



VISIT
BEND^{OR}
STRATEGIC PLAN + BUDGET

FY2027
JULY 2026 - JUNE 2027

INDUSTRY.VISITBEND.COM



Under contract as the City of Bend's destination management and marketing organization, Visit Bend works to serve our community, our city, and the people who make Bend an exceptional place to live and visit. We are stewards of 35.4 percent of the city's total annual lodging tax collections and thoughtfully reinvest those funds into initiatives that enrich local culture, aid the Bend economy, and strengthen and sustain the places we all cherish. Through engaging and mindful marketing campaigns, strategic grant funding, impactful research, and welcoming visitor services, Visit Bend ensures tourism supports and enhances our entire community. Our goal is to create lasting, positive outcomes that benefit residents now and in the future.

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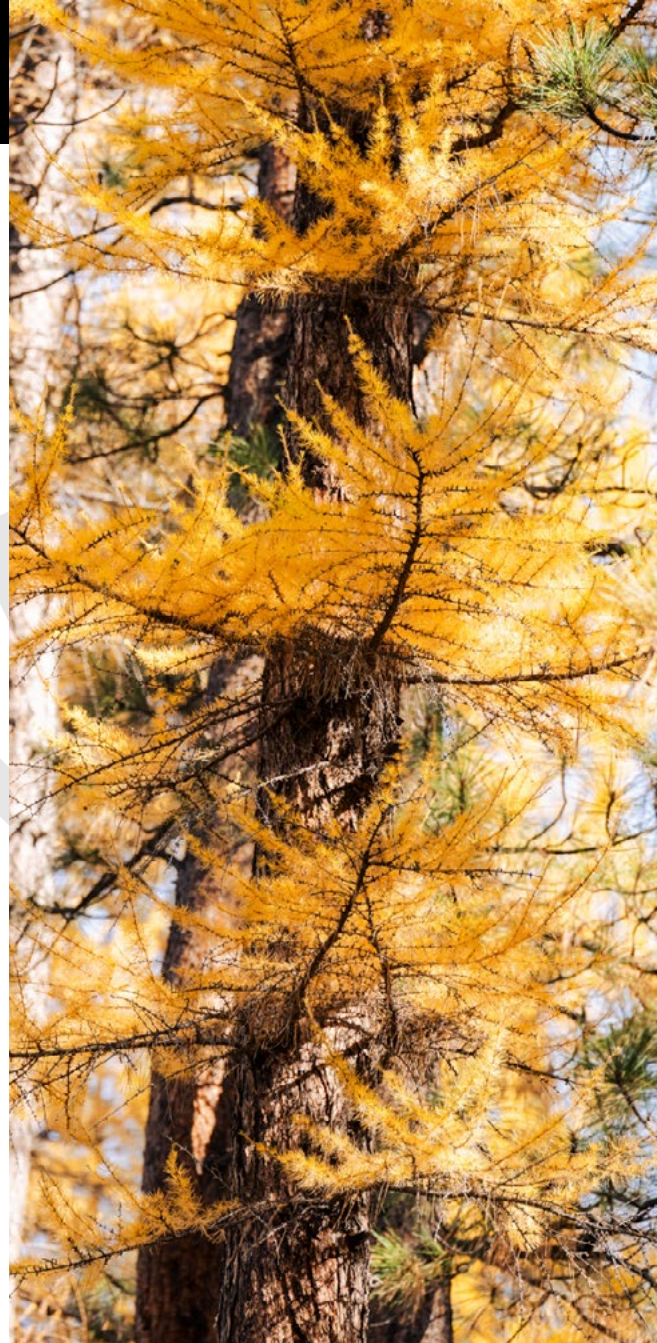
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ACKNOWLEDGING HISTORY

Indigenous people have fished, hunted, and recreated on these lands for generations. That history is not lost. We recognize we live, work, and play on the traditional lands of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Wascoes, and Paiutes, and we honor their enduring relationship to this place.

DRAFT

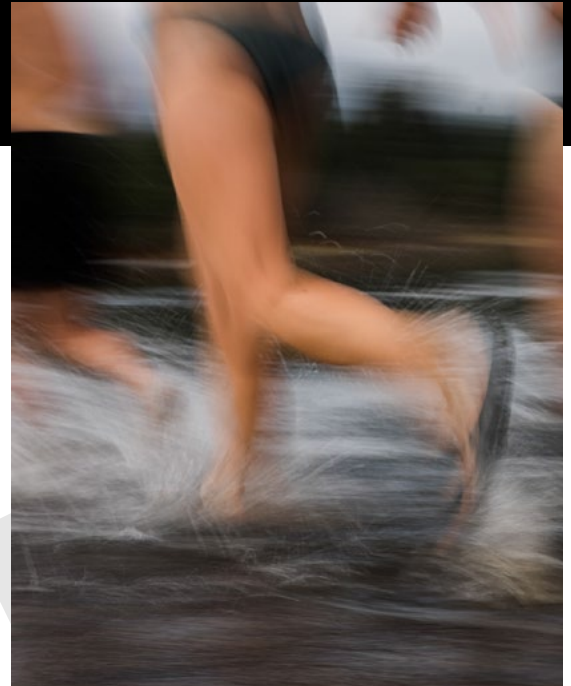


INTRODUCTION

Visit Bend contributes to the strength and well-being of our community through initiatives that support economic vitality, social connection, and environmental stewardship, ensuring tourism continues to grow as a positive force. The City of Bend recently identified tourism as a priority sector that strengthens economic diversity and resilience. Visit Bend is actively supporting the city's effort to deploy its first comprehensive economic development strategy.

Our approach is grounded. We build genuine relationships, engage diverse community voices, and serve as responsible advocates for the natural resources that define our region. Tourism is a powerful means to support essential city services, enhance local infrastructure, and expand inclusive access to the experiences that make Bend unique. Visit Bend advances this by strategically reinvesting visitor-generated tax revenue into meaningful projects that benefit residents and visitors alike.

Visit Bend's role continues to evolve through partnerships with local organizations, active community engagement, and a focus on equity and accessibility. By leveraging our team's expertise, we work to ensure tourism's benefits are shared widely—fostering a welcoming, balanced Bend for today's residents and future generations.

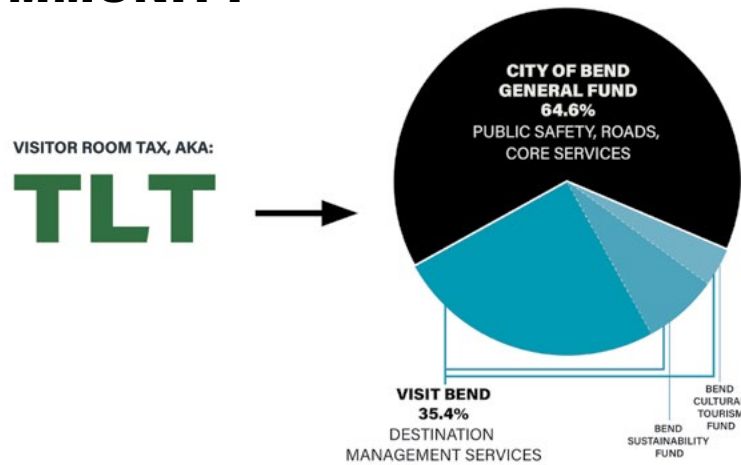


COMMUNITY VOICE

Visit Bend believes that responsible tourism drives community reinvestment. By strategically encouraging visitation, they champion local, small businesses. This not only fuels the economy but also generates vital 'tourism dollars' that help fund various community-centered projects, elevating the quality of life for locals and visitors alike. Visit Bend continues to serve as a bridge between a thriving visitor economy and the heartbeat of our local community. They believe that their success is measured not just by the guests they welcome, but also by the tangible benefits they return to the place we all call home.

— Courtney Braun, co-owner Wanderlust Tours, Visit Bend board member

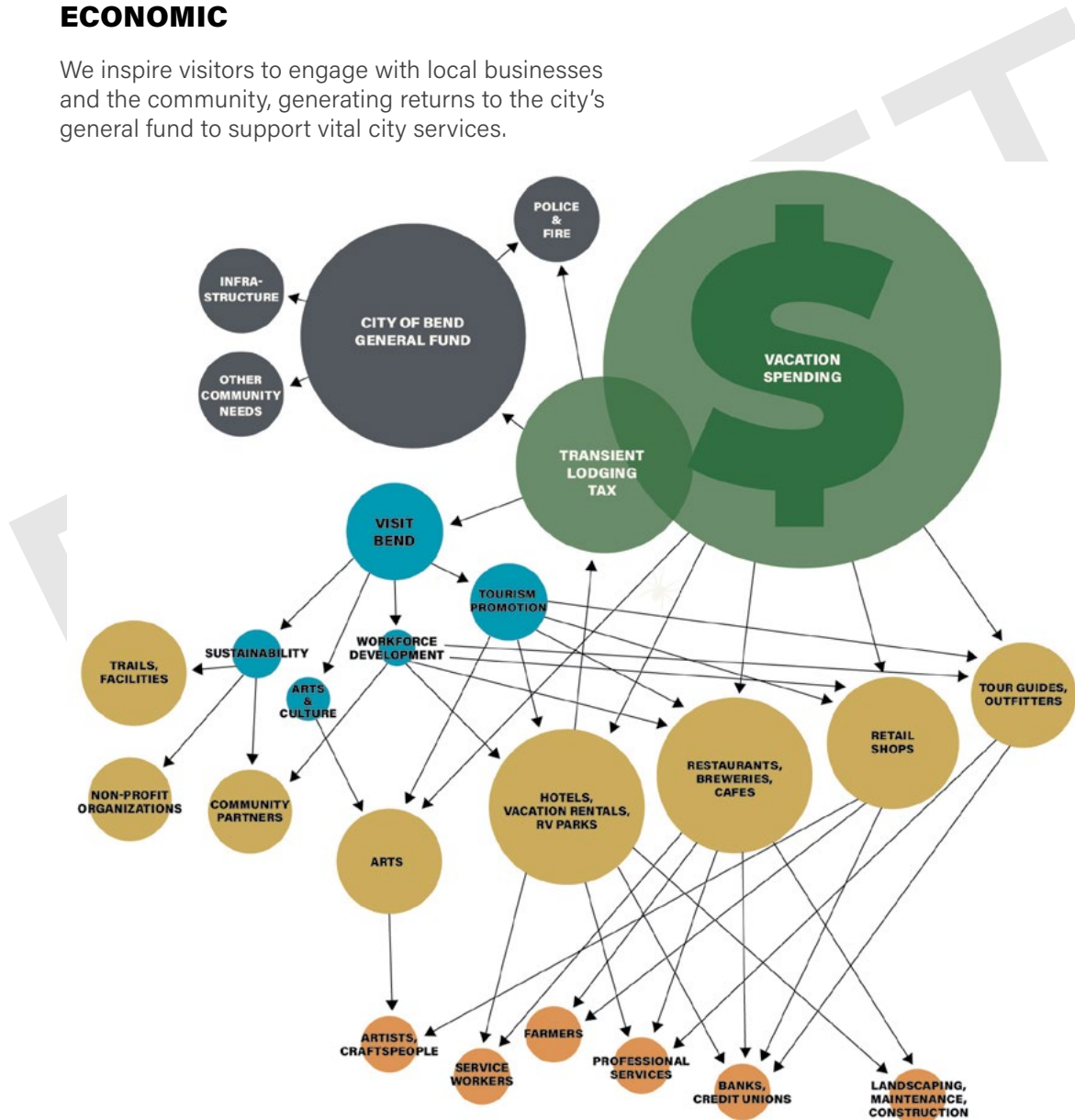
VISIT BEND'S FUNDING + REINVESTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ECONOMIC

We inspire visitors to engage with local businesses and the community, generating returns to the city's general fund to support vital city services.



SOCIAL

We foster a community that is safe, supportive, inclusive, and welcoming.



COMMUNITY VOICE

With support from the Bend Sustainability Fund, the Central Oregon Wash Hub is cutting millions of single-use items each year and driving a community-wide shift toward reuse that can serve as a model of sustainability for visitor destinations.

— Kavi Chokshi, program manager, The Environmental Center

ENVIRONMENTAL

We partner with community organizations and actively work to advance environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability.



SUCCESSSES FROM FISCAL YEAR 2025

Visit Bend remains committed to advancing sustainable tourism in ways that strengthen both our economy and community.

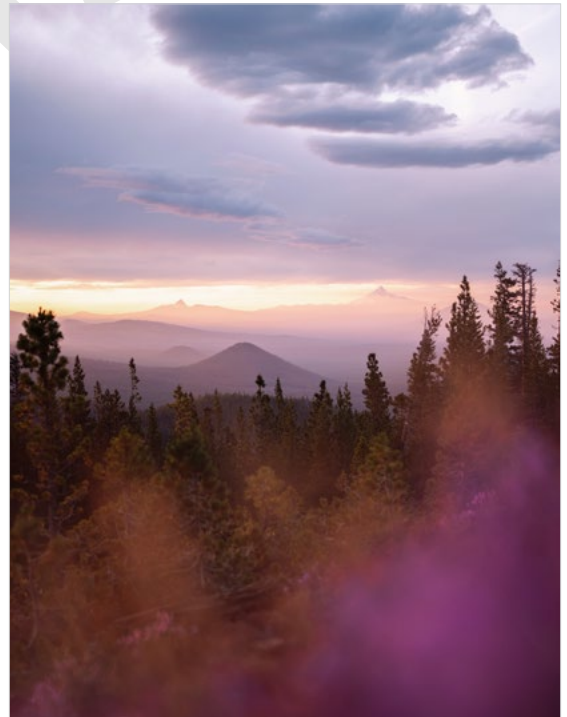
In Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), Visit Bend deepened its role as a convener and collaborator on issues critical to Bend's long-term vitality. We strengthened partnerships across the region, working alongside the City of Bend's newly-formed economic development team and aligning with Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO), Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), the Bend Chamber and the Central Oregon Business Alliance, and engaging local business districts to ensure tourism's contributions are distributed more equitably across the community. We also launched group sales as a formal, year-round program for the first time since 2015, with new assets and expanded outreach to meeting planners and leisure group organizers.

The broader, national economic picture in FY26 remained uneven. While local spending softened, visitor spending proved resilient. Data from Affinity shows dining spend among visitors increased 23.6 percent during the 2025–2026 winter season, even as resident spending declined 19 percent year over year. This dynamic underscores the stabilizing role of the visitor economy beyond the tax revenue generated by supporting small businesses throughout our community (while also contributing to the tax base). Lodging tax collections reflected that strength, growing 5.3 percent year over year, an increase of more than \$497,000, as of time of writing, marking the most significant year-over-year gain since the pandemic. These visitor-generated dollars continue to contribute meaningfully to the City of Bend for police, fire, roads, and other core

COMMUNITY VOICE

Visit Bend's work reflects a rare kind of leadership—one that understands a thriving visitor economy must expand local capabilities, honor the integrity of place, and generate lasting social, environmental, and economic value. Grounded in community insight and investing in the shared stewardship of nature, culture, and a resilient local economy, Visit Bend is shaping a future that can restore what people cherish, enrich what people share, and protect what future generations will inherit.

—Mick Minard, managing director, impact advisory and strategy, FM Civic



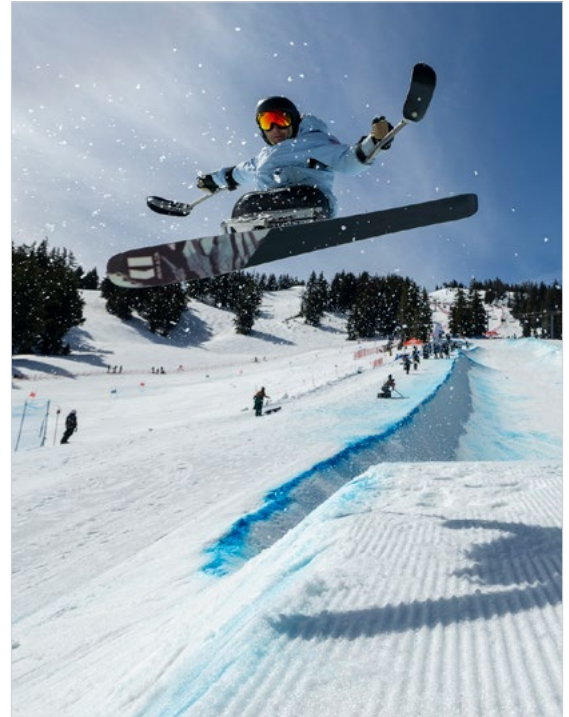
services. Per capita, per day, visitors contribute \$4.10 to the city for every \$1 paid in property taxes by residents, the city's data shows. Visitor stays also ensure tourism-generated dollars support our parks, libraries, and even Central Oregon Community College.

At the same time, Visit Bend also continued addressing workforce pressures that shape the visitor experience. We expanded our collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service and Discover Your Northwest to ensure trails and public lands remain accessible and well-managed, added another intern through Nature Connect Central Oregon, and strengthened our support of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association's ProStart program to help build the next generation of hospitality workers.

Through the Bend Sustainability Fund (BSF) and Bend Cultural Tourism Fund (BCTF), we invested in cultural programming, community amenities, and environmental stewardship, including some of the most values-aligned BSF investments since the program launched in 2021. We also deepened our commitment to equity and access through partnerships with Oregon Adaptive Sports, Camp Yoshi, and other organizations working to make Bend's outdoor experiences genuinely inclusive. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to ensuring residents not only understand but feel the positive impacts of tourism. Across all projects and partnerships, Visit Bend remains focused on transparency, stewardship, and delivering meaningful benefits for the people who call Bend home.

MARKETING

A major takeaway of Visit Bend's FY26 marketing efforts hinges on how well our renewed summer initiatives worked. After a six-year-long summer marketing hiatus, and a nearly decade-long slide in summer occupancy, Visit Bend strategically reintroduced summer marketing in FY26, and the lodging tax receipts tell the story clearly. August transient lodging tax (TLT) collections came in 22.8 percent above the prior year, the strongest single-month gain in recent memory, with July close behind at an 8.3 percent jump year over year. A relatively quiet wildfire season helped, but so did the intentional investment in reaching summer audiences who had been underserved by Visit Bend's outreach for years. Through the fiscal year-to-date (FYTD) period, TLT collections are running 5.3 percent ahead of the prior year.

A marketing graphic for Visit Bend, Oregon, featuring a teal header with the text "DESCHUTES NATIONAL FOREST" and "THIS IS BEND OR". Below the header is a photograph of a mountain landscape at sunset, with a river in the foreground and a snow-capped mountain in the distance. The text at the bottom reads: "The trails are sunny, the river is running, happiness is happening. Must be summer. Must be nice." and "[VISITBEND.COM]".

DESCHUTES NATIONAL FOREST

THIS IS BEND^{OR}

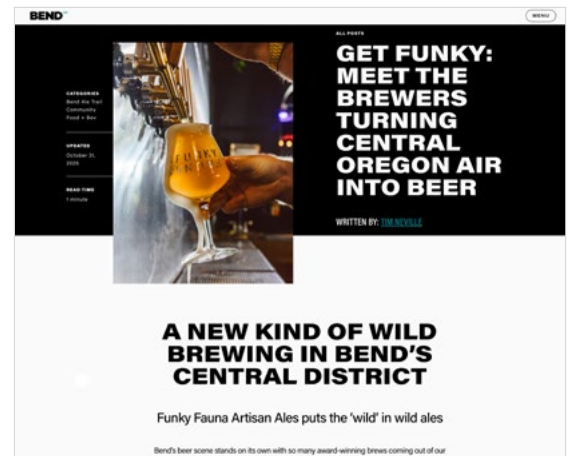
The trails are sunny, the river is running, happiness is happening.
Must be summer. Must be nice.

[VISITBEND.COM]

Tourism in Bend grew from every core market. The Pacific Northwest markets of Seattle and Portland both showed notable gains, and Boise, Spokane, and Tri-Cities moved up as well, a sign that the diversified media mix built around specific audience behaviors (rather than broad reach) is working across the region.

On the content and storytelling side, FY26 saw Visit Bend building on the authentic, local-voice strategy that defined FY25. Partnerships with local creators, influencers, and businesses produced content that resonated well beyond what paid placements alone could deliver. Influencer campaigns generated more than 22 million impressions across the year. New long-form content celebrating local organizations ensured visitors weren't just served up ads but were a part of Visit Bend's organic storytelling efforts connecting people and place.

Campaign efficiency remained strong. Paid media garnered a return-on-ad spend (ROAS) of nearly eight-to-one across the measured portion of the year, consistent with prior-year performance and reinforcing that Visit Bend's targeting continues to convert. Those visitors arrived, spent more money in locally owned businesses, and generated the kind of dispersed, high-value economic activity Visit Bend is contracted to produce.



HIGH-LEVEL METRICS FROM FY26

6.3 percent increase in TLT collections year over year (FYTD).

22.8 percent August TLT growth year over year, the strongest single-month performance of the fiscal year and a direct signal of the summer campaign relaunch success.

22M+ total impressions generated through influencer partnerships across the year, generating a 2,004 percent return on investment (ROI).

7.94-to-1 return on ad spend (ROAS) across paid campaigns, a 694 percent ROI.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

In its fifth year, the Bend Sustainability Fund awarded \$500,000 to 11 community projects, bringing total visitor-generated tax reinvestments to nearly \$4 million. Nearly half of this year's funding supported expanded outdoor access for people of all abilities, including a new adaptive cycling center at Pine Nursery Park (just the third of its kind on the West Coast); a mobile kiosk through the Onward Project that meets people where they're at with an expanded fleet of all-terrain wheelchairs, accessible resources, and information; and ride-over cattle guards at Cline Butte that remove barriers for all cyclists. The largest single grant, \$100,000, went to The Environmental Center to launch a scalable, reusable serviceware wash hub designed to keep more than 250,000 pieces of single-use plastic out of the waste stream annually. Other investments this cycle include trail improvements at Pilot Butte, boot-brush stations at high-traffic trailheads to prevent the spread of invasive species, upgrades to the Tower Theatre's lighting system, and improvements to the Volcanic Theatre. Eight of the 11 recipients were first-time awardees.

Projects were selected by an independent advisory council of 14 Bend residents—not Visit Bend—who scored applications and made funding recommendations that Visit Bend's board then approved. Residents also had a direct voice through a community ballot, voting on their two favorite funded organizations. That governance model is part of what makes the BSF credible, and it's starting to get noticed: National outlets including *Condé Nast Traveler* and *Outside* have featured Bend's approach to accessible, community-funded outdoor experiences as a notable model for sustainable tourism.

Since its launch in 2021, the Bend Sustainability Fund has reinvested \$3,888,094 across 42 projects. The Bend Cultural Tourism Fund, now in its 11th year, awarded \$300,000 to 20 organizations this fiscal year, supporting everything from a new volcanic exhibit at the High Desert Museum to TEDxBend and Día de Muertos. Since 2015, the BCTF has invested \$2,587,418 across 134 projects. Combined with Visit Bend's strategic partnership program, which directed \$90,000 to organizations including Oregon Adaptive Sports, the Deschutes Trails Coalition, Leave No Trace, Central Oregon LandWatch, and Camp Yoshi, Visit Bend's reinvestment programs have now put \$6.46 million back into 175 projects from 82 organizations.



COMMUNITY VOICE

The Onward Project is grateful to the Bend Sustainability Fund for granting us the means to expand our fleet of AdvenChairs that make nature accessible to those with disabilities or mobility challenges. A cargo trailer will allow us to transport the chairs to community rides with our nonprofit partners, as well as hikes and events to attract visitors to Central Oregon. A shipping container will give us much needed storage space at Heliladder where we assemble the homegrown "wheelchair that thinks it's a mountain bike" with parts designed and manufactured by 14 local vendors.

—Geoff Babb, founder and chairman,
The Onward Project

DIVE IN TO THE PROJECTS

- › [Bend Sustainability Fund](#)
- › [Bend Cultural Tourism Fund](#)

COMMUNITY SENTIMENT + ECONOMIC IMPACT

For the first time in four years of tracking, resident sentiment toward tourism in Bend reached parity in 2025. The share of residents who feel tourism's costs outweigh its benefits dropped from 44 percent in 2022 to 31 percent, nearly 70 percent of residents now hold a positive or neutral view. OSU's Sustainable Tourism Lab notes that Bend appears to be entering the inflection point of the Applied Destination Lifecycle, navigating it relatively well. The data also points to an opportunity: residents still don't strongly connect specific investments with tourism, and the FY27 storytelling strategy is designed to close that gap.

Travel spending in Bend reached \$408.3 million in 2025, a 5.3 percent increase over the prior year. Direct, travel-generated employment grew by 3.6 percent, while direct earning rose 8 percent to \$134.1 million. Tax revenue generated by travel totalled \$28.5 million, a 7.3 percent increase, including \$15.3 million in local tax revenue—or \$181 for every household in Deschutes County. On the lodging tax front, Visit Bend expects to finish the fiscal year slightly ahead of forecast.

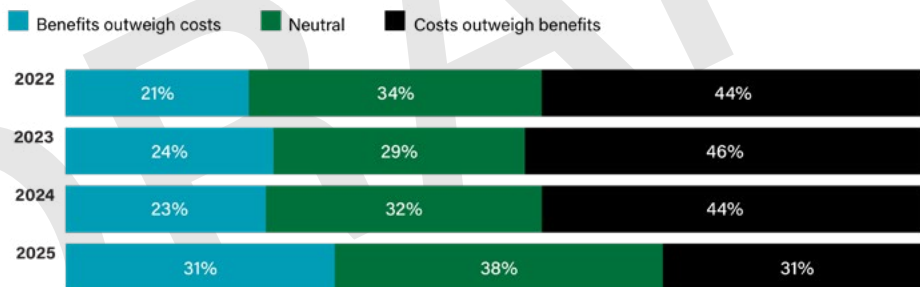
COMMUNITY VOICE

Visit Bend has been a catalytic partner. Their honesty about challenges, generosity with hard-won insights, and visible successes in sustainable destination management have raised the bar for every member in our network, accelerating our shared mission to make tourism a driver of sustainability and community prosperity. The trust and knowledge-sharing show what's possible when forward-thinking destinations lift each other up. Everyone wins.

—Rodney Payne, CEO, Destination Think

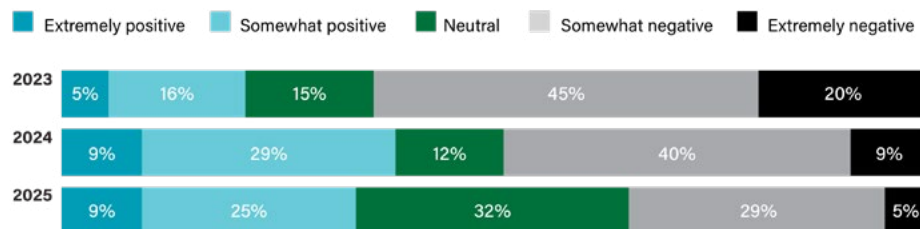
TOURISM BENEFITS VS COSTS

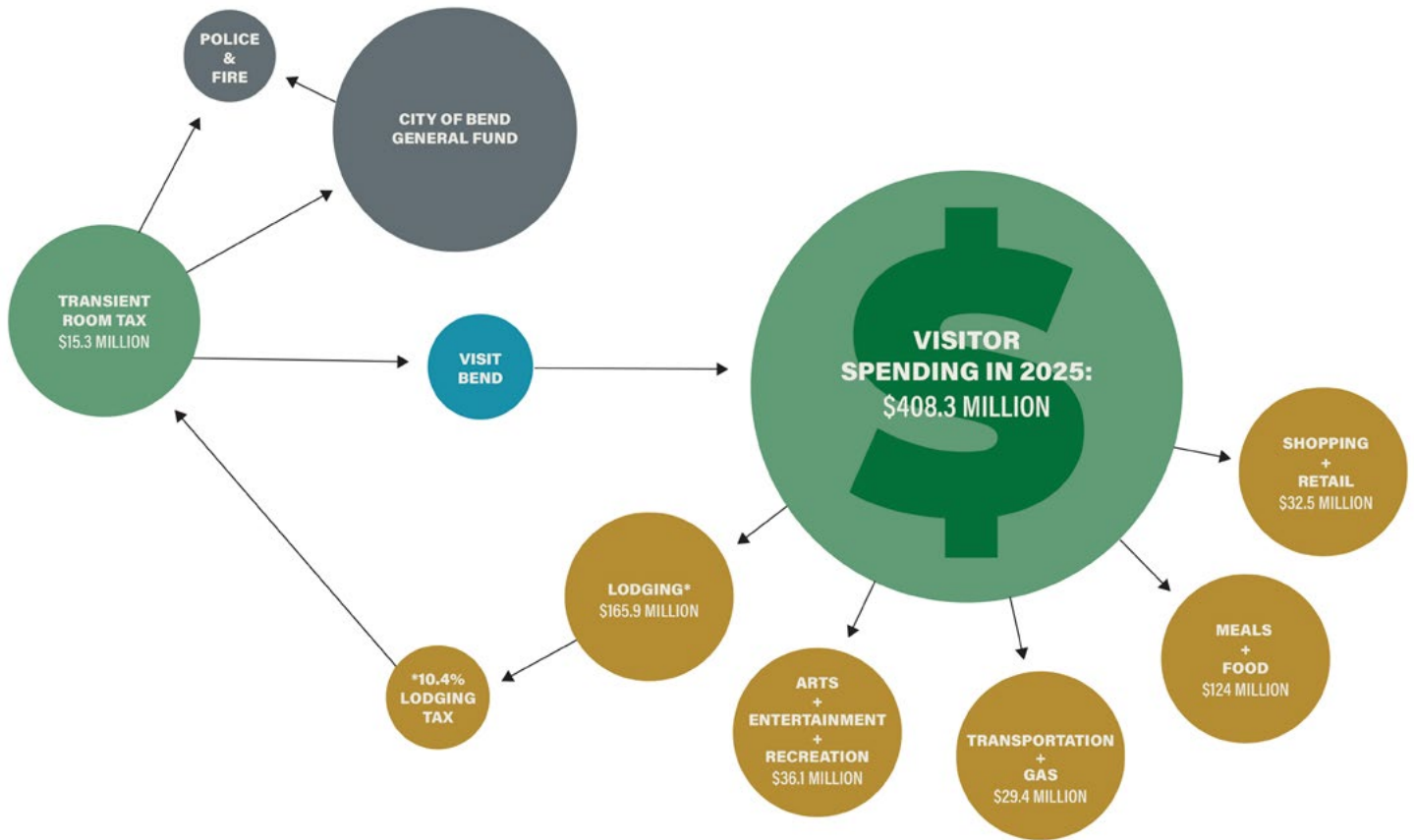
In general, do you feel the benefits of tourism outweigh the costs or do the costs of tourism outweigh the benefits?



OVERALL IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE

How would you rate the overall impact tourism has on your quality of life?





ECONOMIC IMPACT

Travel spending in Bend increased from \$387.8 million in calendar year 2024 to \$408.3 million in 2025, a 5.3 percent increase or 4.5 percent when adjusted for inflation.

Tax receipts generated by travel spending increased to \$28.5 million, up from \$26.6 million in 2024.

Direct travel-generated employment grew to 3,600 jobs, a 3.2 percent increase over 2024.

Direct travel-generated earnings increased to \$134.1 million, a gain of 8 percent compared to 2024.

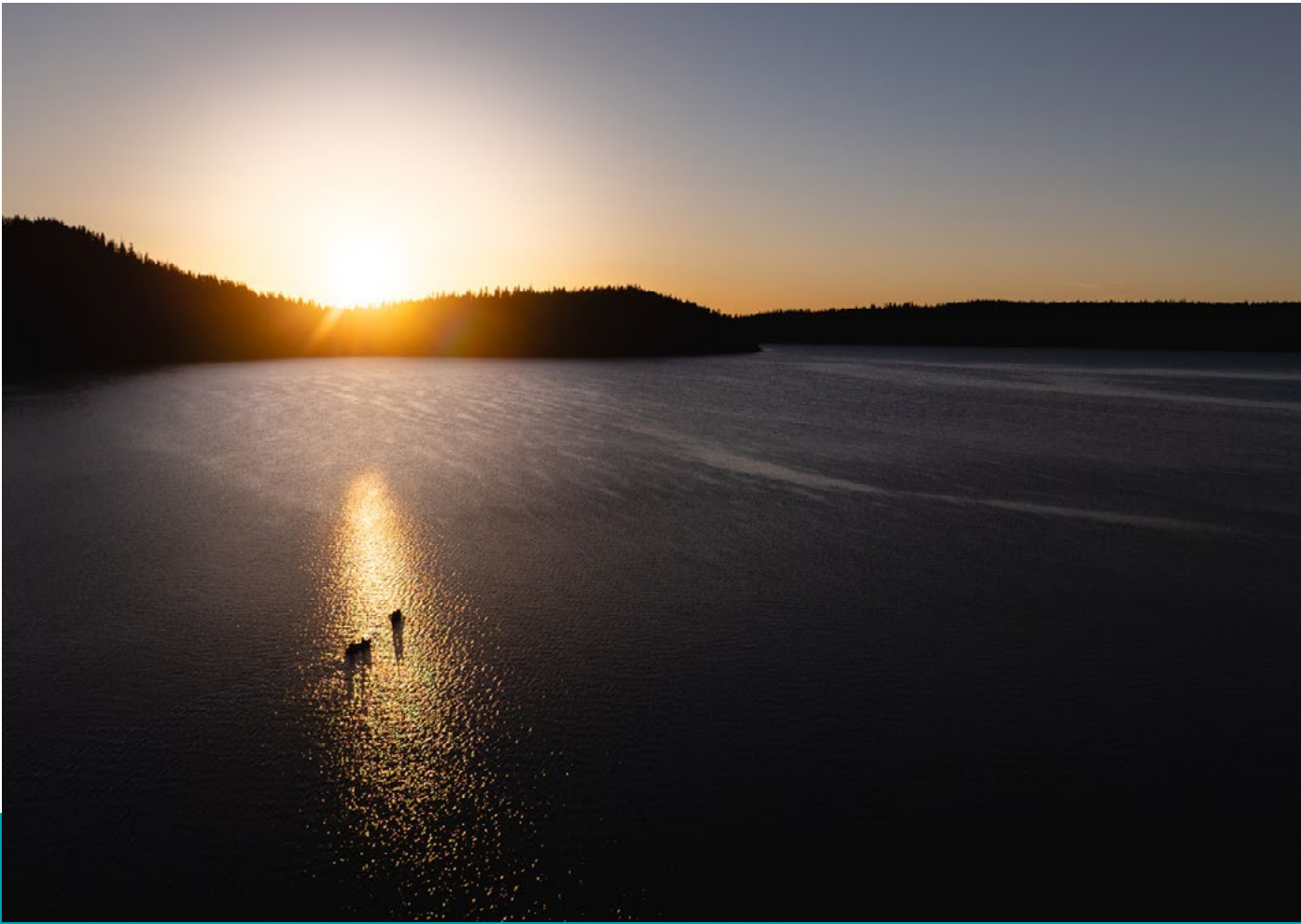
BALANCED BEND: VISIT BEND'S ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MODEL



Visit Bend is powered by a small, committed team united by a deep love for a unique city in a unique place, where the high Cascades meet the American high desert. Working behind the scenes with modesty and authenticity, we see our role as one of service and stewardship with actions guided by close ties to the local community. We listen. We engage. We act. Rather than centering on promotion, we've chosen to lead with purpose and to prioritize what's best for Bend. Through meaningful storytelling, informed research, and effective partnerships, our work focuses on elevating the visitor experience while protecting what makes Bend special. We're committed to ensuring tourism contributes meaningfully to residents' lives, and we embrace a broader vision of well-being that welcomes everyone who feels a connection to this place.

The Balanced Bend approach represents our vision for regenerative tourism, thoughtfully connecting economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and social well-being. Visitors contribute significantly to our economy, creating a foundation that allows Visit Bend to invest directly into the community's social fabric and environmental conservation.

This visitor-generated revenue supports essential city services, infrastructure improvements, and initiatives enriching Bend for both residents and visitors. By nurturing our environment, supporting our workforce, and enhancing community well-being, we sustain and regenerate a thriving destination. A Balanced Bend ensures ongoing positive impacts for the community, fostering long-term resilience, and shared prosperity for everyone who calls Bend home.



VISIT BEND'S ADAPTABILITY IN SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Over the years, Visit Bend's adaptable, community-focused team has continually evolved to redirect resources and recalibrate priorities to meet the needs of residents, local businesses, and city leadership. With nearly two-thirds of lodging tax revenue going to the City of Bend's general fund, Visit Bend strategically stewards the remainder to maximize community well-being and economic vitality.

With the City of Bend's Economic Development Strategic Plan now adopted, Visit Bend is committed to supporting its execution—actively representing tourism and recreation as a recognized target sector and serving as a collaborative partner in efforts to diversify the economy, attract businesses, and develop the workforce Bend needs to grow.

A deepened leadership team and an expanded scope of work reflect Visit Bend's ongoing commitment to responsible, meaningful service. Programs like the Bend Sustainability Fund and our Strategic Partnerships demonstrate our focus on environmental and social responsibility, while new initiatives like group sales, workforce development, and community engagement around a potential new public-assembly venue signal a broader definition of what a destination organization can and should do. As flexible partners, we will continue supporting sustainable growth and enhancing the quality of life for all Bend residents.

Visit Bend's FY27 priorities align with City Council goals around equity, sustainability, economic development, and livability. Through our Balanced Bend approach, integrating people, place, and economy, we collaborate with city leadership to ensure visitor dollars not only fund essential services but also help build an inclusive, resilient, and future-ready Bend.

MARKETING STRATEGY

[ECONOMY]

Visit Bend has expanded its focus to a broader scope of work that benefits everyone as we pursue a more balanced Bend.

According to recent research, visitors to Bend continue to contribute significantly to our community, especially through their economic impact. Data compiled in conjunction with the City of Bend shows that overnight visitors generate 4.1x more in tax revenue per person, per day than residents. That tax revenue, primarily collected at the time of their stay in the form of transient lodging tax (TLT), becomes a significant source of revenue for the City of Bend. Across roughly 2 million annual overnight visits, that adds up to about 5,700 visitors a day contributing to the tax base that supports roads, public safety, parks, libraries, and schools.

The national economic picture, however, is more nuanced and uncertain. High-value travelers are spending more in Bend year over year on lodging, dining, activities, and guided experiences, while residents are pulling back. That split shapes Visit Bend's marketing approach directly. As we move into FY27, our paid efforts will point toward the visitor who's already spending, books higher-ADR lodging within city limits, and whose dollars circulate through the broader local economy. That's not just a room tax strategy; it's how Visit Bend can ensure that visitor spending supports local businesses when residents are a bit less confident in the economy. Visit Bend's owned content will ensure Bend remains seen as a destination for all. The trails, river, and parks are for everyone, and so is our content.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

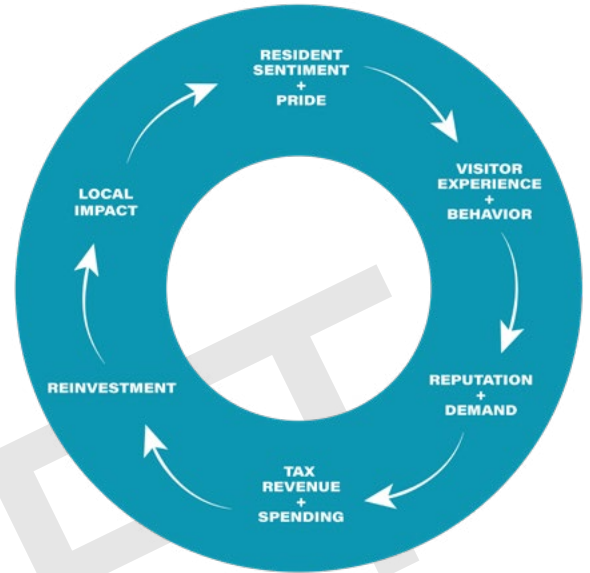
Visit Bend's marketing and economic strategies are central to supporting the city's broader economic development goals. Our work complements efforts to build a resilient, year-round economy by growing visitor spending responsibly, supporting local entrepreneurs, attracting group business, advancing a public-assembly venue, and investing in "culture-forward" tourism and key economic clusters through programs like the BCTF, all of which help to move the city's cultural- and workforce-development priorities forward. The FY27 marketing strategy aligns with the following City Council goals:

- *Maintain public safety service levels to keep pace with increased demand*
- *Implement the citywide Economic Development Strategic Plan, with tourism and recreation as a recognized part of the outdoor lifestyle priority sector*
- *Advance economic diversification and support workforce development*
- *Develop marketing strategies that align with seasonal and economic needs*
- *Support creative placemaking and cultural vibrancy*

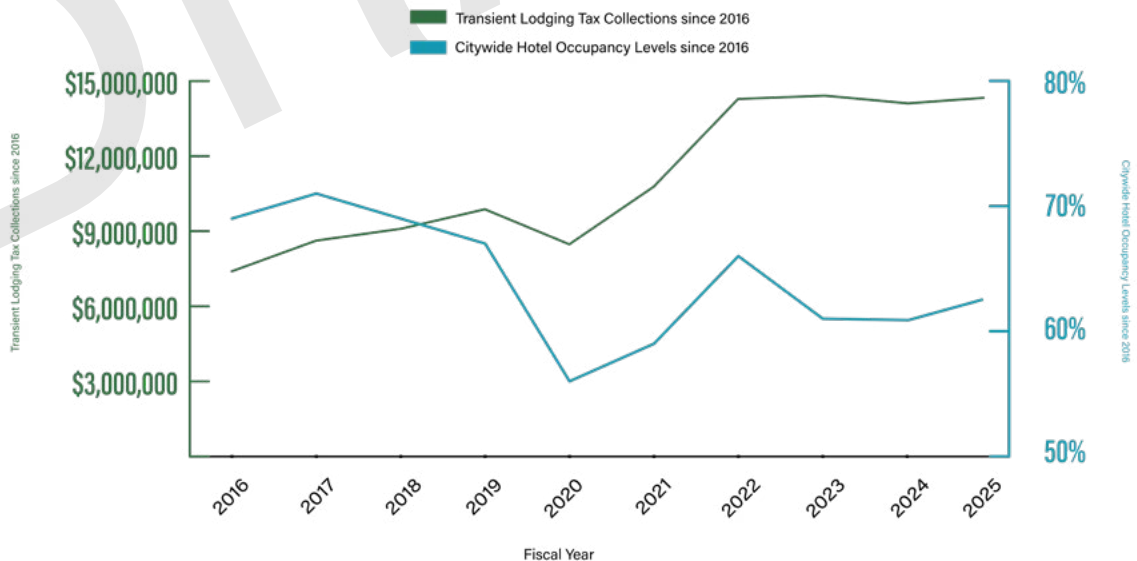
On the earned media side, as the digital advertising landscape grows more crowded and AI-generated content introduces more noise in what travelers encounter, authentic third-party storytelling becomes a more powerful way to reach people who are actively tuning out. FY27 is the year to tell the reinvestment story more consistently, attracting visitors who are value-aligned with our community: the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund's 11th year, the Bend Sustainability Fund's fifth year, and more than \$180,000 back into community events through sponsorships and strategic partnerships. Visitor dollars fund those reinvestments, which make Bend a better place to live, and fuel community pride that makes Bend a better place to visit. That cycle is what the Balanced Bend model is built on, and it's the story that turns a value-aligned visitor into a repeat one.

Visit Bend also recognizes tourism's role in diversifying Bend's economy. Our data-inspired marketing and group-business efforts help Bend attract new businesses and the workforce needed to grow key industries. With the City of Bend's Economic Development Strategic Plan now adopted by City Council, Visit Bend is well-positioned to deepen its role as a collaborative partner, aligning tourism's strengths with the city's broader economic priorities.

Group business becomes a year-round priority for the first time in over a decade, backed by a dedicated staff member whose sole focus is cultivating corporate and leisure groups, hosting meeting-planner familiarization tours, and representing Bend at regional and national industry events. This investment reflects Visit Bend's commitment to stabilizing TLT revenue during periods of need and aligns directly with the city's goal of attracting and retaining businesses, expanding Visit Bend's role in supporting broader economic development well beyond traditional tourism promotion. Visit Bend will also engage in early conversations around the future potential of a public-assembly venue, serving as a constructive voice and convener in that process.



TRANSIENT LODGING TAX COLLECTIONS VS LODGING OCCUPANCY RATES





[ECONOMY]

PRIMARY MARKETING GOALS + ACTION ITEMS

01 Elevate + diversify Visit Bend's marketing + content strategy to increase TLT collections

- Strategically diversify content and advertising assets to target specific audiences, leveraging data to match distinct travel and booking behaviors.
- Launch a dedicated, year-round group-sales program targeting corporate and leisure groups to stabilize lodging tax collections during identified need periods.

02 Maximize visitor spending in the local economy

- Expand storytelling and content partnerships with influencers, creators, and local businesses to boost authentic visitor engagement and spending at locally owned establishments.
- Develop targeted content and itineraries that emphasize locally rooted travel experiences, ensuring visitor spending circulates across Bend's neighborhoods and businesses.

03 Leverage new partnerships throughout the region to grow economic impacts

- Continue to strengthen partnerships with underrepresented groups to highlight authentic, inclusive experiences through storytelling. Continue featuring local voices—such as Indigenous guides and adaptive-sports leaders—to inspire diverse visitation and broaden Bend's appeal.
- Leverage enhanced relationships with the city's newly-formed economic development team, other economic development partners including the Central Oregon Business Alliance, EDCO, the Bend Chamber, and COIC to further strengthen the hospitality industry's impact and alignment with the City of Bend's newly adopted EDSP.

SOCIAL IMPACT STRATEGY

[PEOPLE]

Visit Bend is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive Bend, where every person feels valued and accepted, be they a first-time visitor or resident. It is through this lens that we aim to meet the evolving needs of the community and build connections between visitors, residents, and tourism partners.

Our community's strength lies not just in its natural beauty but in how we support and care for each other. In FY27, Visit Bend will continue building a culture of hospitality that recognizes and supports people who haven't always felt seen or included here. By embracing "culture-forward" tourism practices that honor diverse histories, uplift local voices, and celebrate cultural expression, we work to create a destination that reflects the values of equity and connection. That means identifying businesses, strategic partners, and grantees to feature in owned media, exploring programming in the visitor center that broadens who feels welcome, and continuing to strengthen relationships with tribal partners and organizations across the community who foster a genuine sense of belonging. In FY26, Visit Bend successfully completed a certification program through KultureCity that now recognizes the Bend Visitor Center as a "sensory-inclusive" destination that allows us to identify and serve the needs of those with invisible disabilities.

Resident sentiment remains our North Star. The data we gather through our partnership with Oregon State University's Sustainable Tourism Lab continue to show that residents' perceptions of tourism shapes the visitor experience. In FY27, we'll use those insights more deliberately, letting sentiment findings guide not just what we invest in, but also how we communicate it. The community ambassador program pilot represents one concrete step in that direction: putting local voices at the center of how Bend tells its story.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Visit Bend's focus on accessibility, equity, and community engagement supports the city's commitment to inclusive development and responsive governance. By featuring a more diverse audience, engaging residents more directly, and making investments in cultural and accessibility programs more transparent and accessible, we're working toward a Bend where the benefits of tourism reach across the whole community. The FY27 social impact strategy aligns with the following City Council goals:

- *Develop new policies to support sustainable development, including those responsive to community concerns*
- *Strategically invest in the Core Area to spur private development*
- *Develop and implement a language access policy and program*



Visit Bend's reinvestment programs—the Bend Sustainability Fund, the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund, our sponsorship program, and our strategic partnerships—collectively represent one of the most meaningful things we do. And for too long, those programs have lived in separate corners, with inconsistent language and little visibility into decision-making. FY27 is the year we change that. We'll build a unified framework that brings those programs together under a shared narrative, publish clear and plain-language criteria and decision pathways. We will introduce a series of updated engagement touchpoints. These roundtables, open office hours, and expanded public access to data on the tourism economy, visitor spending, resident sentiment, and community impact will ensure our work is visible, accountable, and shaped by the people it's meant to serve.

COMMUNITY VOICE

As a local non-profit, we've really felt Visit Bend's commitment to show up as a partner for community efforts. As a grantmaker, they've worked to ensure that the projects they fund reflect the needs of our community and are grounded in values that matter to local residents. Their staff are committed to building partnerships that last, rather than having one-time transactions. We've also valued their openness to new opportunities and different ways to support career pathways. This summer, Visit Bend is serving as a host for our Green Jobs Summer Internship Program, and will mentor a high school student to develop career skills in the tourism and outdoor industry. I feel very grateful that Visit Bend's vision extends beyond supporting tourism, and considers the health and sustainability of our entire community.

— Katie Chipko, executive director,
NatureConnect Central Oregon





COMMUNITY VOICE

Through our partnership at Oregon State University's Sustainable Tourism Lab, Visit Bend has demonstrated unparalleled leadership in ensuring tourism benefits the Bend community meaningfully. Among the hundreds of destinations we engage with globally, Visit Bend stands out as an influential example, inspiring communities worldwide to rethink tourism's role in enhancing local quality of life

— Todd Montgomery, OSU professor, director of OSU Sustainable Tourism Lab

[PEOPLE]

PRIMARY SOCIAL IMPACT GOALS + ACTION ITEMS

01 Promote equity and accessibility within Bend's tourism ecosystem

- Identify and implement initiatives to make Bend's tourism experiences more accessible and welcoming for people of all abilities and backgrounds. This includes working with facilities, businesses, and services to ensure inclusivity for both visitors and residents.
- Amplify diverse representation in marketing and storytelling to show visitors from various backgrounds, abilities, and experiences that Bend "sees" them and strives to create an inclusive, inviting community.

02 Enhance resident sentiment and engagement

- Further community-engagement initiatives, including forums and campaigns that surface strategies for balancing tourism growth, community livability, and environmental sustainability.
- Strategically reinvest transient lodging tax (TLT) dollars into the community, directly enhancing the quality of life for locals and visitors alike.

03 Strengthen the community connection to Visit Bend's reinvestments and cultural programs

- Broaden the reach of Visit Bend's cultural grants and reinvestment programs, guided by a unified framework that makes funding priorities, criteria, and outcomes transparent and accessible to the communities they serve.
- Introduce structured community engagement touchpoints, including industry roundtables, open office hours, and expanded access to data on resident sentiment, visitor spending, and tourism's community impact, to ensure Visit Bend's reinvestment work is visible, accountable, and informed by the people it serves.

STRATEGIC ACTION ITEM: Pilot the community ambassador program and launch a unified reinvestment hub that consolidates Visit Bend's grant programs under a shared narrative with plain-language criteria, transparent decision pathways, and expanded public data access, building the foundation for a full impact strategy in FY28.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

[PLACE]

Visit Bend's environmental strategy is rooted in the same logic as the rest of our work: A thriving community depends on protecting the things that make it worth living in and visiting. With nearly 90 percent of visitors coming to Bend for outdoor recreation, our rivers, trails, lakes, and mountains are not just amenities. They are the foundation of our tourism industry and the reason people choose to build their lives here. Protecting those resources requires real investment, honest partnerships, and a willingness to take responsibility for tourism's role in the pressure this place faces.

The Bend Sustainability Fund remains our most direct tool for turning visitor impact into community benefit. Five years in, it has become one of the cleaner expressions of regenerative tourism in the country. In FY27, we will tell that story more consistently and visibly, not as promotion, but as an accountability practice that connects our investments to the people and places they serve and builds trust with travelers seeking destinations that reflect those values.

Resilience is increasingly central to what it means to operate in Central Oregon. Wildfire and smoke aren't anomalies anymore; they're part of the planning calendar. In FY27, Visit Bend will deepen its role in citywide resilience efforts, working with local partners to develop the communication tools that help visitors and the hospitality industry respond quickly when conditions change. That means bringing together industry partners, the City, the Chamber, and county partners around the shared challenges that no single organization can solve alone.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Visit Bend's environmental strategy aligns with the city's climate and sustainability goals. From wildfire and smoke communications to funding environmentally focused projects through the Bend Sustainability Fund, we prioritize resilience, promote responsible outdoor recreation, and reduce tourism's carbon footprint—all in support of a thriving and sustainable future. Visit Bend's FY26 environmental strategy complements the following City Council goals:

- *Plan and build facilities to meet the needs of a growing city with a lens of sustainability and a reduced carbon footprint*
- *Continue implementation of the Climate Action Plan and prioritize the reduction of GHG emissions*
- *Increase wildfire resilience and protect the community from smoke events*



Visit Bend's approach to encouraging responsible outdoor recreation is grounded in the belief that desired behavior stems from ease and incentives more than enforcement: The "right" choice should be the "easy" choice. The most effective way to narrow the gap between what visitors say they value and what they do is to make responsible choices visible and accessible. Increasingly, travelers begin their trip planning by asking two key questions online: where to go and how to visit responsibly. When Bend shows up in the results with clear examples of how overnight visitors fuel meaningful stewardship efforts and create real community benefits—why your trip matters—we can attract visitors whose values align with their actions. Those visitors are more likely to act responsibly during their stay and share their experiences with others. That creates a cycle that helps Bend grow visitation in a sustainable way that fits community needs.



[PLACE]

PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS + ACTION ITEMS

01 Enhance environmental resiliency and sustainability

- Align with and support climate-friendly initiatives, empowering industry partners to better measure and address their impacts through water- and energy-saving actions.
- Expand Visit Bend's role in proactively supporting citywide resilience by working closely with local partners to develop communication strategies and tools that allow us to better respond to natural disasters and environmental challenges like wildfire and smoke.

02 Promote engagement in outdoor recreation, education, and conservation efforts to all who spend time in Bend

- Diversify visitor engagement strategies by leveraging Visit Bend's authenticity and expertise through innovative programs to encourage responsible outdoor recreation.
- Deepen work with existing partners like Oregon Adaptive Sports and Discover Your Northwest to continue supporting and enhancing inclusive experiences.

03 Support and partner with organizations working to find solutions to the challenges Bend faces as a sustainable destination

- Expand the impact of Visit Bend's reinvestments by thoughtfully allocating a significant portion of lodging tax revenue back into the community.
- Create innovative programs and clear messaging that can guide visitors toward sustainable decisions by making those choices easy, attractive, and aligned with their values, thereby narrowing the "say-do" gap.

LOOKING FORWARD

Visit Bend sets the example for how a destination organization can serve its community by focusing on regenerative tourism that prioritizes long-term community benefit over short-term growth. Never satisfied with the status quo, we strive to match the magic in our work with the magic of this place we call home. While driving lodging tax revenue remains essential, we are more than numbers. Meaningful success hinges on a Balanced Bend approach that connects our work to the resiliency and prosperity of our economy, people, and place.

Our organization remains deeply committed to the enduring success of our town, industry, and community—a process that starts from within. Visit Bend attracts the best and brightest talent with competitive packages and a supportive work environment, and has created a top-notch team that is professional, passionate, and authentic. We live, work, and play here, and each of us believes wholeheartedly in a common mission: to serve Bend's people and places as local and state statutes allow. By challenging what is, and by asking what could be, we work to foster a truly sustainable destination rooted in a thriving community.

We are not alone. Shaping Bend's future is a job for everyone. We lean on partners and experts in climate resilience, social equity, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship to help make Bend the best version of itself.

Throughout all of Bend's change, our mission has never been more clear: To nurture, grow, and steward a regenerative community that sustains, connects, and welcomes all who enjoy it safely and responsibly. Disagreements over our route choices may arise, but we remain united in our destination—a future where Bend is a livable, inclusive community, and a beacon of sustainability and economic vibrancy for all.



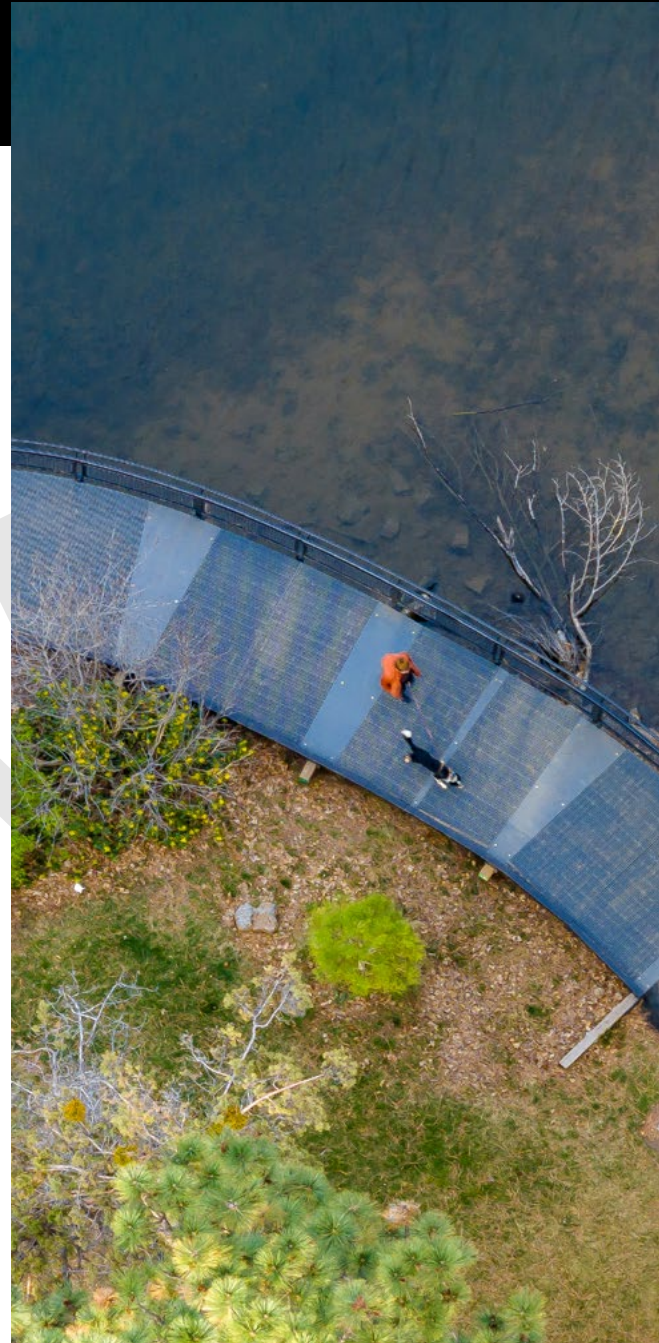
APPENDIX

Visit Bend is currently operating under a contract with the City of Bend to provide the following scope of work, defined as:

Visit Bend is responsible for the deployment of City of Bend room tax funds designated for tourism promotion and tourism related facility development via Visit Bend as defined in the contract.

Operating as a full-service destination management organization (DMO), Visit Bend is tasked with creating and placing tourism promotion content, developing Bend as a tourism destination, administering grants, performing research on industry trends, and operating a visitor center. These efforts seek to meet the needs of the local lodging industry in enhancing Bend's tourism industry while maximizing room tax revenue for the City of Bend.

The supporting data below is what guides Visit Bend as an organization in doing work that has a positive impact on the industry and community.



BUDGET FY27

In FY27, Visit Bend and the City of Bend's finance department anticipate total Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) collections of approximately \$15 million. 35.4% of overall collections are allocated under contract to Visit Bend, which will be reinvested in accordance with Oregon state statute and Bend city code into tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities. The remainder of TLT collections is allocated to the city's general fund and public safety.

Visit Bend is budgeting \$5,070,600 from TLT collections, which is approximately a 2% increase from the FY26 budget. Total revenue for the organization, including advertising sales, retail sales, and interest income, is \$5,139,000.

As a not-for-profit organization, Visit Bend operates its profit-and-loss (P+L) budget on a break-even basis. In FY27, Visit Bend is budgeting \$5,227,211 in expenses, ending the fiscal year with a deficit of \$88,211, which will be offset by a prior-year surplus. This year's budget balances needs across all three pillars of the organization's work and remains nimble amid broader economic uncertainty.

- \$ 380,200 to the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund
- \$ 760,700 to the Bend Sustainability Fund
- \$ 1,708,300 to Marketing + Visitor Development
- \$ 369,219 to General + Administrative
- \$ 2,008,792 to Personnel

REVENUE	YEAR TO YEAR COMPARISON		VARIANCE	
	FY27	FY26	\$	%
City Funding - Current Year	5,070,600	4,976,200	94,400	2%
Retail Sales	54,000	50,000	4,000	8%
Advertising	4,800	4,800	-	0%
Interest Income	9,600	10,800	(1,200)	-11%
TOTAL REVENUE	5,139,000	5,041,800	97,200	2%
EXPENSES	FY27	FY26	\$	%
Personnel	2,008,792	1,890,834	117,958	6%
Grant Programs	1,140,900	1,119,700	21,200	2%
Marketing + Visitor Development	1,708,300	1,721,270	(12,970)	-1%
Overhead Expenses	369,219	371,192	(1,973)	-1%
TOTAL	5,227,211	5,102,996	124,215	2%
NET INCOME (LOSS)	(88,211)	(61,196)	(27,015)	

	TOTAL \$
REVENUE	
City Funding - Current Year	5,070,600
Retail Sales	54,000
Advertising Sales	4,800
Interest Income	9,600
TOTAL	\$ 5,139,000
PERSONNEL EXPENSES	
Base Pay	1,417,492
Incentive Pay	109,800
Payroll Taxes	122,100
Employee Benefits	359,400
TOTAL	\$ 1,877,946
GRANT PROGRAMS	
Bend Cultural Tourism Fund	380,200
Bend Sustainability Fund	760,700
TOTAL	\$ 1,140,900
SALES & MARKETING EXPENSES	
Audio Marketing	15,000
Blog	6,000
Brochure Distribution	35,000
Collateral	60,000
Content	110,000
Digital Marketing	140,000
Influencer Marketing	110,000
Marketing Software	28,946
Photo	29,000
Postage	7,200
Print	55,000
Production	97,000
Promotions	57,075
Public Relations	64,300
Research	334,079
Social	102,000
Travel & Meals	6,000
Video Marketing	210,000
Visitor Development	132,500
Website Development & Maint	65,200
Retail Purchasing	44,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,708,300

	TOTAL \$
OVERHEAD EXPENSES	
Bank Fees	7,200
Building Lease	81,600
Building Maintenance	19,200
Depreciation & Amortization	18,000
Dues & Subscriptions	14,500
Education & Training	32,100
Equipment Lease & Maint.	3,600
Hiring Expenses	1,200
Insurance	4,000
Interest Expense	7,692
Licenses & Permits	6,000
Network & Telco	24,600
Office Supplies	15,927
Professional Fees	81,600
Travel & Meals	41,200
Utilities	10,800
TOTAL	\$ 369,219

TOTAL FY27 EXPENSES

\$5,227,211

TOTAL FY27 DEFICIT

-\$88,211

TOTAL RESERVE FUND

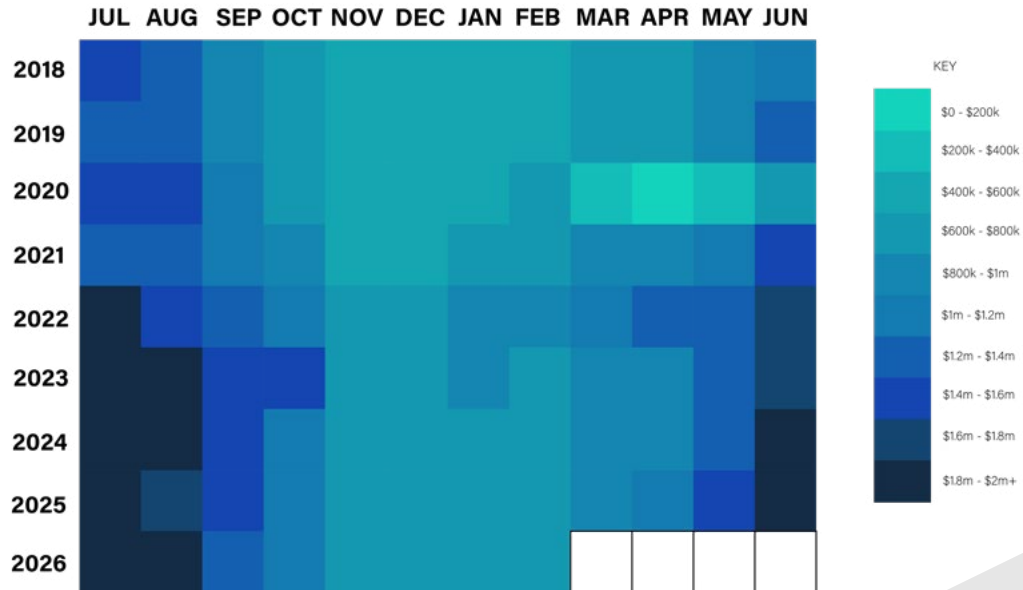
\$517,530

TRANSIENT ROOM TAX COLLECTIONS

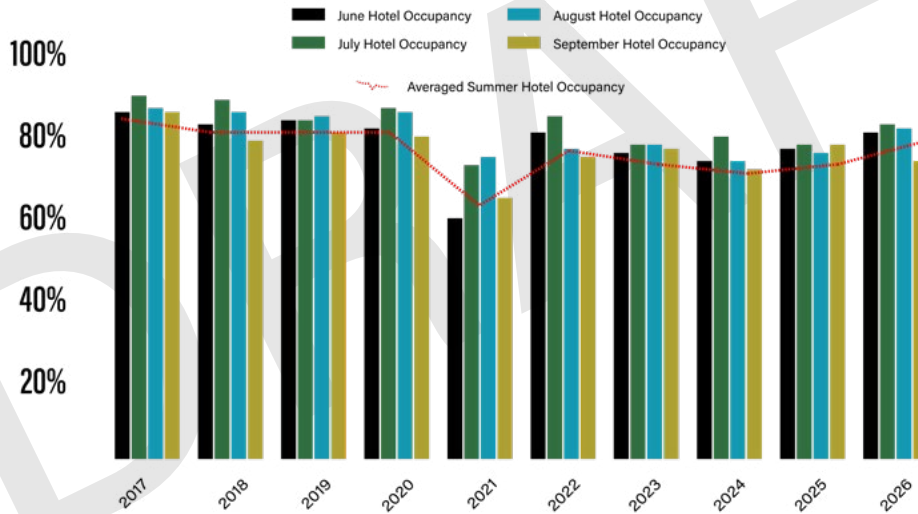
Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) serves as the primary measurement of the ebbs and flows of the tourism industry. Because our demand-driven industry is heavily impacted by economic and environmental disruption, TLT is a blended metric of rate and occupancy, effectively approximating the overall demand for the destination's lodging inventory.

In the City of Bend, a TLT of 10.4 percent is levied on all overnight stays of less than 30 days and is collected by our lodging operators. That money is then remitted to the city on a monthly basis, where approximately 35 percent is reinvested into the promotion of tourism and tourism-related facilities under a contract with Visit Bend. The remaining 65 percent is allocated to the city's general fund and police + fire. The City of Bend's General Fund supports public safety, roads, and other core services. In FY27, visitors will contribute nearly \$10 million to the City of Bend's general fund through taxes paid on their stays.

CITY OF BEND TRANSIENT LODGING TAX (TLT)— COLLECTIONS BY MONTH.



SUMMER HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES - CITYWIDE SINCE 2016



ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCES TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE:

OSU Sustainable Tourism Lab: A partnership with Visit Bend, establishing a benchmark to track resident sentiment of tourism through annual community surveys over the coming years.

Smith Travel Research: Transformative data software that delivers weekly and monthly insights within the hotel and motel industry.

AirDNA: Statistically valid data delivered monthly providing insights to track the health of the short-term rental industry in Bend.

Dean Runyan Associates: Annual, city-level economic impact data relevant to travel and tourism in Bend.

Datafy: Comprehensive data analytics, visitor spending through Affinity, strategic advertising DSP, and campaign measurement with attribution to measure impact of visitation

Placer.ai: Location intelligence and foot traffic analytics platform that uses anonymized, aggregated mobile location data to analyze human movement patterns, retail visitation, and consumer demographics. It helps businesses analyze competitors, and understand consumer behavior.

Visit Bend publishes up-to-date lodging industry metrics on its **Tableau dashboard**, which can be found [here](#).

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