

TRAVEL



OREGON

GRANTS PROGRAM UPDATE
MARCH 2024 COMMISSION MEETING



Image by: Kenji Sugahara

2022 Capacity & Small Project Grants Program

Overview

- Program announced in October 2022 with awards made in late December
- Eligible applicants: Destination Marketing/Management Organizations and federally-recognized tribes
- Program Intent: Funds were intended to develop and refine skills, systems, structures and strategies so the organization can successfully fulfill its mission and achieve outcomes that are more impactful
- Project Categories:
 - Professional Development
 - Technical Skills
 - Learning/Adaptation
 - New Market/Product Development
 - Diversity/Equity/Inclusion

2022 Capacity & Small Project Grants Program Results

- Applications Awarded: 45 - \$1.4M
- Total Capacity Projects Funded: 40 - \$1.3M
- Projects completed by December 31, 2023

Impact of Grant Award:

Jennifer Piper – Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce - \$3,600

Marlee Boxler – City of Troutdale - \$43,500

Tori Middelstadt – Visit Grants Pass - \$50,000



WALLOWA
◀ COUNTY ▶
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Employee Handbook & Strategic Development Process -
the Transformative Impact of Capacity Building

Jennifer Piper, Executive Director



WHERE WE STARTED

- Project need identified in 2020
- Lack of guidance for staff
- Need for stabilized organizational structure to facilitate growth

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Establish up-to-date personnel policies
- Provide guidelines for staff success
- Compliance review to ensure continued operational stability





PARTNERSHIP WITH CASCADE EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION

- Creation of comprehensive employee handbook
- Ongoing support & compliance review for two years

PROJECT RIPPLE EFFECT

- Serving as an example for other organizations
- Inspiring similar initiatives in tourism sector
- Positive impact on the broader economic context





STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS W/UNBRIDLED STRATEGIES: PHASE I

- Organizational Assessment
- Insights from the assessment laid the groundwork for:
 - Three community workshops
 - Stakeholder survey
 - Board insights workshop
- RESULT: Shared vision, strategic priorities, & tangible tactics for future decisions.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED NEXT (& THANK YOU!)

- Dual-pronged transformation: internal & external
- Positioning for sustained influence & impact

THANK YOU TRAVEL OREGON!





A DESTINATION STRATEGY FOR TROUTDALE

CENTERING COMMUNITY, BUILDING THE TOURISM ECOSYSTEM



**CROSSCURRENT
COLLECTIVE**

**HISTORIC
TROUTDALE**
GATEWAY TO THE GORGE
EST. 1907

TROUTDALE LEADERSHIP

PROJECT ADVISORY TEAM

Convener: Marlee Boxler, City of Troutdale

Jeanie Linn, Artistree NW

Corey Rust, Envi Adventures

Sam Purvis, Good Coffee

Mel Jensen, McMenamins

Renee Rank, McMenamins

Lizzie Keenan, Mt. Hood Gorge Regional DMO

Ryan Domingo + Emily Cafazzo, Sugarpine Drive-In

Loree Harrell, Troutdale Arts Center

Stephen Elgart, U.S. Forest Service, CRGNA

PROJECT CONSULTANTS

Crosscurrent Collective



A DESTINATION STRATEGY

THE ROAD MAP

Managing for sustainable tourism in a destination is a complex activity. A road map is necessary in order to get diverse stakeholders to align for impact. A destination strategy is exactly that – a vision and a road map that clarifies where a community wants to go, and how they're going to get there. A strategy may contain direction on management, development, marketing and stewardship activities.





COMPONENTS OF A STRATEGY

TERMS DEFINED

Destination development is the act of improving the experience within a destination for visitors and residents.

Destination marketing is the act of raising awareness, attracting visitors and building long-term relationships through branding, communications, and promotion.

Destination stewardship is the act of protecting ecosystems, landscapes and cultures that define a place.

Destination management is the act of coordinating activities across multiple agencies and organizations to manage visitor impacts and improve livability.



DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

- Leadership provided through a collaboration of diverse organizations
- Responsible for creating and implementing a destination strategy
- Focus is on systems for communication, coordination + collaboration

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- Community engagement + communications
- Experience development
- Visitor management
- Investing in innovation

DESTINATION MARKETING

- Domestic + international
- Earned + paid media
- Visitor communications
- Sales

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

- Carbon neutral
- Protecting natural systems
- Protecting culture
- Giving back

DESTINATION STRATEGY

KEY COMPONENTS

- Visitor + stakeholder research
- 15-year vision of success narrative
- Community values
- Strategic areas of focus (2-4)
 - Medium term outcomes (~ 5 years)
 - Short-term outcomes (1-2 years)
 - KPIs
 - Priority projects (1-2 years)
- Leadership structure identified

CORDOVA'S DESTINATION VISION NARRATIVE

15-YEAR COMMUNITY VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (2036)

[This Place] Ancestral homeland to Eyak, Chugach Region People, Tlingit and Athabaskan peoples, Cordova is a small, gritty Alaskan fishing community brimming with artists, scientists and hard-working individuals shaped and sustained by the landscape. Situated at the confluence of Prince William Sound, the northern Gulf of Alaska and the Copper River watershed, the region is full of highly productive ecosystems rich in fish and wildlife resources that span boreal forests, complex wetlands, tidewater glaciers, rocky intertidal shorelines and coastal barrier islands. The 700,000-acre delta at the mouth of the Copper River comprises the largest continuous wetland on the Pacific Coast of North America. The Copper River flows into the northern Gulf of Alaska, a waypoint on the great ocean conveyor belt, which creates what has become known as the "World's Richest Waters." Home to Copper River salmon, the delta is also an important stopover on the Pacific Flyway for millions of migrating shorebirds and waterfowl.

[Our Culture] Our deep love of this place compels us to graciously welcome visitors and share our unique history and way of life, including our traditions, artistry, science and fishing. We're down to earth, easy to talk to and can help provide a deeper understanding of this landscape through our stories and activities. There's a buzz as visitors get to directly experience our way of life and why we live here. We've found a way to share our culture in a way that strengthens and uplifts our core community values.

[The Outdoors] Adventurers seeking off-the-beaten-path experiences across the seasons. Motivated by easy access to the mountains, kayakers can enjoy a variety of experiences from mountaintop to ocean view. The Cordova Community is committed to providing a variety of experiences for visitors to enjoy, from kayak our way to the mountains to ocean view. The Cordova Community is committed to providing a variety of experiences for visitors to enjoy, from kayak our way to the mountains to ocean view.

[Vibrant Services] A variety of businesses, from gear rentals (it's a bustling downtown) to The Cordova Community and airline services.

[Marketing] The Cordova Community is committed to providing a variety of experiences for visitors to enjoy, from kayak our way to the mountains to ocean view. The Cordova Community is committed to providing a variety of experiences for visitors to enjoy, from kayak our way to the mountains to ocean view.

[Community Livability] The Cordova Community is committed to providing a variety of experiences for visitors to enjoy, from kayak our way to the mountains to ocean view. The Cordova Community is committed to providing a variety of experiences for visitors to enjoy, from kayak our way to the mountains to ocean view.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA	(A) IMPROVE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE + SUPPORT BUSINESS GROWTH	(B) INCREASE VISITATION + IMPROVE CONSISTENCY OF DEMAND
5-YEAR OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have robust outfitting and guide services that support hiking, cycling, kayaking and boating. • We have a thriving downtown with an appealing aesthetic where there is a healthy mix of complementary businesses serving locals and visitors alike. • Our business community is thriving as a result of businesses supporting one another and finding new ways to be complementary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber and businesses are putting out consistent and targeted destination marketing throughout year. • Businesses are coordinated to promote Cordova with one voice, with the tools to do so. • Our demand is consistent and at a level that transportation service providers can expand service to Cordova and surrounding PWS communities.
1- TO 2-YEAR OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and emerging businesses are supported with resources and information including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to capitalize on the visitor economy ○ What visitor services are needed in our community ○ City requirements + insurance requirements ○ Opportunities for how they can work together with existing businesses • We have at least one business offering guided kayak trips and kayak rentals. • New visitor experiences exist providing opportunities to take part in things we do in this community – foraging, making jam, making art, learning about kelp farms. These 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More businesses would be extended to a year-round model, with high levels of satisfaction. • Festival and event attendees are returning to Cordova for repeat visits as a result of targeted marketing. • Visiting friends and relatives are returning to Cordova for repeat visits as a result of targeted marketing.

WHAT WOULD SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

AT THE END OF THIS PROCESS

- We have a solid roadmap for the future
- The community moves forward *together*
- Everyone is aligned around a common set of priorities so we can get things done
- Build off existing/past work and augment complementary efforts
- Information is flowing
- People are working together in new ways to accomplish bigger results



DESTINATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

AT A GLANCE

PHASE 1: BUILD THE FOUNDATION
Apr.-Sep. 2023

GROUNDTRUTH,
RESEARCH,
DESIGN

PHASE 2: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY
Aug.-Nov. 2023

COMMUNITY
WORKSHOP

PHASE 3: MOVE INTO ACTION
Nov.-Dec. 2023

DEVELOP
STRATEGY +
LEADERSHIP TEAM

WORKSHOP
2
w/ project
team

TROUTDALE
TOURISM
ADVISORY TEAM

PRIORITY
PROJECT

PRIORITY
PROJECT

PRIORITY
PROJECT

PROJECT ADVISORY
TEAM



DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS



PROJECT ADVISORY
TEAM +
STAKEHOLDERS



5 MONTHS

3 MONTHS

2 MONTHS

COMMUNITY VALUES

THE IMPERATIVES

Community values are core to any destination – they're the invisible backbone to a community's culture. If we want to celebrate and retain a community's culture, it is important to first gain clarity on the commonly held, yet not often discussed, values. These values can be used as an internal compass or communicated with visitors directly.



COMMUNITY VALUES

TROUTDALE'S COMMUNITY VALUES

Community values are core to any destination – they're the invisible backbone of a community's culture. If we want to celebrate and retain a community's culture, it is important to first gain clarity on its commonly held, yet not often discussed, values. These values can be used as an internal compass or communicated with visitors directly.



What we're committed to protecting:

SMALL-TOWN CHARACTER

Our small, clean and well-cared-for historic town provides a place to gather, connect and develop a sense of closeness.

CARE FOR OTHERS

Caring for one another in both our current community and our past cultures translates into welcoming others and creating safe places for all to enjoy.

STEWARDSHIP

We honor the natural resources our community resides within and work to ensure these places thrive, for nature's sake and for all to enjoy.

THOUGHTFUL, HUMAN-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

We value thoughtful design and quality development that connects people with both people and place. Our community design facilitates all forms of mobility: bikers, walkers, riders and more.

LOCAL PRIDE

We support locally owned businesses, as well as locally grown and made products, because this creates a stronger community and a richer local economy.

A DESTINATION'S VISION OF SUCCESS

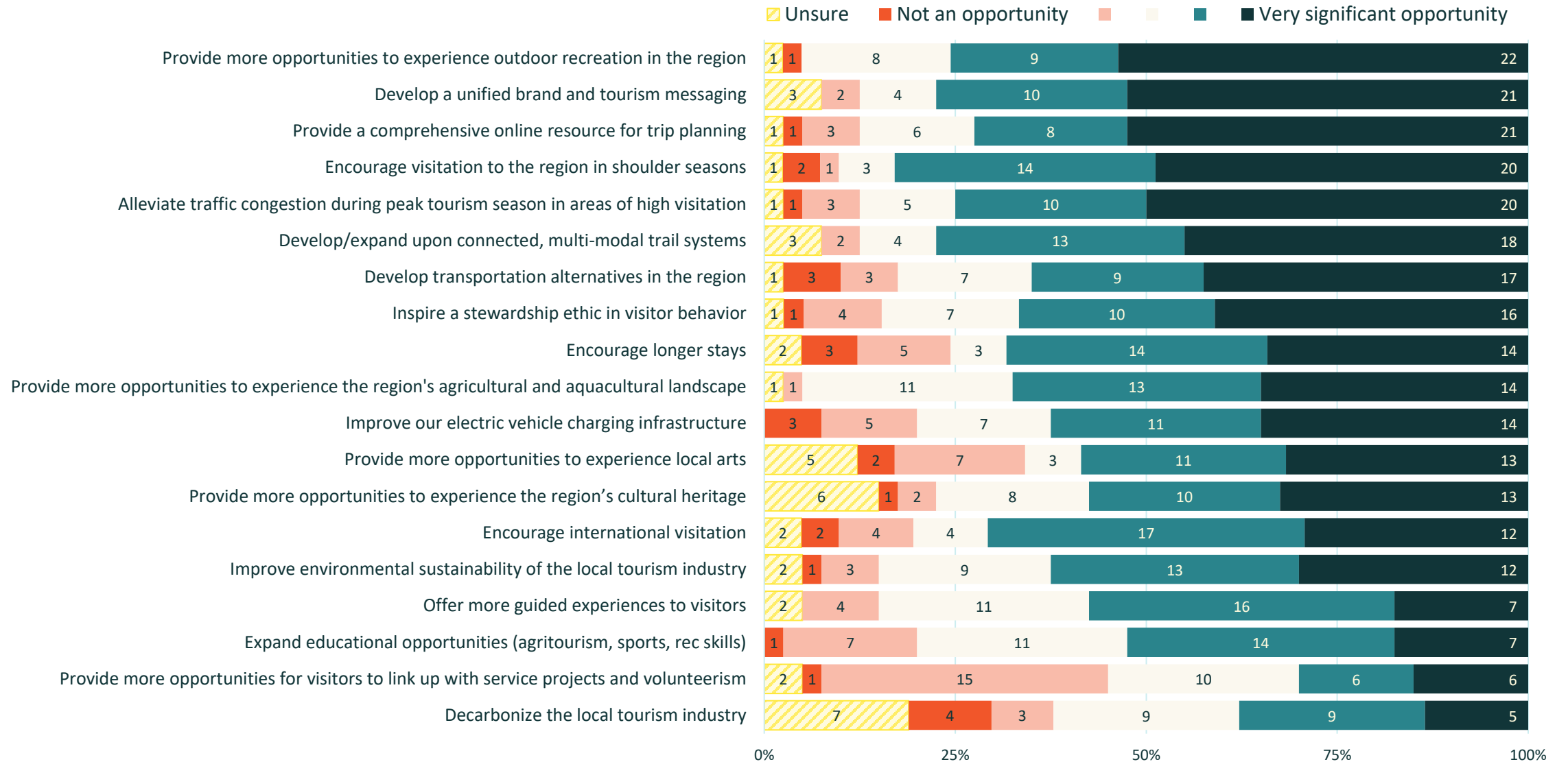
WHY?

A vision is like a community's North Star. It should paint a vivid picture of where community members would like to be in the future. A clearly articulated and inspiring narrative of what a community sees for itself will help individuals and organizations envision what's possible and allow them to direct their energy and resources toward achieving it.



OPPORTUNITIES - RANKING

17. What do you believe are the best tactical OPPORTUNITIES to advance the positive impact of local tourism



15-YEAR VISION OF SUCCESS

A vision is like a community's North Star. It should paint a vivid picture of where community members would like to be in the future. A clearly articulated and inspiring narrative of what a community sees for itself will help individuals and organizations envision what's possible and allow them to direct their energy and resources toward achieving it.



What this visitor destination will look like in 2038:

GATEWAY TO GREATER ADVENTURES

Troutdale has become THE jumping-off point for embarking on a world-class Columbia River Gorge recreation experience or an adventure on the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail. Troutdale is uniquely positioned to increase its standing as a “basecamp” for outdoor recreation in the Columbia Gorge and Mt. Hood.

We take strong pride in the infrastructure and connections we’ve built within multiple transportation systems to offer revolutionary car-free travel for Gorge visitors – including seamless links to the Portland metro area for residents and visitors alike. Our commitment to this work has elevated our status as a gateway community and has also helped reduce congestion and traffic in our treasured National Scenic Area and nearby natural areas.

This focus on accessibility has spurred an emerging cluster of businesses that cater to the needs of adventure-seekers through services and amenities. Existing downtown businesses are also capturing the benefits of this new stream of visitors.



QUAINT, VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

Troutdale is a destination in its own right, drawing explorers who seek a taste of authentic small-town life surrounded by phenomenal natural riches, all just a stone's throw from Portland. Troutdale's renown draws both day-trippers and overnight visitors.

Troutdale's comfortable scale and walkable nature invite visitors and residents to slow down and savor their surroundings. Along the streets, diverse businesses spark visitor interest and further exploration. Our pedestrian-friendly community makes it easy for people of all ages to explore with a sense of safety, inviting them to discover businesses and amenities beyond their initial point of interest.

The scale and design of our quaint, historic downtown has shaped thoughtful development, creating and connecting new amenities to the broader community. Our downtown draws visitors and residents of all ages to businesses, services and events. Because locals are embracing and caring for downtown, it remains a vibrant and authentic community to visit. In Troutdale, everyone can feel what it's like to live in a small town – even if it's only for a weekend.

THE RIVER CONNECTS US ALL

The Wild and Scenic Sandy River is the natural centerpiece of our community. River stewardship is paramount; it's our responsibility to ensure it thrives for generations to come. To mitigate human impact, we're pursuing collaborative solutions to manage river use and ease parking-congestion issues. We've invested in walkable connections between downtown and the river, providing safe access to the river as well as new, sustainable revenue for more businesses in town.

GROWING AND CONNECTED TOURISM ECOSYSTEM

We're building on the established Explore Troutdale brand, reinforcing a strong shared identity as a destination. Our community and business leaders are aligned in recognizing the value of tourism. This shared emphasis keeps our development trajectory in sync with other community efforts, connecting to and complementing other regional and statewide initiatives.

DESTINATION STRATEGY

STRATEGIC IMPACT AREAS

STRATEGIC IMPACT AREAS

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

Where should Troutdale focus over the next 5 years?

A. BECOME THE GATEWAY TO THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE AND BASECAMP FOR CAR-FREE TRAVEL
be a solution provider

B. INCREASE CONNECTIVITY WITH THE WILD + SCENIC SANDY RIVER WHILE PROTECTING ITS ECOLOGICAL VALUES
harness the power of the river

C. IMPROVE THE VIBRANCY OF OUR QUAINT DOWNTOWN BY EVOLVING OUR VISITOR EXPERIENCE
develop a center of gravity in town

D. CONNECT + BUILD OUR TOURISM ECOSYSTEM
accelerate connections between people working in the tourism economy

IMPACT AREA A Become the Gateway to the Columbia River Gorge and a Basecamp for Car-Free Travel	IMPACT AREA B Increase Connectivity with the Wild and Scenic Sandy River While Protecting its Ecological Values	IMPACT AREA C Improve the Vibrancy of our Quaint Downtown by Evolving the Visitor Experience	IMPACT AREA D Connect and Build Our Tourism Ecosystem
<p>Develop Gateway Services, Amenities, Experiences Develop supporting services, amenities and experiences to provide a world-class experience to recreationists visiting the Historic Columbia River Highway.</p> <p>Foster Greater Transportation Connectivity Build upon existing transit systems and parking strategy to position Troutdale as a hub for Columbia Gorge-bound car-free travel.</p> <p>Build Relationships Build partnerships to better integrate Troutdale in regional outdoor recreation activities and visions.</p> <p>Architect Wayfinding and Signage Develop wayfinding and signage that creates a sense of place, draws visitors into downtown and supports navigation to surrounding attractions.</p> <p>Communicate with Visitors Develop messaging that positions Troutdale as a can't-miss first and last stop on trips to the Gorge.</p>	<p>Foster Coordination and Collaboration Convene river-focused partners and integrate plans across jurisdictions to improve the user experience on the Sandy River.</p> <p>Develop the Sandy River Recreation Experience Pursue a Sandy River shuttle system and other infrastructure to alleviate parking challenges and open up new visitor experiences.</p> <p>Develop Town-to-River Connections Strengthen pedestrian connections between Troutdale's downtown and the Sandy River to promote easy and integrated access among amenities and natural areas.</p> <p>Communicate with Visitors Improve the consistency of messaging at Sandy River access points to encourage safety, environmental protection, and integration with other destination experiences.</p>	<p>Develop the Visitor Experience in Downtown Troutdale Evolve and diversify the visitor experience in downtown to build upon existing strengths.</p> <p>Develop and Connect Surrounding Visitor Experiences to Downtown Develop and diversify visitor experiences in the broader destination of Troutdale, supporting outdoor recreation and local food and farm experiences in a way that will draw new visitation to the region. Strengthen the connections between these visitor experiences and downtown Troutdale in creative ways to foster a supportive network among small, locally owned businesses.</p> <p>Communicate with Visitors Strengthen visitor information messaging to encourage visitor movement through the whole community.</p>	<p>Develop Destination Leadership Capacity for Troutdale Cultivate a broader network of local tourism leaders and partners to implement the destination vision.</p> <p>Communicate with Your Tourism Ecosystem Develop consistent and relevant industry-facing communication in order to engage and support Troutdale's tourism ecosystem.</p> <p>Provide Capacity and Technical Assistance to Local Businesses in the Tourism Ecosystem Help businesses and organizations working in the tourism economy access existing industry communication, marketing channels and development opportunities.</p> <p>Build City Staff Capacity for Tourism Development and Marketing Ensure staff has capacity to deliver on destination strategy and marketing plan.</p> <p>Increase Funding for Building the Tourism Economy Develop additional funding sources and gain clarity on existing funding to ensure tourism resources are allocated strategically.</p>

THESE FUNDS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO DO WORK THAT OUR SMALL STAFF OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THE TIME OR RESOURCES TO CONDUCT.

BY WORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS IN THE INDUSTRY, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY AND VISITORS AND DEFINE A CLEAR ROADMAP OF OUR FUTURE AS A DESTINATION AND ARE ABLE TO ALLOCATE OUR TIME AND RESOURCES WISELY TO GET US THERE.

THIS WILL GUIDE US FOR THE NEXT 15 YEARS AND I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT WHERE WE'RE HEADED REFLECTS OUR COMMUNITY'S VISION AND VALUES.



THANKS

FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE
INFORMATION ABOUT
THIS STRATEGY PLEASE
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Visit Grants Pass Capacity Grant

Cave Junction Main Street development
& Formation of Grants Pass Main Street



Role of VGP

- Serve as the destination marketing organization for Grants Pass and Josephine County
 - Funding limitation: Collection within city limits only
 - Cave Junction active in community improvement and welcoming visitors for day experiences
- VGP is a new DMO, established in 2021
 - The new establishment made a clear directive VGP markets community events and is not the event maker
 - This directive leaves a capacity void in downtown management





Capacity sharing

- **Cave Junction**– established Main Street, without a strategic plan for funding engine
 - **Opportunities:** Gateway to Oregon Caves National Monument, one of the last amenity stops on Hwy 199 before California
- **Grants Pass**– The old DMO was performing downtown management services that took away from its primary purpose, marketing the destination
 - **Opportunity:** A Mainstreet organization would provide event organization for the DMO to market, downtown business advocacy (beyond visitor facing businesses), aid in downtown revitalization goals

Cave Junction Mainstreet

Process:

- Engage community and Mainstreet CJ stakeholders for a Strategic Plan
- Board Workshop
- Sustainable funding conversations

Deliverable:

- Main Street Cave Junction Strategic Plan
- Sustainable funding strategy



Cave Junction Main Street

“The Main Street Cave Junction team is a great example of how a small community can come together and make good things happen. Despite each member of the team being incredibly busy with multiple initiatives, they come to the table to work together. My time with them on their first strategic plan was a great opportunity to map and prioritize all the great work they accomplish.”

– Jason Schneider, Civic*Possible



Cave Junction Main Street

"Cave Junction is a place where individuals already carry multiple responsibilities, making capacity a primary barrier to progress. Compounded by limited funding, these challenges often lead to a frustrating cycle of stagnation. In a community where the burden of progress rests heavily on the shoulders of a few dedicated individuals, this strategic planning effort, fueled by this funding, has empowered our community to overcome. The significance of this work extends beyond mere outcomes; it's about nurturing a sense of hope and empowerment within a community that has long felt marginalized and overlooked. Through collaboration and strategic foresight, Civic* Possible and Main Street Cave Junction, supported by Travel Oregon and Visit Grants Pass, are not just facilitating change—they are cultivating a legacy of resilience and possibility that will endure for generations."

– Megan Pugh, Illinois Valley Chamber



Grants Pass Main Street

Process:

- Engage downtown community to determine need
- Gauge community appetite for organizational budget and funding options

Deliverable:

- Roadmap to Grants Pass Main Street Organization
- Establish a steering committee lead by downtown stakeholders



Grants Pass Main Street

"Grant Pass has been caught in a 'whose role is it' conundrum over the past few years. Working with the existing entities and nearly 100 concerned business owners, we were able to come to a consensus to create a Main Street program. There are still plenty of details to be worked out, but now there is a path and community support to get things moving."

– Jason Schneider, Civic*Possible





Grants Pass Main Street

"Having the opportunity to work with an experienced consultant that could navigate our community of vested partners and produce a roadmap in less than a year was efficient, organized, and effective."

– Dana Pearce, Economic Development Manager City of Grants Pass

Grant Impacts

Addressed Challenges

- Funding limitations
- Capacity
- No cash match requirement

Barriers

- Budget limit for application amounts



A long-exposure photograph of a waterfall cascading into a pool, surrounded by lush green moss and ferns. The water is blurred, creating a soft, white curtain effect. The surrounding forest is dense with green foliage and moss-covered trees.

Questions?

Thank you!