

LA GRANDE BIKE PARK FEASIBILITY REPORT

June 2025
La Grande, Oregon



TRAVEL



OREGON



Acknowledgements

This feasibility report for the La Grande Bike Park project would not have been possible without collaboration and participation from the following organizations:

City of La Grande

Eastern Oregon Visitors Association

Grand Ronde Gravity

Executive Summary

The La Grande Bike Park feasibility report, prepared for Grande Ronde Gravity as part of Travel Oregon's Recreation Ready program, proposes a destination-quality bike park in La Grande, Oregon, welcoming various biking disciplines, including mountain biking, adaptive mountain biking and BMX, with a focus on accessibility, inclusion and community. This Recreation Ready: Phase I study assessed feasibility by engaging stakeholders, analyzing existing conditions and visitor trends, evaluating disability and inclusion, and identifying opportunities and constraints. Key findings show strong community support and high interest in Oregon as a premier biking destination. Disability and inclusion feedback highlighted the need for accessible infrastructure, transportation, rental options for adaptive bikes and clear online information. Opportunities include economic enhancement, increased

tourism and positioning La Grande as an active, inclusive community. Constraints involve funding, some local opposition, existing accessibility limitations and lack of existing adaptive trails.

Recommendations include establishing an accessibility advisory committee, prioritizing accessibility in design, hiring consultants with lived disability experience and developing an accessibility maintenance plan. Precedent examples such as Bolton, Vermont's The Driving Range and Whistler Mountain Bike Park offer valuable insights. The project is viable for Phase II, with a recommended action plan emphasizing inclusive design, construction, community engagement and additional fundraising. The La Grande Bike Park project promises economic benefits, increased recreational opportunities and greater outdoor accessibility for the La Grande community and regional visitors.

CONTENTS

| | |
|----|---|
| 04 | RECREATION READY BACKGROUND |
| 06 | ACCESS AND EQUITY IN THE OUTDOORS |
| 08 | STEERING COMMITTEE |
| 10 | PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND |
| 12 | EXISTING CONDITIONS |
| 14 | RESEARCH |
| 23 | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT |
| 26 | OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS |
| 29 | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT |
| 33 | RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN FOR PHASE II |
| 36 | APPENDIX |

PREPARED FOR

Grande Ronde Gravity

RECIPIENT OF

Travel Oregon Recreation Ready Program

PREPARED BY

C2 Recreation

Empowering Access

Travel Oregon

RECREATION READY BACKGROUND





Katie Falkenberg

To support Oregon communities in developing new outdoor recreation visitor experiences that enhance local communities, grow economic opportunities, respect natural environments and increase access and equity in the outdoors, Travel Oregon launched the Recreation Ready program in 2024.

Designed to provide communities with early project planning, technical assistance and investments, Recreation Ready is delivered over two phases. First, Travel Oregon staff and a consultant team work with a local project steering committee over a six-month period to assess project feasibility through a series of key steps. In the second phase, feasible projects are eligible to receive additional technical assistance and financial investment to further advance projects.

PHASE I: Assess project feasibility

(over six- month period)

- Convene local project steering committee
- Receive *Access and Belonging in Outdoor Recreation* training
- Examine existing conditions
- Analyze visitor trends and potential visitor profiles
- Perform disability and inclusion evaluation
- Engage community and receive feedback
- Identify opportunities and constraints
- Provide action planning for Phase II
- Culminate steps into this feasibility report

PHASE II: Investment

- Fund action plan to advance project forward (up to \$100,000 to be executed by December 31, 2026)

The Recreation Ready program was available to rural communities and to tribal communities within the nine federally recognized Tribes of Oregon. Successful program applicants identified an outdoor recreation visitor experience project in early stages of development and planning; at the time of application, these projects were not yet ready to seek traditional infrastructure investments and were in need of assistance to get to that position in the future. Twenty-four applicants applied to the program through a competitive statewide process in fall of 2024. The La Grande Bike Park was one of four projects accepted into the program.

Program participants that successfully complete Phase I with a viable project — determined through the feasibility report — are eligible and invited to participate in Phase II. Applicants are required to submit a detailed project scope of work, including a budget and timeline, to Travel Oregon to receive the Phase II investment award.

ACCESS AND EQUITY IN THE OUTDOORS



Access and Equity in the Outdoors

Access in outdoor recreation ensures people have the *ability* to physically reach and participate in outdoor spaces and activities by removing barriers. **Equity**, however, goes further: It acknowledges that different groups face unique challenges and have varying needs, focusing on *fairness* and addressing historical inequalities. The Recreation Ready program aims to prioritize both access and equity in the outdoor projects it supports. In Phase I, Travel Oregon retained an accessibility consultant with lived disability experience to provide guidance to program participants, addressing outdoor recreation disparities and highlighting the importance of intersectionality. Creating truly inclusive outdoor experiences requires intentional outreach to disability communities, hiring expert consultants and exceeding current standards. Ongoing community investment and partnerships are vital for genuine outdoor access and inclusion. This report presents findings and recommendations from Empowering Access to further these goals.

About Empowering Access

Empowering Access provides expert consultation in disability, equity and inclusion, drawing on both professional knowledge and personal experience. They partner with stakeholders to develop comprehensive and inclusive solutions that go beyond standard practices. Through research, best practices and a deep understanding of lived experiences, they prioritize and elevate the voices of individuals with disabilities. Their goal is to foster inclusion across all settings, offering clients innovative strategies for accessible outdoor engagement.

OSU Training on Access and Belonging

To support program participants in framing their outdoor projects with access and equity, project leads took Oregon State University's Elevate Outdoors training on access and belonging, followed by an Empowering Access-led debrief. Discussions covered inclusion, equity, historical exclusion and current research for equitable outdoor experiences. Projected learning outcomes included understanding access, inclusion and belonging; self-awareness; appreciating diverse identities; understanding barriers; and creating inclusive outdoor experiences. The debrief addressed history, Native lands, inclusive spaces/marketing, safety/allyship, dismantling privilege, forming partnerships and expanding opportunities.

A high-angle, wide shot of a river valley. A dark blue river flows from the bottom left towards the center right, curving gently. To the left of the river, a paved asphalt road follows the curve of the valley. The hillsides are covered in green grass and scattered evergreen trees. In the background, the hills rise and recede under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

STEERING COMMITTEE



The Recreation Ready program was designed for destination management/marketing organizations (or other organizations working closely with destination managers). The program required each DMO applicant to identify a local steering committee that would shape and guide their project and to submit a letter of commitment from each member. Recreation Ready: Phase I steering committee members for the La Grande Bike Park project included:

- **Sean Lerner, President, Grande Ronde Gravity (lead)**
- **Nicole Howard, Secretary, Grande Ronde Gravity**
- **Stu Spence, Parks & Recreation Director, La Grande Parks & Recreation**
- **Kate Harbour, Deputy Director, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

The La Grande Bike Park project aims to develop a destination-quality bike park in La Grande, Oregon, featuring trails, jumps and challenges suitable for various biking disciplines, including mountain biking, adaptive mountain biking and BMX. The project originates from local riders and community members who identified a need for dedicated biking facilities. It aligns with regional goals to expand outdoor recreation opportunities, as outlined in the *Northeast Oregon Tri-County Destination Mountain Bike Plan*. Currently, comparable facilities are distant, and La Grande's park would fill a gap, catering to riders of all ages, abilities and skill levels. The park will feature purpose-built and progressive dirt jumps, aiming to boost recreational cycling and cycling tourism. It will be able to host events and workshops, thereby promoting tourism and community engagement. The project seeks to enhance La Grande's identity as an active community and benefit from the technical support offered through the Recreation Ready program.



EXISTING CONDITIONS



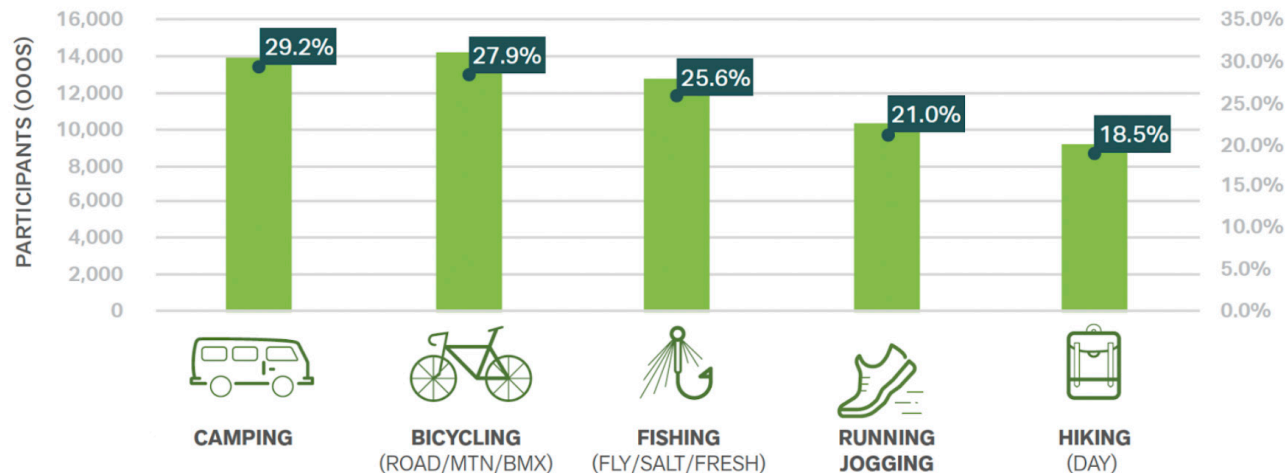
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Biking is a popular activity in the United States, with over 9.2 million participants mountain biking in 2024.¹ In Oregon, the sport generated over \$209 million in economic activity in 2022⁽²⁾ and is expected to grow, with cycling remaining the most popular outdoor activity for youth.⁽³⁾ It is likely that increased accessibility to mountain biking trails would further increase participation. The lack of nearby trails is a significant factor contributing to physical inactivity, and the demand for mountain biking trails is higher than for other non-motorized trails.⁽⁴⁾

PinkBike.com community surveys suggest riders would engage in mountain biking three to five times per week if trails were readily available, indicating substantial latent demand. This does not account for individuals who do not participate due to a lack of local facilities. In response to the accessibility issue, municipal bike parks have grown in popularity since the early 2000s, with several established in Oregon communities such as John Day, Sandy, The Dalles and Bend.

In Northeast Oregon, municipal bike parks are crucial for enhancing the region's reputation as a mountain biking destination. *The Northeast Oregon Tri-County Destination Mountain Bike Plan* specifically identifies a municipal bike park in La Grande as a valuable recreation amenity and an economic driver. Several potential sites within La Grande's city limits were evaluated for the bike park's development, all with terrain conducive to various biking features and sufficient access infrastructure.

Additionally, there is growing demand for adaptive mountain biking experiences, with Oregon Adaptive Sports reporting 871 programmed adaptive bike experiences in Bend in 2024. The 2025 *La Grande Bike Park Background Report* indicates that 22.3% of travelers to the area have an accessibility need, while the *La Grande Bike Park Potential Visitor Profile* projects 13.4% of future recreation visitors will have similar accessibility needs. These statistics underscore the importance of inclusive design and features for adaptive riders.



1. Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2024 Outdoor Participation Trends Report.
2. 2022 Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon.
3. Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2024 Outdoor Participation Trends Report.

4. Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP); ECONorthwest, Outdoor Recreation Scarcity and Abundance in Western Oregon: A Spatial Analysis (2014).

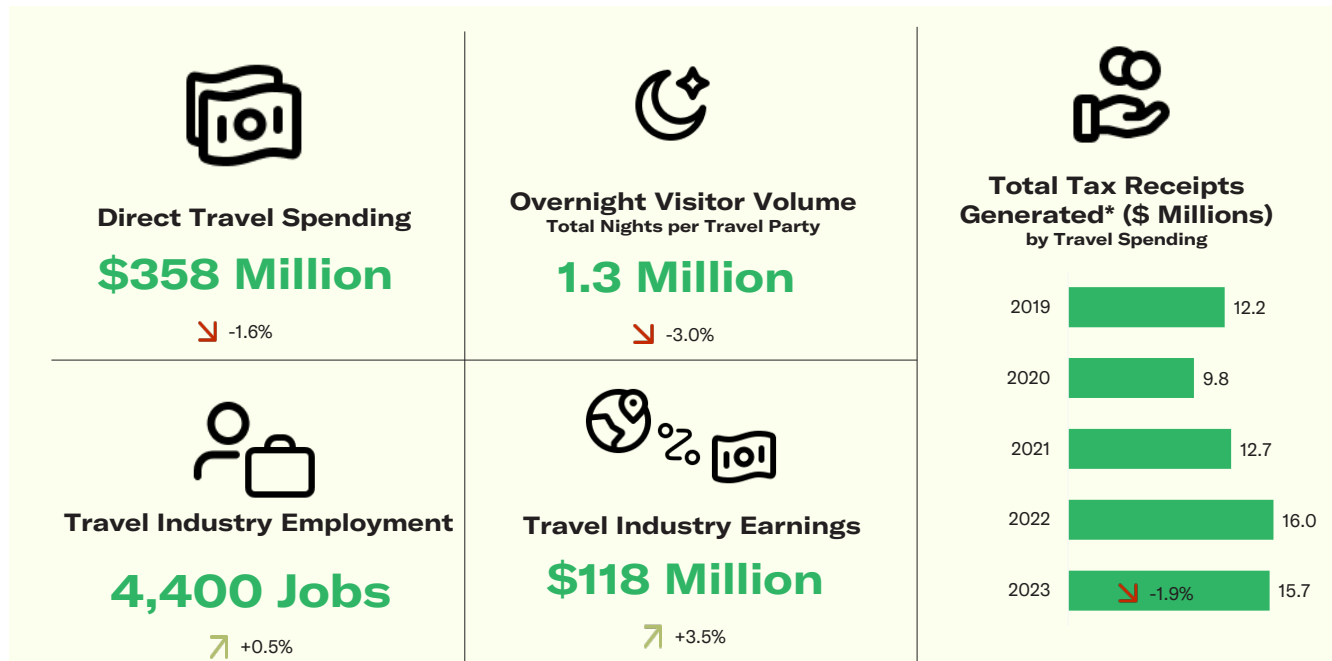
A close-up, low-angle shot of a forest floor. The foreground is dominated by dark, rich brown soil, textured with small clumps and scattered pine needles. Some needles are bright orange-brown, while others are dark green. The background is a soft-focus view of a forest with tall, thin tree trunks and a canopy of green leaves, creating a bokeh effect with light filtering through. The overall mood is natural and serene.

RESEARCH

Dylan VanWeelden

To understand the potential and need for the Deathball Mountain Bike Trail System, Travel Oregon commissioned Future Partners to conduct two visitor-focused studies: one analyzing current local and regional visitor trends, the tourism economy, and resident sentiment; and another assessing regional outdoor recreation travelers' interest in the project and their perceptions of Oregon as an outdoor destination compared to competitors such as Washington, Idaho, Nevada and California. Furthermore, to gather specific feedback on accessibility and inclusion, Empowering Access facilitated disability and inclusion focus groups in both Portland and Central Oregon in March 2025. These sessions aimed to identify accessible recreation interests and barriers, providing crucial insight to ensure the trail system meets the diverse needs of all potential users.

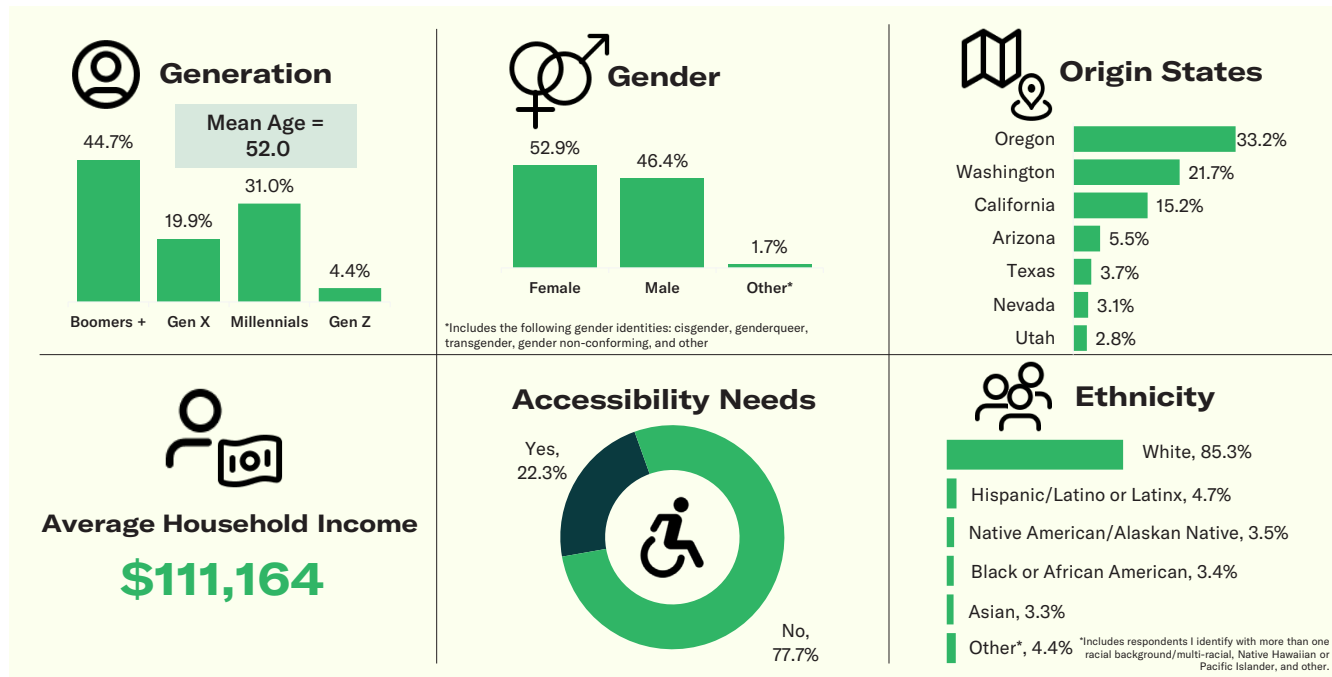
Economic Snapshot



*The Total Tax Receipts Generated includes both state and local taxes

Source: The Economic Impact of Travel in Oregon – 2023 preliminary data, Baker, Umatilla, and Union Counties.

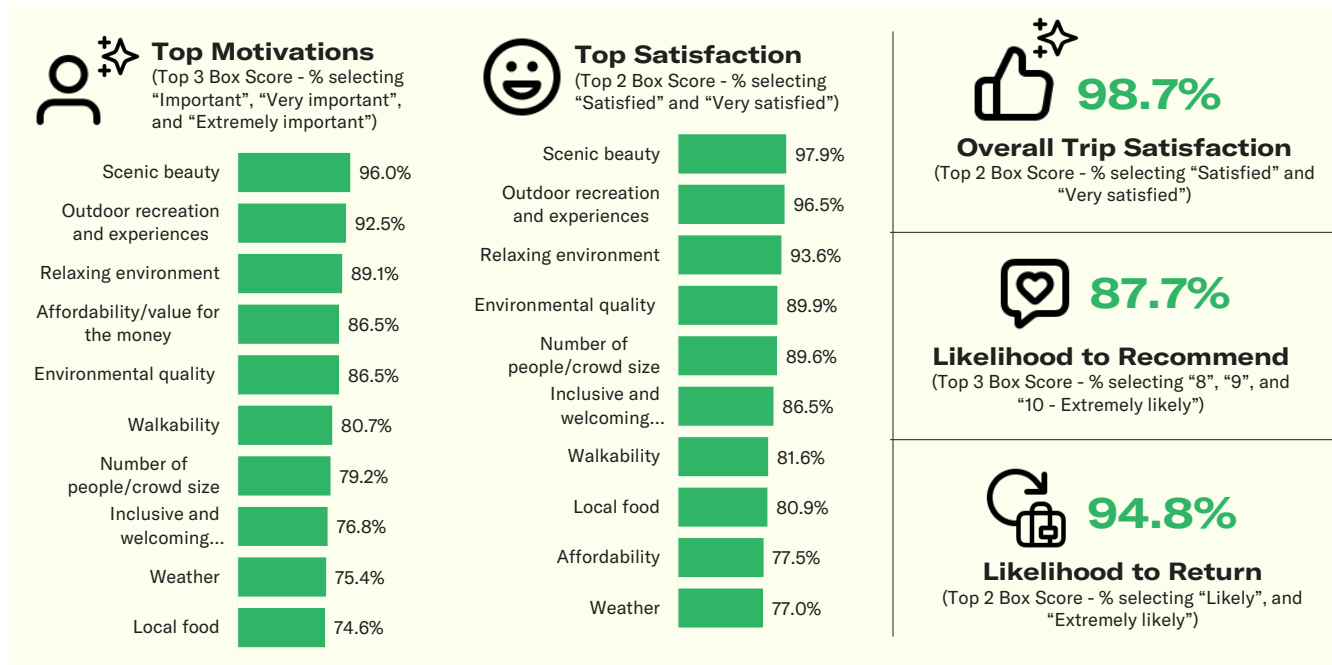
Visitor Demographics Snapshot



Source: Travel Oregon, 2022 Visitor Profile Study.

La Grande Bike Park includes Cove, Elgin, La Grande, Union, Milton-Freewater, Pendleton, Hermiston, Umatilla, Baker City.

Outdoor Recreation Snapshot

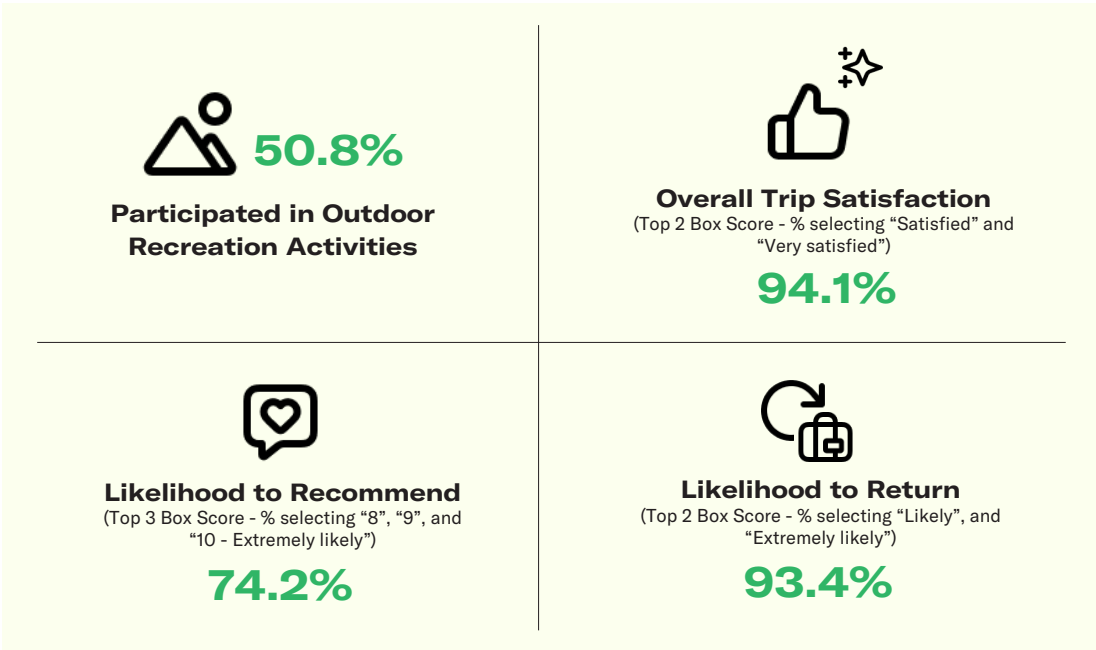


Source: Travel Oregon, 2022 Visitor Profile Study.

Sample: Visitors who participated in an outdoor recreation activity on their last trip to Oregon.

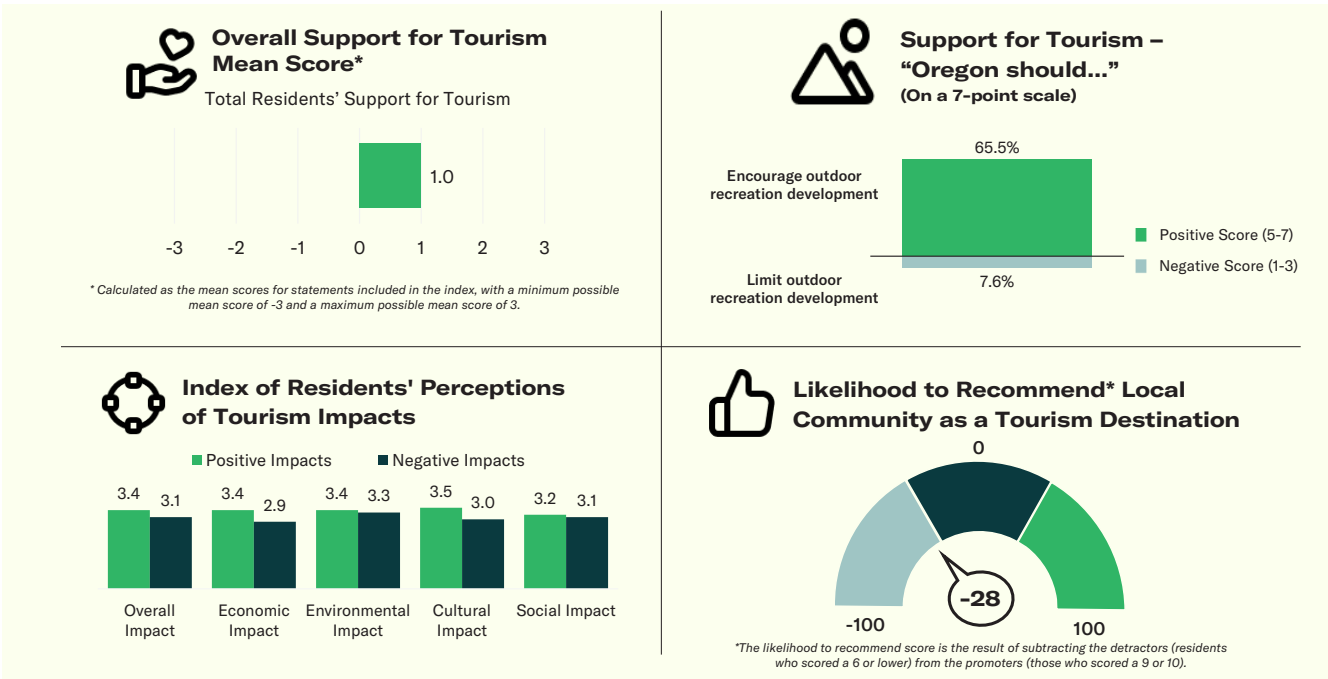
La Grande Bike Park includes Cove, Elgin, La Grande, Union, Milton-Freewater, Pendleton, Hermiston, Umatilla, Baker City.

Visitors with Disabilities Snapshot



Source: Travel Oregon, 2022 Visitor Profile Study; Eastern Oregon Region, Visitors with Disabilities.

Baker, Umatilla and Union Counties Resident Sentiment Snapshot



Source: Travel Oregon, 2023 Resident Sentiment Study, Baker, Umatilla, and Union Counties

Potential Visitors

KEY INSIGHTS

Key Markets: Oregon is perceived as a top biking destination, especially by white travelers, older travelers and travelers with disabilities. The La Grande Bike Park should actively target these groups, ensuring accessibility features benefit all.

Opportunity: Out-of-state travelers who identify as Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) take more overnight outdoor trips, presenting a significant opportunity to provide offerings for and market to this group.

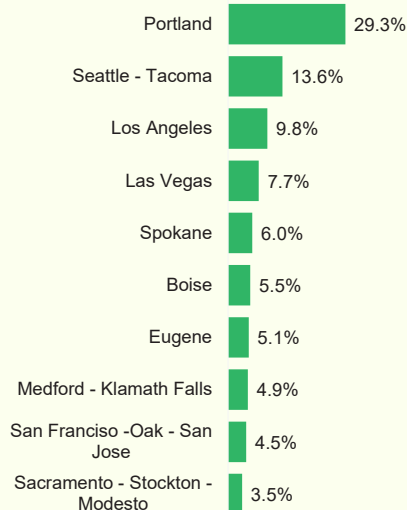
Competition: California is a major competitor, particularly for BIPOC and younger travelers. To attract these visitors, emphasize Oregon's scenic landscapes and relaxing environments.

Travel Inspiration: Potential visitors rely on internet searches, word of mouth and YouTube for travel inspiration. Travelers with disabilities favor traditional media, while younger travelers prefer social media.

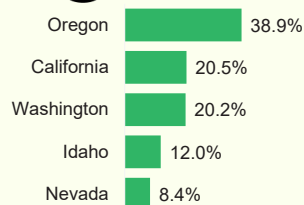
Travel Profile Snapshot



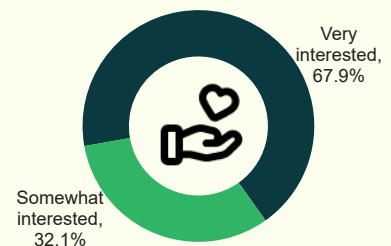
Top Origin by DMA (Designated Market Area)



Origin States



Leisure Travel Interest in Outdoor Recreation



Average Overnight Leisure Trips Taken Including Outdoor Activities (Past 12 Months)

4.0 Trips



Average Length of Stay of Most Recent Outdoor Recreation Trip

4.0 Nights

Outdoor Trip Snapshot

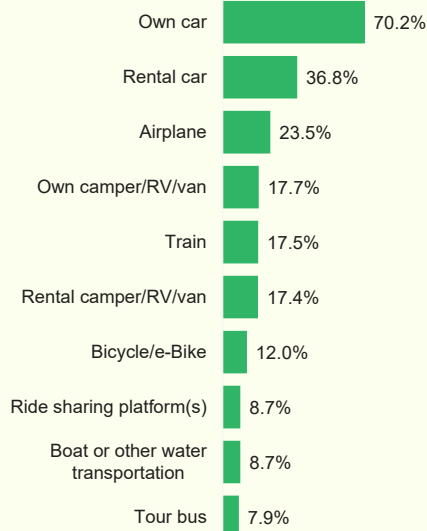


**Average Distance
Willing to Travel
from Lodging to
Outdoor Recreation**

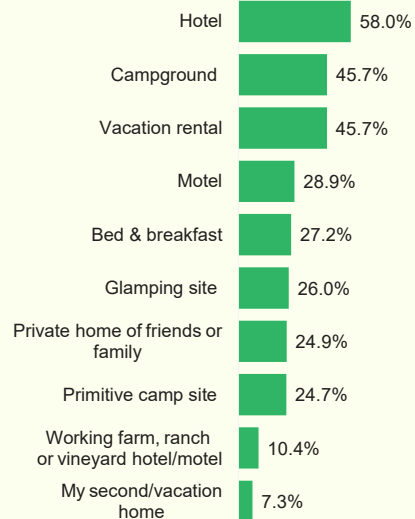
20.1 Miles



Top Preferred Mode of Travel For Outdoor Recreation Trip



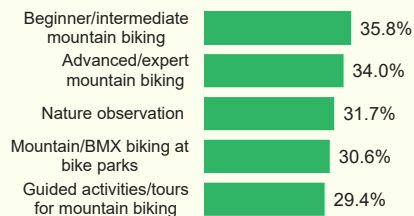
Preferred Accommodation For Outdoor Recreation Trip



Oregon Perceptions Snapshot

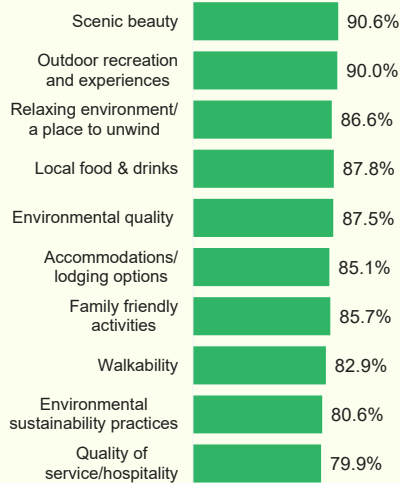


Oregon Attribute Performance (% selected as Best Destination Attribute)



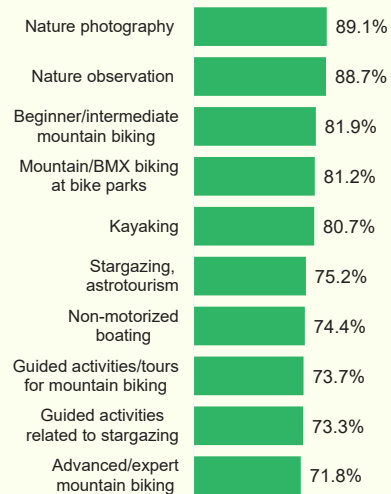
Top Oregon Attributes

(Top 2 Box Score - % selecting "Good" and "Very good")

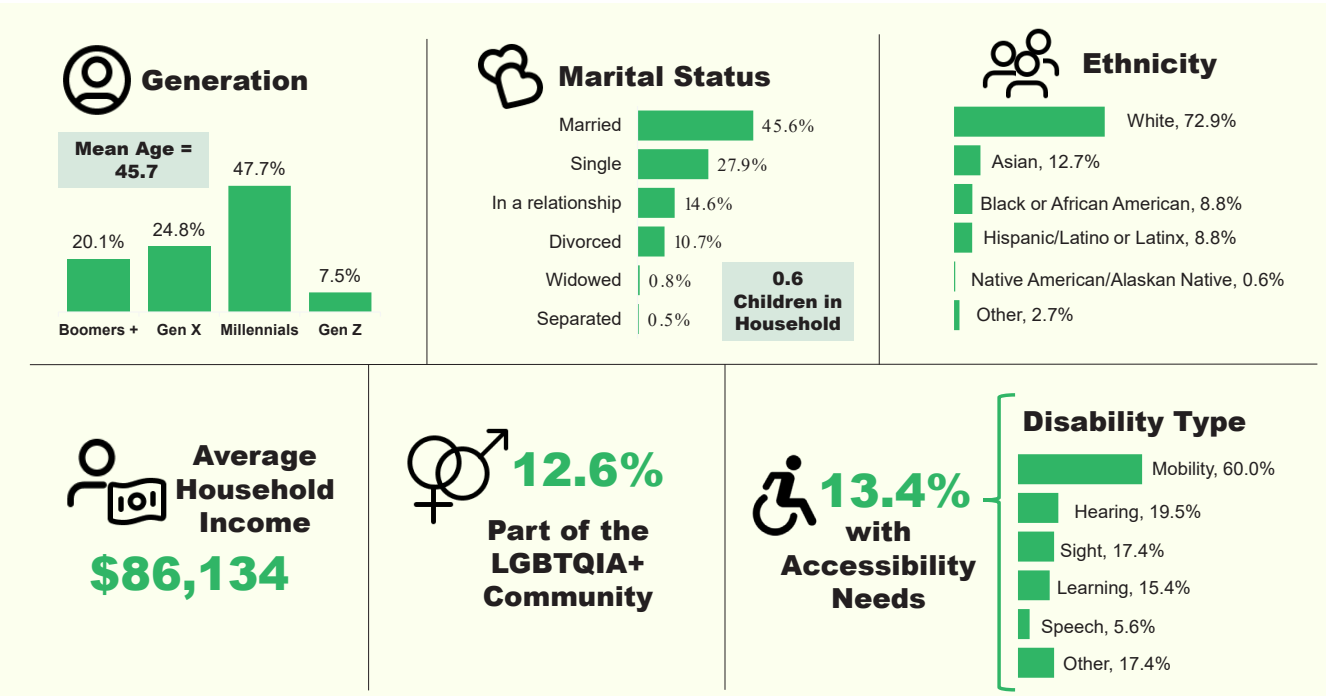


Top Oregon Outdoors Attributes

(Top 2 Box Score - % selecting "Good" and "Very good")

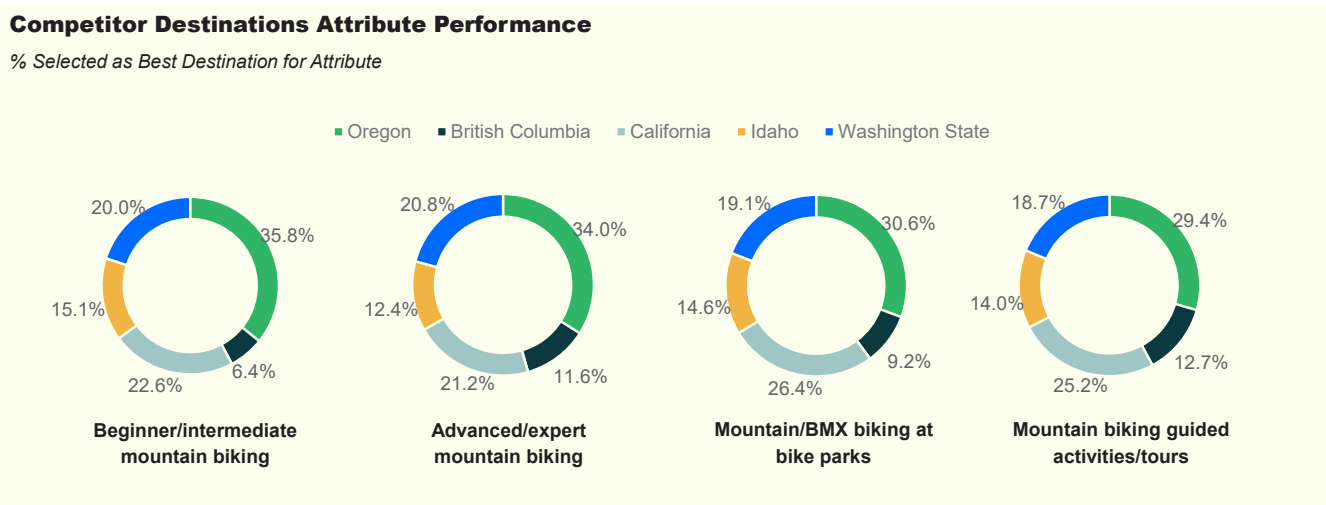


Demographics Snapshot



Oregon is considered the best destination for biking recreation activities

When asked to select which regional destination is best for various biking recreation activities, Oregon was consistently selected over competitor destinations by potential visitors. While more than three in ten chose Oregon as the best destination for all four biking activities, the largest share (35.8%) said Oregon was the best destination for beginner/intermediate mountain biking.



Base: Total respondents. 266 completed surveys.



Disability & Inclusion Focus Groups

Two focus groups, representing potential visitors from different Oregon regions who would travel at least 50 miles, participated in this study. The participants represented a diverse range of disabilities and interests, and they engaged through in-person conversations or group Zoom calls, followed by detailed surveys. Snapshots of the findings are below, with full survey responses available in the *Appendix*.

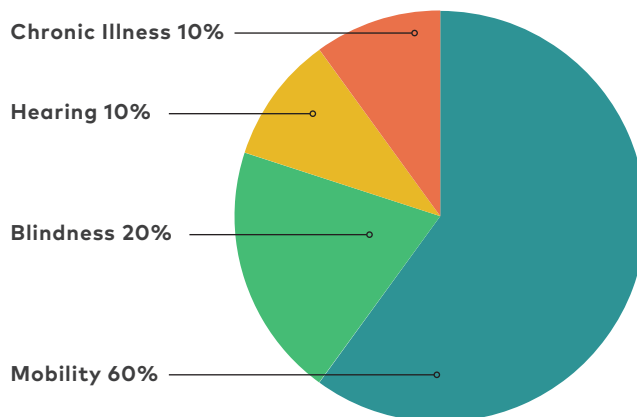
IN-PERSON FINDINGS

Participants from both regions, Portland metro and Central Oregon, showed little interest in traveling east specifically for biking, but indicated they would be interested in biking if already in the area, or willing to travel if the area had other accessible features and attractions in addition to biking. Both groups knew little about adaptive riding opportunities in the region. They expressed interest in seeing another destination prioritize access, but noted accomplishing this would require a lot of work. Both groups spoke to aMTB access needs and desires from the disabled perspective.

SURVEY RESPONSES

The 11 participants, aged 41 to 77 and from the Portland metro and Central Oregon areas, were surveyed about their outdoor recreation experiences. The group included individuals identifying as white and as people of color, as well as a range of gender identities (she/he/they). Participants reported a variety of disabilities — primarily mobility-related, along with blindness, chronic illness, hearing loss and chronic pain.

DISABILITIES EXPERIENCED





Alyssa Brownlee

KEY THEMES AND DIRECT EXPERIENCES

Safety & Inclusivity: Perceptions of safety varied, with concerns raised about personal safety due to race, gender and lack of support. Privilege was noted as a factor affecting safety perceptions.

- "I fear for my personal safety [as a person of color]."
- "As a woman, I don't always feel comfortable going out alone ... I can't find the right information online to know if I can use [the area] safely as a power wheelchair user."

Transportation & Assistance: Most participants needed personal vehicles to transport equipment. Roughly half required loading/unloading assistance, and those without equipment still needed support.

- "I use my truck ... I do bring at least one person for assistance."
- "I do not ... have a bike to load and unload, [but I need assistance]."

Trail Preferences & Equipment: Trail preferences ranged widely (single-track, flowy, no elevation gain), catering to various equipment (aMTBs, e-assist). Rental options for adaptive bikes were highly desired.

- "I would be interested in something ... more flowy and not super technical."
- "I would love to be able to rent an accessible mountain bike and would probably need one that is e-assist."

Experiences & Barriers: Positive experiences came from camaraderie, challenge and accessibility. Negative experiences involved unwelcoming interactions, physical barriers and a lack of accessible information or services.

- "Best attributes are ... accessible bathrooms, accessible lodging and a website that provides detailed information. ... Worst experience: a location not having any of those."
- "Worst experiences generally have to do with interactions with sh**ty people and being challenged for my right to participate."

The complete reports are available in the *Appendix*.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





Inclusive Stakeholder Mapping & Outreach Strategy

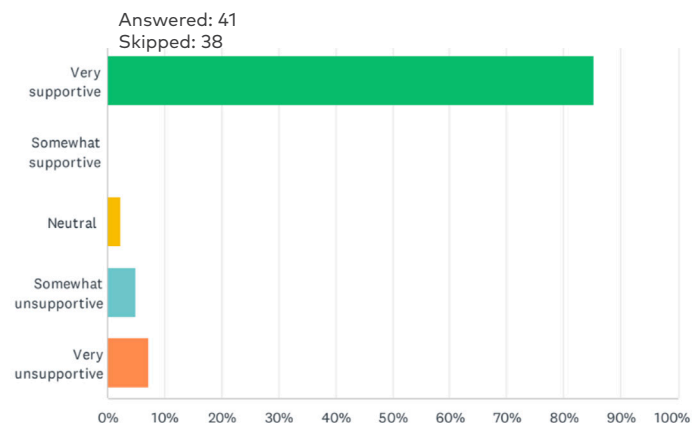
Prioritizing inclusivity and accessibility, Empowering Access guided the project steering committee to proactively engage underserved local communities (including adaptive athletes, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, women, economically disadvantaged groups and disability groups). Through intentional and transparent outreach, the committee focused on building authentic relationships, acknowledging past exclusions and emphasizing shared goals. Communication prioritized empathy, connection and trust over immediate requests, ensuring a safe and welcoming engagement process. Communities were also invited to thson community gathering.

Community Gathering and Survey

A public gathering was held in La Grande on April 21, 2025, inviting residents to learn about the project, participate in a Q&A session, and provide feedback via verbal comments and an online survey. The 44 collected survey responses revealed strong community support:

- Overwhelming Support:** 85% of respondents were "very supportive." One participant stated, "Expanding any outdoor recreation ... benefits the community and travelers. Getting youth into healthy hobbies is one of the best things we can do."
- Access to Recreation:** 88% agreed the park would provide better recreation access.
- Concerns and Counterpoints:** While some feared money will be wasted ("I honestly don't think this is gonna do much."), others saw economic potential: "It could possibly attract folks from out of town ... and generate some revenue." Another added, "La Grande needs things that draw visitors... This will help boost the local economy." However, some simply stated, "Don't need more visitors."

THINKING ABOUT THE NEW OUTDOOR RECREATION PROJECT CONCEPT THAT YOU LEARNED ABOUT, HOW SUPPORTIVE OF THIS PROJECT ARE YOU?*





Dylan VanWeelden

PRIORITIES

Priorities: Events, public restrooms and public parking were the most desired services/features. These priorities emphasize inclusivity, convenience and accessibility for all participants and spectators. When asked to elaborate, the community identified the following themes:

- **Strong Community Support:** Enthusiasm was widespread, and participants were eager for the project's long-term benefits.
- **Pioneer Park Preference:** Accessibility, existing facilities and potential for expansion made it the preferred location.
- **Skill Progression:** Desire for diverse features that would challenge and improve riders of all levels.
- **Inclusive Design:** Support for features catering to various ages and abilities, going beyond just jumps.
- **Economic Impact:** The project was seen as a way to attract tourism and boost La Grande's economy.
- **Accessibility:** Strong emphasis on making the park accessible to pedestrians and bikes, and linking it to the surrounding area.

The complete survey results are available in the *Appendix*.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS



Opportunities and Constraints

Assessing the feasibility of the La Grande Bike Park project requires a thorough evaluation of potential opportunities and constraints. These were identified through collaboration with the steering committee, site visits and community engagement efforts, including a public gathering and online surveys.



OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Destination-Quality Bike Park:** Create an innovative, welcoming bike park appealing to mountain bikers and BMX riders of various skills and interests. Ensure accessibility and inclusion are prioritized from the outset through equity-focused advisory groups and consultants with lived experience.
2. **Economic Enhancement:** Diversify and enhance the local recreation tourism economy by providing increased recreation infrastructure and appealing to a broader range of visitors, as outlined in the *Northeast Oregon Tri-County Destination Mountain Bike Plan*.
3. **Strong Community Support:** The 2025 Community Engagement Survey revealed widespread excitement and endorsement, and intent for regular use by local families and individuals.
4. **Regional Destination Perception:** The 2025 *La Grande Bike Park Potential Visitor* report found Oregon was consistently selected over competing destinations for biking recreation, with 30.6% citing Oregon as the best for mountain/BMX biking at bike parks.
5. **Adaptive Rider Appeal:** Attract more adaptive riders with various abilities and catalyze a larger accessibility focus in the community and on trails.
6. **Health Benefits:** Provide physical and mental health benefits to residents and visitors. (Studies show trails reduce stress and improve overall well-being.)

CONSTRAINTS

1. **Funding:** No bike parks are currently identified in the La Grande Parks and Recreation Department's capital improvement plan, requiring near-term funding from outside the city's general fund.
2. **Broader Regional Plan:** Realizing the full economic impact of mountain bike tourism depends on undertaking other projects listed in the Northeast Oregon Tri-County Destination Mountain Bike Plan.
3. **Local Opposition:** Some survey respondents expressed a lack of support, citing the potential for wasted money and concerns about increased visitors.
4. **Visitor Perceptions:** The La Grande Bike Park Potential Visitor Profile report found top barriers to visitation were a sense of "been there, done that" (34.7%) and preference for other destinations (33.8%).
5. **Limited Accessibility Infrastructure:** Existing accessibility information and infrastructure in La Grande are limited, potentially hindering visitors with disabilities.
6. **Lack of Adaptive Trails:** There are no current adaptive trails or features for adaptive riders, local or visiting.

Site-Specific Considerations

Following an initial evaluation by the project steering committee, Travel Oregon and the consultant team, five sites were considered. Due to significant constraints, three were eliminated, leaving the undeveloped west side of Pioneer Park and the open area north of the dog park at Riverside Park.

SITE A: PIONEER PARK

- **Opportunities:** Gravity trail potential, construction access, proximity to existing facilities and community preference.
- **Constraints:** Sun orientation, potential

SITE B: RIVERSIDE PARK

- **Opportunities:** Large, flat area suitable for various features, existing lighting, integration with other park facilities and good construction access.
- **Constraints:** Limited gravity riding potential, need for large start mounds, potential conflicts with existing park uses, ADA access challenges for existing trails and parking, and community concern that the site may be inadequate for the project.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



The La Grande Bike Park Project offers a significant opportunity to integrate accessibility and inclusion throughout its development, creating a truly inclusive environment. Its location adjacent to an existing sports complex presents unique advantages, as existing services and infrastructure can be enhanced to improve access for all users of both facilities. To cultivate positive and inclusive biking experiences, the project will need to address:

- **Connectivity:** Ensuring accessible connections within the park and to services in the surrounding area.
- **Accessible Services:** Providing services and amenities that meet the needs of all users, as well as ADA standards.
- **Eliminating Physical Barriers:** Designing and constructing the park to be physically accessible to everyone.
- **Education:** Offering resources and information to ensure all visitors can safely and comfortably enjoy the park.
- **Clear Expectations:** Establishing and communicating guidelines for park use. Implementing strategies to promote a respectful and welcoming atmosphere.

Recognizing projects often take nonlinear paths, it will be important to pull from these recommendations at the appropriate times throughout the project process. To maximize the project's effectiveness regarding accessibility and inclusion, a deliberate and comprehensive strategy should incorporate the following recommended best practices:

Holistic Approach to Project Development

COMMITTEES

- Establish a steering committee with diverse representation for feedback and guidance in the early stages.
- Proactively engage identified communities early, prioritizing those historically and currently excluded.
- Form a separate, specialized accessibility and inclusion advisory committee.
- Engage an accessibility contractor to establish and engage the advisory group.
- Provide compensation for any historically or currently underserved or under-resourced communities asked to be involved

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

- In the hiring/RFP process for experts and designers, specifically require a team member or consultant with lived experience of disability.
- Integrating this perspective from the beginning of a project prevents oversights and leverages unique insights, ensuring the built environment reflects a commitment to accessibility.

CONSULTANTS

- Seek professionals with demonstrable subject matter expertise in accessibility assessments, universal design, and inclusive planning.
- Inclusion shifts the approach from "for" to "with" people with disabilities, ensuring user-centered solutions.
- Technical expertise is crucial, especially knowledge of project specific guidelines and regulations, ADA standards, and assistive technology.
- Community engagement is vital for diverse perspectives, but not for complex technical tasks.
- Professional consultants with both lived experience and technical proficiency offer a unique, valuable skill set.
- The most effective strategy involves engaging consultants who embody both lived experience and subject matter expertise.

SITE SELECTION

- Consult an accessibility expert to evaluate sites beyond ADA code compliance.
- The accessibility consultant should assess physical, sensory, cognitive and wayfinding aspects, and should recommend inclusive, user-centered solutions.

MAINTENANCE

- After the completion of an accessible design, maintenance will be crucial due to the dynamic nature of outdoor environments in order to maintain access.
- A maintenance plan developed during the design phase should identify at-risk accessible features and establish a schedule for regular checks and upkeep.
- Train maintenance staff on the importance and proper care of these features, potentially through accessibility consultant-led workshops. This is essential for long-term accessibility.

DATA COLLECTION

- Invest in comprehensive data collection on site accessibility and usage.
- Systematically gather data on how individuals with varying abilities use site features.
- Develop a rubric cataloging existing accessible site features, considering physical, sensory and cognitive accessibility.
- Create a practical checklist for regular accessibility evaluations.
- Schedule revisits to maintain standards and promptly address issues.
- Use data to track progress and inform future inclusive development.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK/INPUT

- Actively engage the disability community throughout the design process.
- Conduct regular feedback sessions tied to data collection milestones.
- Seek diverse perspectives.
- Provide accessible formats for information and feedback.
- Document how feedback influences design iterations.
- Prioritize a user-centered product design approach.

MARKETING

- Develop a collaborative, intentional and inclusive marketing plan with community input and feedback from consultants with lived experience of disability.
- Craft welcoming invitations using appropriate language and imagery.
- Reach out to specific communities proactively through relevant channels to provide comprehensive accessibility information.
- Cultivate inclusion by listening actively, providing support, and building trust through ongoing dialogue and responsiveness.

User Profiles and Equipment Specifications

When designing outdoor recreation experiences with accessibility at the forefront, it is important to develop a lens for access needs. One way to do this is to examine user groups, user profiles and various adaptive recreational equipment. General categories to evaluate include:

- Types of mobility devices
- Demographics (user age, race, ability, gender identity)
- Preferences (independence, desired level of challenge, safety, exposure, community)
- Facilities and features to support access (restrooms, parking, staging areas, information kiosks, website info, directional signage)

ADAPTIVE MOUNTAIN BIKE SPECIFICATIONS

Adaptive riders' bike specifications are as diverse as their needs, reflecting the variety of trails they seek. Integrating adaptive bikes into existing trails presents challenges due to this wide range of bike specifications, as well as prevalent stereotypes and lack of knowledge about adaptive bikes. In the *Appendix*, find detailed adaptive mountain bike specifications, common issues and regulations supporting their access.



PRECEDENT EXAMPLES

Prior to designing and developing new outdoor recreation infrastructure and programs, researching existing projects and evaluating their outcomes is crucial. This process helps determine effective design elements and infrastructure investments while highlighting areas where innovative solutions may be necessary.

See the *Appendix* for two precedent examples of adaptive world-class riding destinations that offer key opportunities for evaluation and learning: Bolton, Vermont and Whistler, British Columbia.



Skills Park

Skills Park Rules

- Ride at your own risk and ability.
- This is a family and beginner trail area, be patient.
- Be courteous and allow others their turn.
- Oregon law requires those under age 16 in public places to wear bicycle helmets when riding a bike, and safety helmets when riding skateboards, scooters, and in-line skates.
- Helmets and other protective equipment are recommended for all guests.
- Follow directional signs—most trails are one-way.
- Yield to faster riders when it's safe to slow down and step off to the side.
- Do not alter any park trails or features.
- Skateboards, scooters, and skates are allowed only on the pump track.

Reglas del Parque de habilidades

- Usa a tu propio riesgo y según tu destreza.
- Este es una zona de senderos para familias y principiantes, sea paciente.
- Sea amable y espere su turno.
- Las leyes de Oregon exigen que quienes tengan menos de 16 años en los espacios públicos usen casco de bicicleta cuando manejen una y cascos de seguridad cuando usen patinetas, monopatines o patines en línea.
- Se recomienda a todos los visitantes que usen cascos y otros equipos de protección.
- Siga las señales con direcciones la mayoría de las senderos son de un solo sentido.
- Ceda el paso a los ciclistas más veloces cuando sea seguro, reduzca la velocidad y hágase a un lado del camino.
- No altere ninguno de las senderos o las particularidades del parque.
- Las patinetas, los monopatines y los patines se permiten únicamente en el circuito "pump track".

Quy Tắc Của Công Viên về Các Kỹ Năng

- Đây là từ khu vực dành cho người mới và có kỹ năng thấp nhất.
- Đây là khu vực dành cho người mới và người mới bắt đầu, hãy kiên nhẫn.
- Hãy lịch sự và cho người khác có thể vượt qua.
- Luật pháp Oregon yêu cầu những người dưới 16 tuổi phải đeo mũ bảo hiểm khi đi xe đạp và mũ bảo hiểm an toàn khi đi xe trượt, xe tay ga và xe trượt patin.
- Khi cần hãy đi vào một làn để tránh va chạm.
- Luôn chú ý theo các biển báo chỉ hướng - hầu hết các đường mòn là đường một chiều.
- Không được thay đổi bất kỳ đặc điểm nào của bất kỳ làn đi và hãy đi đúng làn của mình.
- Không thay đổi bất kỳ đường mòn nào để tạo ra những lối đi mới.
- Luôn cẩn thận và đi chậm lại khi vượt qua người đi nhanh hơn hoặc đi chậm hơn.

RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN FOR PHASE II



Micah Fischer

The program participant for the La Grande Bike Park project has successfully completed all steps required for the Phase I feasibility assessment and is invited to submit an application for Phase II funding.

Based on the required steps completed in partnership with the project steering committee as part of Phase I, Travel Oregon and the consultant team recommend the following action plan to effectively move the project forward with Phase II funds (to be executed by December 31, 2026).

Additionally, over Phase II, Travel Oregon will provide up to 15 hours of disability and inclusion advising and technical assistance from the consultant, Empowering Access, in key areas of the action plan to support the project in achieving its goals.



Dan Ruffoni

RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN FOR PHASE II

| # | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE PARTY | TIMELINE | PHASE II BUDGET |
|------------------------|---|---|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Present to La Grande Parks Commission and receive approval to advance the project and submit the Phase II grant application. | Grande Ronde Gravity | June 2025 | |
| 2 | <p>Identify and convene Phase II project steering committee (SC) to provide technical support and advise on the action plan as needed. The Phase II SC will likely consist of most of the members of the Phase I SC, but with substitutions and additions as needed to achieve necessary support of the Phase II process and feedback on the design and plan as noted below. The Phase II SC will be active for the duration of the action plan.</p> <p>Recommended: Add a community member from the stakeholder mapping exercise, and provide a \$500 stipend for their time.</p> | Grande Ronde Gravity with input from Phase I project steering committee | Sept. 2025 - Oct. 2026 | \$500 |
| 3 | Perform additional fundraising for bike park construction, associated park improvements and maintenance. | Grande Ronde Gravity | Sept. 2025 - ongoing | |
| 4 | <p>Retain experienced bike park designer/firm/team to create concept and schematic design and cost estimates for the west side of Pioneer Park. The design ought to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be sufficient to move to construction, assuming implementation by an experienced and qualified bike park contractor. This should include approximate trail/track alignments, placement and size of features (e.g., start hill, jumps, drops and congregation areas), and phasing options in the event that funding does not exist for the entire implementation.• Be carried out by a bike park design consultant with experience developing destination-quality bike parks and include staff or a subconsultant with specific adaptive mountain bike park expertise, in accordance with this feasibility report.• Include a community engagement opportunity to solicit community feedback as part of the design process. <p>City of La Grande Parks and Recreation and Grande Ronde Gravity will express commitment — via a formal letter of intent or similar instrument — to implement the full project, including the bike park and other park improvements, per schematic design and grant requirements.</p> | Grande Ronde Gravity with input from SC and Empowering Access | Oct. 2025 - Feb. 2026 | \$15,000 |
| 5 | <p>Develop plans for additional park improvements relative to the development of the bike park, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parking expansion, including ADA-compliant spaces• Accessible, ADA-compliant bathroom improvements• Accessible site access and routing• Utilities | City of La Grande Parks and Recreation with input from SC and Empowering Access | Oct. 2025 - Feb. 2026 | In kind |
| 6 | Retain contractor to construct or self-perform ADA improvements to the park as noted in action #5 | City of La Grande Parks and Recreation with input from SC and Empowering Access | April - Dec. 2026 | \$42,250 |
| 7 | <p>Retain a qualified bike park contractor to build the bike park per the design. The selected contractor ought to have experience constructing the types of tracks/trails/features identified in the design.</p> <p>Retain an independent, professional third-party adaptive mountain biking consultant to ride the bike park and confirm it meets the adaptive riding experience requirements identified in this report and in the design. This consultant must have experience designing and building bike parks for adaptive mountain biking, and riding bike parks on an adaptive mountain bike. (The bike park construction will not be deemed complete without this step.)</p> | Grande Ronde Gravity with input from SC and Empowering Access | April - Dec. 2026 | \$42,250 |
| TOTAL PHASE II FUNDING | | | | \$100,000 |

APPENDIX





Research

[La Grande Bike Park Background Report, 2025](#)

[La Grande Bike Park Potential Visitor Profile, 2025](#)

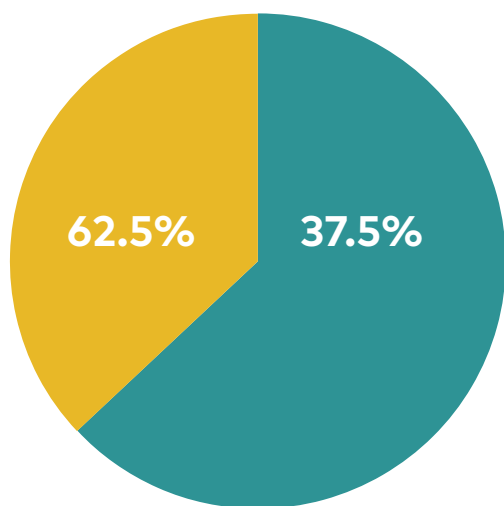
[La Grande Bike Park Community Engagement Survey Report, 2025](#)

Disability & Inclusion Focus Group Survey

SURVEY RESULTS

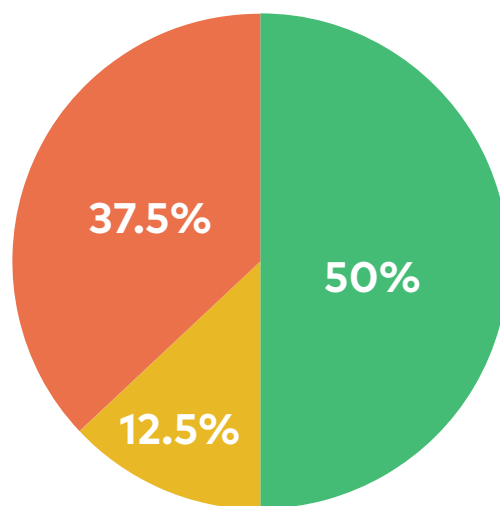
Race?

8 responses



Gender Identity?

8 responses



Demographics (disability, age, location, race, gender)

Respondents represented ages between 41-77 from the Portland metro and Central Oregon regions, identified as white and POC, and included a spectrum of gender identities (she/he/they). Most identified as experiencing mobility disabilities, along with blindness, chronic illness, hearing loss and chronic pain.

1. What kind of disability(s) do you have?

- Neurodivergence, chronic illness
- T-10 paraplegic
- Physical mobility impairment
- Physical disability
- Manual wheelchair user
- Paraplegic
- Congenital blindness, hearing loss (aids in both ears), asthma, arthritis through body
- Paraplegic

2. Do you feel safe in the outdoors? Please explain.

- Yes.
- I feel like I do, but when I really think about it, I'm not. I recreate solo often and will need to share maps and locations with friends because trailhead signage is poor and there's often poor cell service. More than anything, as a person of color, I fear for my personal safety.
- I do feel safe in the outdoors. I may have a disability, but I am also white and male, which affords me a lot of privilege in the outdoors. I also grew up in the outdoors, so I am very comfortable in those spaces.
- As a woman, I don't always feel comfortable going out alone. I'm always looking for a new place to explore nature, but many times I can't find the right information online or when calling park officials to know if I can use [the area] safely as a power wheelchair user.
- Yes, I feel safe.

- Yes, when I have adequate support with information, cane and, sometimes, a walker.
- Yes and no. My ability to feel safe outdoors depends on a lot of factors. I feel safe outdoors during the day, when I am in an environment that I know I will be able to traverse unassisted. There are certain grades or terrains that I would not try on my own, because if I fall out of my chair and I'm alone, I would be stuck. At night with a headlamp I feel somewhat safe, but as a woman who cannot run, I would probably opt for bringing a friend.

3. What is your experience with bike parks and skill-building terrain? How do you feel about them?

- Their target audience is such a small population of people. In order to even ride in the park you are required to have a bike and a bike helmet. I also don't feel like, unless there are adults specifically stationed at these parks to teach and build skills, ... it's not intuitive at all for anyone to just go in there and ride. How would they know they are building up their skills? In most of these skills parks, there are no signs or wayfinding that dive into technique and attempt to teach park users how to be better cyclists.
- My experience with them is limited to Gateway Green in Portland. I like them. It offers something different than trails. Often, they may be closer in distance to a city, so it is less of a lift than driving an hour or more for a trail ride. To make them most beneficial to an adaptive rider, accessibility would need to be added in the design process.
- I have never been to one. I think it's good to have them for those who enjoy these kinds of challenging activities.
- I've never experienced it, but I would like to try it.
- They are fun. I enjoy riding, but prefer single-track out in nature.

- I don't really participate in bike parks. I have done flat trails, using hand cycles.
- None.
- I have no experience with this. I feel like this could be something that could be really fun for certain wheelchair users. I suppose if I had a mountain bike, it would be a place to practice?

4. What would make you want to visit a bike park? What features would appeal to you?

- There are lots of other park-like amenities, like swings, water feature, shade and picnic area.
- Having more than one option or feature that is usable for my aMTB. It doesn't interest me much if there is only one line for me to run.
- I would enjoy watching the activity. It would be enhanced if there were benches with wheelchair companion seating in optional areas that are covered for rain/shade and open for sunny/dry days.
- Other nearby attractions and the park having an accessible bathroom and parking.
- Well-designed flow and jumps.
- If I had the opportunity to utilize mountain bikes and had someone with knowledge on adaptive biking to teach me.
- I would go with someone who could give me good verbal descriptions. As a blind person with slow mobility, I am anxious just listening to the description.
- The ability to rent a bike. Being able to talk with and get tips from other riders. I'm not sure if this is included in features, but accessible bathroom, accessible parking, very compact or paved path to accessible area.

5. Would you feel safe at a bike park? If no, what would change that? Please explain.

- I feel safe enough, but I don't feel welcome. I don't feel like park designers "take me into account" during their design work.
- Yes, I would feel safe at a bike park.
- Never having been, I can't answer yes or no definitively.
- It would make me feel safer if they had a designated area for adaptive bikes.
- Yes, as long as feature width and access to the bike park was accessible with my aMTB.
- I wouldn't feel safe on my own, as I don't have the knowledge or experience using adaptive mountain bikes.
- I would feel safe, but this is probably not something I would do alone, even if others were around. I suppose something that might not make me feel safe is if there is not a lot of awareness or care for people with disabilities by other riders. I'm not sure how this would be laid out. I like the idea of being in community.

Adaptive Mountain Bike Specifications



DIMENSION RANGE

Adaptive bikes are heavy and bulky, with poor turning radius, making transport difficult and requiring large vehicles or strong racks and physical strength. Ample staging and parking are needed for loading and unloading. Common specs:

- Wheelbase — 31" to 55"
- Overall length — 71" to 85"
- Weight — 40 lbs. to 90 lbs.
- Turn radius — around 11'

STYLES

- Recumbent (reclined, with forward legs and hand cranks, often with suspension)
- Upright (similar to a bicycle, with hand crank propulsion and steering)
- Kneeling/prone (low to the ground, with torso support for stability)

MANUFACTURERS (MOST COMMON)

- Lasher Sport — <https://lashersport.com/cycles/>
- ReActive Adaptations — <https://www.reactiveadaptations.com/>
- Bowhead Corp — <https://www.bowheadcorp.com/> (fully electric, no pedal option)

COMMON CONFLICTS

A key challenge for adaptive riders on trails, beyond physical barriers, is a lack of public awareness. Riders often wrongly assume adaptive bikes with e-assist are prohibited, not understanding they are legally classified as mobility devices for accessibility. These encounters can be stressful for adaptive riders already facing daily accessibility hurdles and a scarcity of suitable trails.

- Most modern aMTBs are e-assisted or fully electric with throttle options.
- Other power-driven mobility devices (OPDMDs) are defined by the ADA as battery-, fuel- or engine-powered mobility devices for individuals with disabilities (excluding wheelchairs).
- Public entities and businesses must allow OPDMDs with reasonable modifications, unless unsafe operation can be demonstrated based on legitimate safety requirements.

ABILITIES TO CONSIDER (NON-EXHAUSTIVE)

- **Visual Disabilities:** Blindness (complete loss of sight) and low vision (reduced visual acuity not fully corrected by lenses) impacting navigation and interaction with visual information.
- **Auditory Disabilities:** Deafness (profound hearing loss) and hard of hearing (varying degrees of hearing impairment) affecting communication and perception of auditory signals.
- **Neurological Disabilities:** Autism Spectrum Disorder (sensory sensitivities and overstimulation) and Traumatic Brain Injury (balance, coordination and safety awareness issues impacting physical movement).
- **Mobility Disabilities:** Limitations in physical movement affecting the ability to walk, climb stairs or manipulate objects.

PRECEDENT EXAMPLES

The Driving Range — Bolton, Vermont

The Singletracks website has a noteworthy article titled, ["Is this the first fully adaptive MTB trail network in the world?"](#), which delves into the adaptive trail system in Bolton. It provides ample information and details the process for developing a fully adaptive trail system. Key snapshot:

- "Work on the trail system began in 2022 and was completed in 2024. Over 200 volunteers donated over 5,000 hours of labor, plus \$270,000 was invested in professional trail builders and an expansive paved parking lot with 53 parking spots, including handicap-accessible spots. While we normally gloss over discussion of infrastructure development, the parking lot infrastructure is actually critically important to this project."

Whistler Mountain Bike Park — Whistler, British Columbia

Whistler's website article, ["Whistler: A Premier Destination for Adaptive Mountain Biking,"](#) details their adaptive mountain biking system, processes and partners, and provides extensive accessibility information. As a world-class sports destination with experience developing and refining accessible facilities, Whistler is a valuable case study for research and learning. Key snapshot:

- "Kootenay Adaptive Sport Association is leading the way for adaptive trail design and marking. KASA helped review and make recommendations for the Whistler Mountain Bike Park trails. Adaptive riders were able to review and give their feedback directly to Patrol — an important piece that helps ensure authentic disability experiences are included."

TRAVEL  **OREGON**