- Existing Ashland Trails
- Potential Trails
- Major Roads



# Wrights Creek

MADRONE RIDGE – ROGUE RIVER BASIN

Protecting biodiversity and the drinking water of Ashland, Oregon

Jackson County, Oregon



WESTERN RIVERS  
CONSERVANCY

6.25



**T**he Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion is one of the most unique and visually stunning locations in the Pacific Northwest. Expansive vistas containing dormant volcanoes to the east and an endless cascade of rugged mountaintops to the west create incredibly dramatic scenery. The deep canyons and wooded valleys in this region are also home to several iconic and well-loved Oregon rivers, including the Umpqua, Illinois, and Rogue. The variability in elevation, geology, climate, precipitation, and physical connection with the Pacific Ocean makes the Klamath-Siskiyou region one of the most biologically diverse places on Earth. Because of this, the World Wildlife Fund identified the Klamath-Siskiyou region as one of the 200 most important places for species diversity worldwide.

Unsurprisingly, the region's stunning features and rich plant and wildlife diversity attract both year-round residents and seasonal visitors. While many communities throughout the area offer amenity-filled lifestyles, the City of Ashland (population 21,000) is renowned for its cultural and outdoor activities. Chief among these is direct access to more than 50,000 acres of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest via an extensive network of hiking and biking trails. Many of these trails originate in the city's center and wind up into the adjacent public lands through the 15,000-acre Ashland Creek watershed, home to healthy forests and the city's drinking water source. The Forest Service and the city have carefully managed this area to provide clean water and compatible recreation opportunities, and to minimize wildfire risk.

Madrone Ridge is the largest private property adjacent to the Ashland Creek watershed, with about 270 acres within the watershed boundaries. Conservation of the property presents an incredible opportunity to expand on all the qualities that make this region and Ashland exceptional, while adding a greater layer of protection for the city's drinking water source. Located in the mountains northwest of the city, the 1,974-acre property lies adjacent to the city's urban growth boundary and is visible from much of downtown. While the property has historically been closed to public access, the Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission has identified features on the property, specifically Wrights Creek, as the highest priority area for expanding public access and recreation for Ashland residents and visitors.

**Acres:** 1,974

**Tributary Miles:** 1.5

**Key Fish:** fall chinook, coho, pacific lamprey, summer and winter steelhead

**Key Wildlife:** American marten, fisher, ringtail cat, and northern spotted owl



*The rich plant and wildlife diversity found on Madrone Ridge is emblematic of the biodiversity the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion is so well known for.*

In addition to the recreation potential, restoration of Wrights Creek, a small tributary to Bear Creek and the Rogue River, and other wetland areas on the property, has the potential to improve water quality and flow in these streams. The varied topography and diverse forest types on Madrone Ridge are emblematic of the biodiversity found in the Klamath-Siskiyou ecoregion, and create ideal conditions for American marten, fisher, ringtail cat, and northern spotted owl to thrive. Finally, the property has been managed for forest health and fuels reduction objectives for the past decade, and permanently conserving this property will help ensure those activities continue, helping protect Ashland and its drinking watershed from wildfire and development.

Madrone Ridge was listed on the open market and touted as a potential development opportunity for 15 high-end residences or a small destination resort. However, Western Rivers Conservancy stepped in and entered into an agreement with the landowners, giving us until September 30, 2027 to complete due diligence and secure funding to purchase the property. If we are not successful, the owners will put the property back on the market.

*For more information, please contact:*

**Nelson Mathews, President**

**Western Rivers Conservancy**

503-241-0151 | [nmathews@westernrivers.org](mailto:nmathews@westernrivers.org)

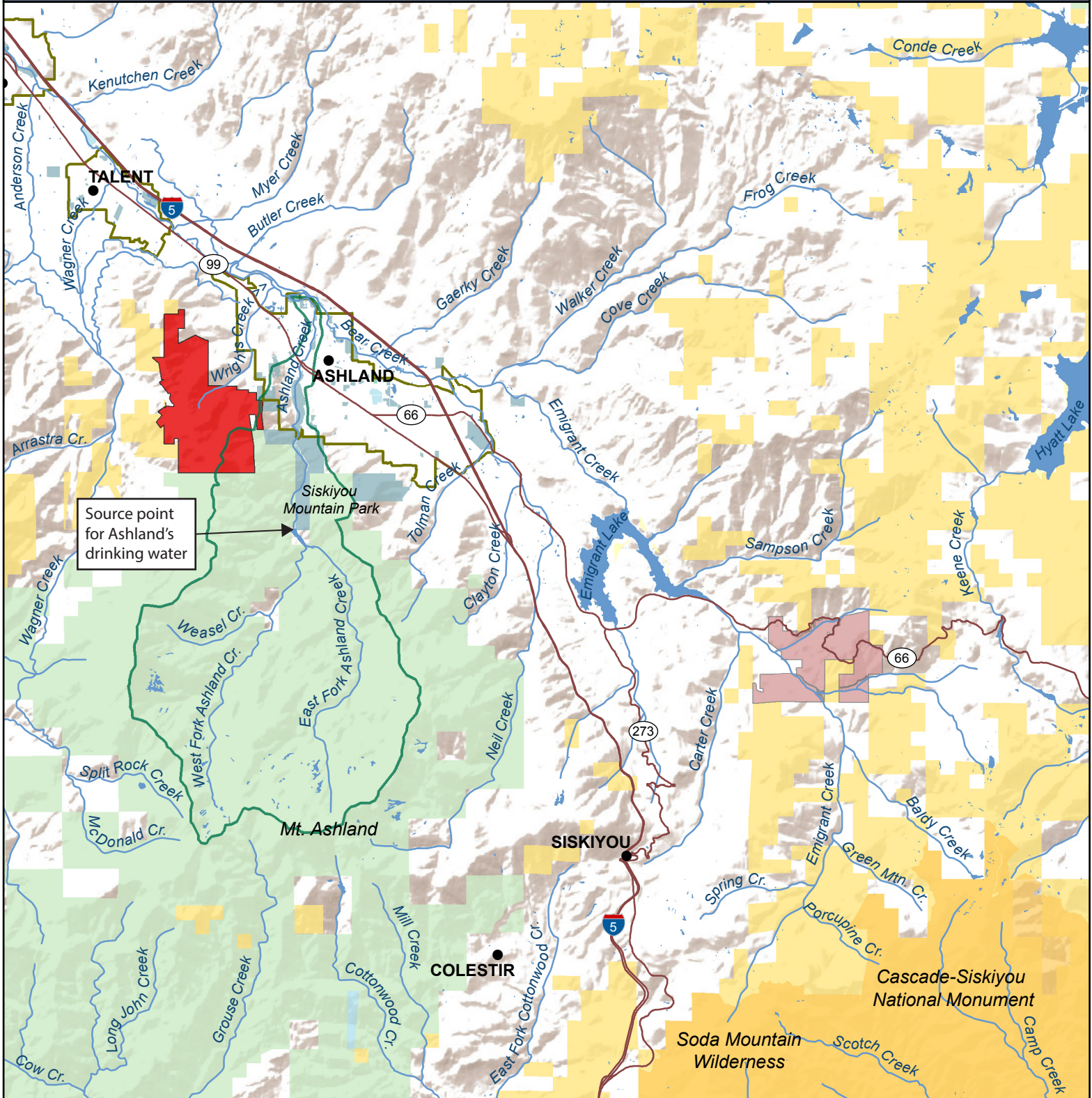
# Rogue River – Wrights Creek

## Madrone Ridge

Jackson County, Oregon



WESTERN RIVERS  
CONSERVANCY



Source point for Ashland's drinking water

- Madrone Ridge Property (1,974 acres)
- Urban Growth Boundaries
- Ashland Creek Watershed Boundary
- Emigrant Creek Ranch (WRC Project)
- US Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

- BLM Wilderness Area
- City Lands
- State Lands
- Interstate
- Highway

