

# **CITY OF OAKRIDGE, OREGON STRATEGIC PLAN 2013 – 2018**

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Prepared with assistance from

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## **Executive Summary**

In the spring of 2013, the City of Oakridge submitted and received a Ford Institute grant for Community Building to assist the City complete its first ever five year strategic plan. The City engaged a private consulting firm, PARC Resources, to provide facilitation and assist the City complete their plan. After a series of public sessions including a wide ranging “town hall style” meetings, the City Council finalized a priority list of projects and activities which the city government would undertake in the coming years.

The City had quite a few requests for assistance in areas that are either the prerogative of other jurisdictions or outside the scope of what typically is the role of a municipal government. Issues such as supporting our schools, creating jobs, and making improvements to a state highway were all pressing issues for the citizens of Oakridge. The City Council determined the best they could do in these areas is to continue to serve as advocates and supporters for the needed improvements with officials in Salem and Washington D.C..

The City Council determined that the majority of activities the City would undertake fell into five distinct categories:

- Beautification of our Community
- Economic Development for our Region
- Improved Medical Facilities and Services for Oakridge
- Youth and Community Services
- Internal Organizational Improvements

The City has developed a scope of work for each activity and will utilize this plan to guide staff efforts in securing the needed resources to fully implement the plan. A plan is a living document, so it will be necessary to revisit the strategic plan annually to adjust timeframes and specific work activities to reflect the current realities.

The civic spirit and “can-do” attitude of the participants in the planning process suggest that this plan can transition Oakridge from the financial problems of the previous management to a promising renewal. For the many Oakridge citizens who gave their time, interest, and suggestions to this plan we commend your involvement and request that you stay engaged. It will take all our citizens to plot a positive path forward for our community and with your help we can make Oakridge the community in which we all want to live.

## **Chapter 1: History of Oakridge, Oregon**

In 1852 pioneers looking for a new route from Central Oregon to the Willamette Valley began exploring the area now known as Oakridge. The area was originally a mountain ranch called Big Prairie until a post office was established in 1888 and the community was then called Hazeldell. In May 1912 the Southern Pacific Railroad opened a new

railway station named Oak Ridge in the community. In 1912 the City officially changed its name to the single word spelling of Oakridge.<sup>1</sup>



**Tunnel 22**

The Southern Pacific Railroad played an integral role in the early boom years of Oakridge. By 1910 the railroad had begun work on Tunnel 22, a short route connecting Oakridge to the community of Westfir. The Oakridge railway station was on Southern Pacific's Cascade line, a heavily used route over the Willamette Pass via the Natron Cutoff. In the late 1970's the railroad stopped its regular service and the depot was torn down. The Union Pacific Railroad now operates in Oakridge with cargo shipping services. Amtrak currently shares the line providing passenger service.<sup>2</sup>

Oakridge experienced a second growth period after the Pope and Talbot Timber Company opened a sawmill in the community in 1948. Within a few years, the mill employed more than 500 employees. By the late 1970's, the mill began to modernize and subsequently laid off hundreds of employees. In 1985, Pope and Talbot announced plans to close the mill permanently. An agreement was made in 1986 between the employees and the union to keep the mill operating with 100 employees. Pope and Talbot sold the mill in 1989 and the company filed for bankruptcy, closing the mill permanently. The City of Oakridge now owns the property that housed the Pope and Talbot sawmill.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Oakridge,\\_Oregon.html](http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Oakridge,_Oregon.html).

<sup>2</sup> <http://spcascades.railfan.net/aboutcas.html>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.brian894x4.com/PopeandTalbotMill.html>.



**Pope and Talbot Sawmill. Oakridge, Oregon, circa 1935**

Oakridge has undergone a significant economic transition after the decline of the timber industry in the 1980's. The area lost a significant number of family wage jobs as the mills closed and subsequently the population decreased. The City has now transitioned away from timber production and has focused on tourism to promote economic growth.<sup>4</sup>

In recent years there has been a revival centered on the recreational activities in the area. Oakridge is located on State Highway 58, a corridor linking the Willamette Valley with Central Oregon. The City is nestled in the foothills of the Western Cascade Mountains and is completely surrounded by the Willamette National Forest, making it a popular location for outdoor enthusiasts. Oakridge is often referred to as the Center of Oregon Outdoor Recreation and the Mountain Biking Capital of the Northwest. Hiking, mountain biking, fly-fishing, birding, mushroom hunting, huckleberry picking, watersports, and the Willamette Pass ski area are popular activities.<sup>5</sup>

## **Chapter 2: Citizen Involvement**

The City of Oakridge conducted a wide range of public participation sessions throughout the strategic planning process. Planning sessions with the public and City Council were held as well as a free-flowing town hall session where citizens were asked to comment on

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<sup>4</sup> Outdoor Recreation Destination Economic Opportunities Analysis for the City of Oakridge. 2007.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ci.oakridge.or.us/>.

a broad range of subjects. The sessions were held in 2013 on March 27th, April 16th, May 16<sup>th</sup>, and June 13th. From each of these public sessions, comments and suggestions were captured and analyzed by the City Council in determining the proper course for next five years.

### **S.W.O. T. Process (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)**

During the early fact-finding public sessions, each group was asked to participate in a SWOT process where perceptions are captured in each category to establish a community attitude. As part of the strategic planning process this baseline attitudinal measure helps to determine the major areas that the City Council and the community can successfully address.

#### Strengths

Citizens feel their community offers a significant number of real strengths for existing and future residents. Many of the community's assets are linked to the location of the City. The identified strengths are as follows:

##### Location

- Weather
- Recreational opportunities and clean air
- Trails
- Scenic drive
- RV parks
- Camping
- Fishing
- Three rivers

##### Human Resources

- Good schools
- Our people
- Strong spirit of volunteerism
- Local artists
- Engaged citizenry

##### Local Infrastructure

- Low crime rate
- Local festivals
- Mountain biking capital of Oregon
- Golf course
- Airport
- Geo-thermal resources
- Enterprise zone
- Rail line/Rail spur study
- Industrial Park
- Forest Service Headquarters

## Weaknesses

Most participants agreed to the weaknesses of the community. While the citizens are very supportive of their community, the absence of a major employer since the closure of the mills has had a very severe impact on the quality of life in Oakridge. The weaknesses were grouped into the following subcategories:

### Infrastructure Needs

- Lack of medical services
- Water system problems/Delivery to Industrial Park
- Inadequate water resources and pressure at Industrial Park
- Willamette Activity Center re-purposing
- Lack of diverse economic base

### Lack of Tourism and Service Industry Resources

- Highway 58 corridor is unsightly and an impediment to local economic development
- Non-maintained trailer parks and other properties create a less desirable appearance for the community
- Oakridge is NOT a destination stop for visitors
- Closure of eating establishments creates limited choices for locals and visitors
- Lack of opportunities for young people

### Impact of Limited Economic Growth

- Aging population
- Limited local employees
- Lack of diverse economic base
- Struggling schools with declining enrollments

## Opportunities

Enthusiasm for Oakridge and its potential future was undiminished by the struggles of the last decades. The responses fell into two different broad categories as follows:

### Capitalizing on Existing Opportunities

- A connection to the river from town
- Better signage and public information
- Vacant restaurant locations
- Need improved ODOT signage on East entrance to the City
- City website improvements/Promoting Oakridge
- Extend public transit services to weekends
- Work with the Westfir Community to jointly market communities
- Consider strategic annexations and mergers
- Consider building velodrome track for biking in inclement weather

### Using Existing Tools and Buildings for Economic Development Growth

- Public Works building for re-use
- Industrial lands/100+ acres



- Establish an Amtrak Station in Oakridge
- Approved housing developments
- Vacant school building re-use
- Heinz Mill site re-use
- Local transient room tax for local project support
- City phone tax for local support
- Implement the Cascadia Design criteria in new and remodeled properties

### Threats

Each community faces threats to the quality of life and well-being of its citizens. These threats can present real challenges to the sustainable growth and development of a community if not addressed. The citizenry of Oakridge agreed that some of the factors facing the community pose a real threat to our long-term well-being.

The key factors that must be addressed are as follows:

- Lack of a diverse economic base
- Limited financial resources
- Fragmented organizations without a cohesive common vision
- Limited infrastructure capacity
- Out-migration of young people
- Limited medical services
- Absence of a year-round economy
- Visual introductions to the community is a negative rather than a positive impression
- The City of Oakridge, the small town of Westfir, and the surrounding area was designated a “non-attainment” area in 1994 by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Oakridge Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) Attainment Plan by reference is made by addendum attached hereto.

### **Conclusion**

The SWOT analysis confirmed many assumptions of the participants and helped the City Council focus on the best steps to take in the next five years to assist the community in moving forward. City government has undergone a major challenge in recent years and through austerity and pragmatic management has restored operations to sustainable levels. Improvements in City government will allow the City Council the option to provide limited support to achieve the goals set forth in this strategic plan. With the continued cooperation of the citizenry and strategic leadership of the City Council, it is reasonable to believe that the next five years can turn the tide for Oakridge and set a course of sustainable future economic growth.

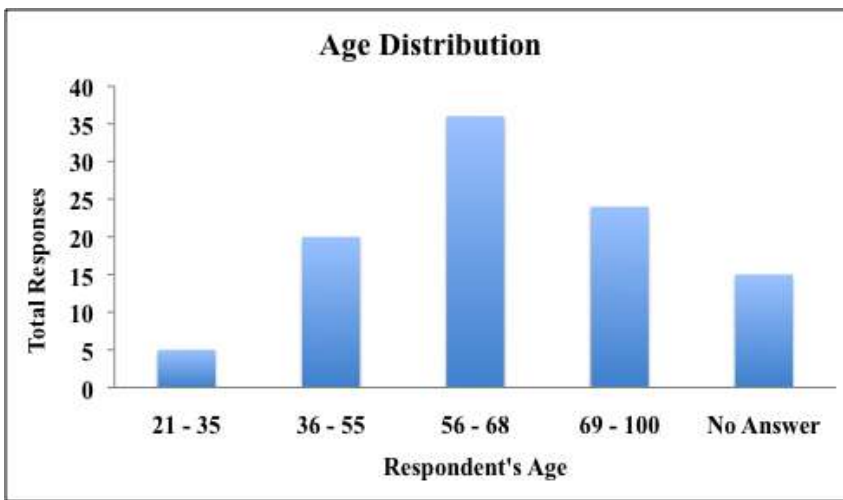
The location and amenities available to the people wishing to relocate to Oakridge are significant. With new business investments, the quality of life present in the 1970’s and 1980’s can be re-established for another generation of Oregonians.

## Chapter 3: Community Survey Results

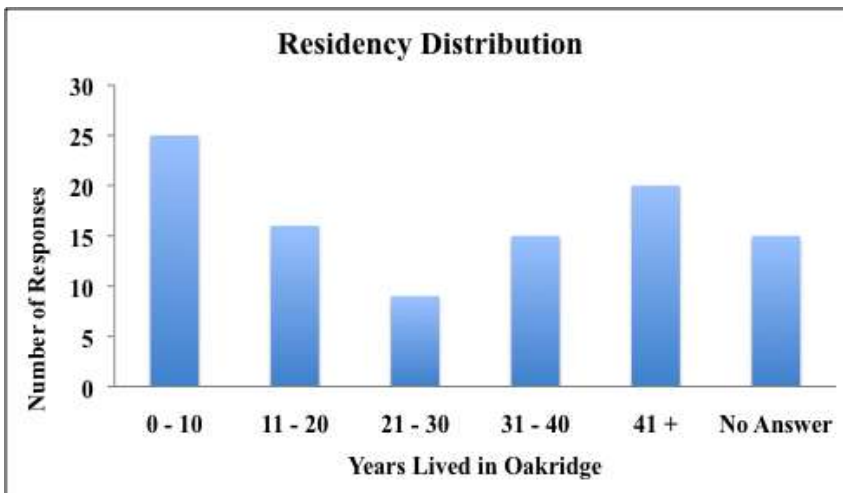
In April of 2013 the City of Oakridge distributed a voluntary survey to area residents to provide suggestions on how to shape the future of their community. The City received 100 returned surveys, representing approximately 3.1% of the total population of Oakridge. The response rate represents a baseline of statistically significant data.

### Survey Respondent Demographics

The majority of respondents were age 56 and older, representing 60% of returned surveys. There were few responses from people between the ages of 21-35 with 5% of total responses representing this group. Fifteen respondents did not give their age.



The returned surveys represented a fairly even distribution in the number of years residents have lived in the City of Oakridge.



## Survey Results

The top survey responses to the community survey are summarized below. Not all respondents answered all questions.

### Question 1: What is your number one priority for improvement to our community?

- New industries and businesses to create new jobs (45 votes)
- Clean up the City and Highway 58 corridor (22 votes)
- More efficient government (7 votes)
- Better medical and emergency services (6 votes)
- Improve and pave streets (5 votes)

The most common answer to this question focused on jobs. Nearly half of respondents to the survey identified bringing in new industries and businesses as their number one priority.

The second most common answer identified cleaning up the City and Highway 58 corridor.

### Question 2: What role do you feel that the City should play in supporting our business community?

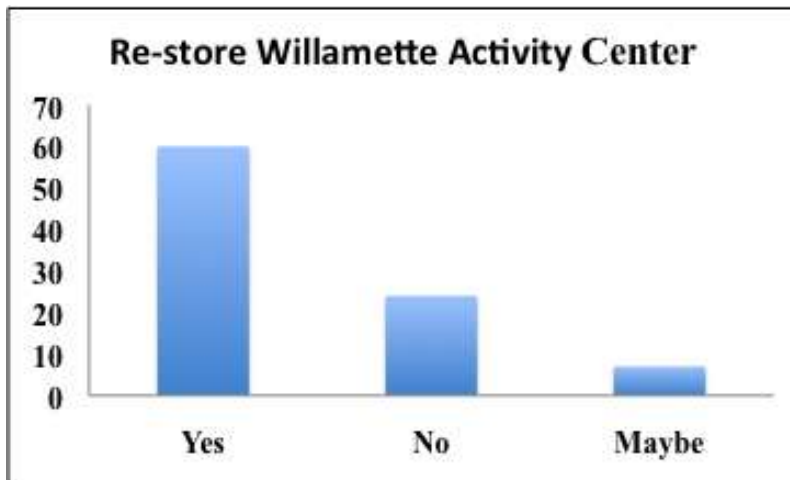
- Promote new jobs, industries, and market business ventures (25 votes)
- Offer tax breaks and incentives for new and existing businesses. Relax regulations and permits for business upgrades (19 votes)
- City should take a supportive role in supporting businesses (14 votes)
- Beautification and clean up the city (13 votes)
- City should NOT take a supportive role (8 votes)

### Question 3: The Highway 58 Corridor is the most visible part of our community to the travelling public. If there were plans to improve the state highway corridor going through our community, what amenities would you like to see included in these improvements?

- Cross walks for pedestrians and paved sidewalks (30 votes)
- Flowers, plants, trees, greenways, and landscaping (25 votes)
- Clean up Oakridge (22 votes)
- More small businesses such as restaurants, bakeries, and art galleries (13 votes)
- Bike lanes and running trails (9 votes)

### Question 4: The City is considering re-storing the Willamette Activity Center for our town, are you supportive of this plan? If yes, can you tell us what you feel is the most important element of this restoration.

The majority of respondents who provided an answer were in favor of re-storing the Willamette Activity Center. Some respondents chose to write “maybe” or left the question blank.



Respondents were also given the chance to provide written comments to this question.

Responses from those in favor of re-storing the Willamette Activity Center include:

- Upgrade mechanical systems, new gym floor, roof repairs, removal of dry rot and black mold, paint court lines on blacktop, and install a backboard and chain nets
- Provide children’s activities, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club
- Use as community center, meeting area, events, senior center, sewing and art classes, car and carpentry classes
- Restore Willamette Activity Center as a log cabin
- Restore using grant funds
- Use facility for State and County services, food programs, sports complex, indoor pool, pantry, helping hands

Responses from those not in favor of re-storing the Willamette Activity Center include:

- Too costly
- Focus on jobs first
- People are still angry about the middle school restoration bond
- Demolish the building. Tear down and replace with a smaller and more functional building
- Sell the building as is

Question 5: What beautification elements would you like to see in Oakridge?

- Clean up businesses and residences, remove junk, clean up the City (45 votes)
- Plant trees, shrubs, flowers, and hanging baskets (41 votes)
- Tear down or renovate vacant buildings (24 votes)
- Add public benches and lamp posts (5 votes)
- There are more important issues than beauty (4 votes)

Question 6: Are there community efforts that you feel that the City should be more actively involved in and what are those efforts?

No response was given to this open-ended question in 41 of the returned surveys. The top answers from those that offered a response include:

- Encourage new local business
- Clean up the City
- Plant Greenery
- Clean up the Willamette Activity Center
- Tear down or renovate old buildings

Question 7: In looking at surrounding communities in the area, what are the strengths of Oakridge which you feel we should be promoting and highlighting in our efforts to boost tourism in our community?

Over 60 responses to question 7 stated that recreational opportunities and natural beauty should be promoted to boost tourism. Respondents felt the strengths of Oakridge included:

- Recreational opportunities (cycling, kayaking, fishing, camping, hiking)
- Natural beauty of the outdoors
- Location to Eugene and Springfield
- Sights to visit (fish hatcheries and Kitson Hot Springs)
- Weather

Question 8: What services do you most desire to be part of the Oakridge business community?

31 respondents did not offer an answer to question 8.

- Retail stores and service businesses (36 votes)
- Health care (19 votes)
- Services that provide jobs (8 votes)
- Entertainment such as movie theater, swimming pool, open air events (6 votes)
- Volunteer and help groups such as tour guides, help for elderly (3 votes)

Question 9: What is the key opportunity you see for Oakridge?

- Larger businesses and industries (32 votes)
- Oakridge is a tourist destination (27 votes)
- Better medical facilities (4 votes)
- No Opportunities (2 votes)

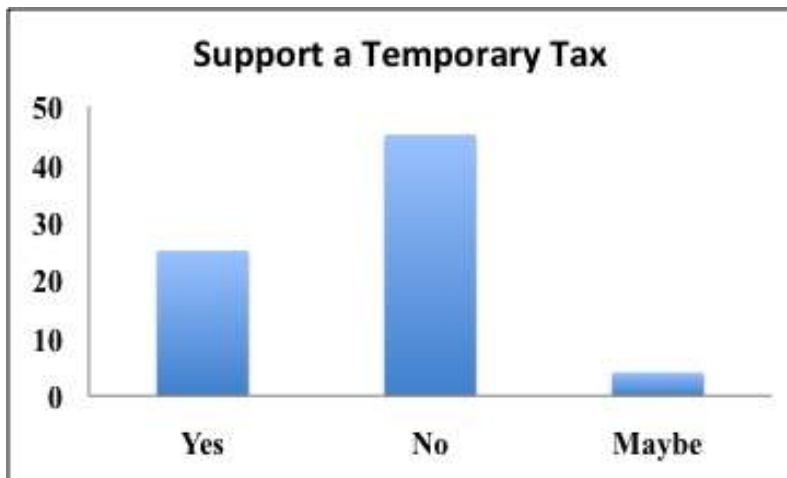
Question 10: How can the City Council best support future growth?

33 respondents offered no response.

- Welcome new businesses, support current local businesses, and promote tourism (37 votes)
- Enhance the City's appearance (10 votes)
- Be open to new ideas, offer visitor tours, build on cycling destination, create new economic development committee (10 votes)
- Pay attention to fiscal solvency (2 votes)

Question 11: Are there any steps that the City of Oakridge can take for which you would be willing to support temporary increases in property taxes?

Nearly half of respondents to the survey are not willing to support a temporary increase in property taxes.



Comments from respondents willing to support a temporary increase in property taxes include:

- Fenced dog park
- EMT/Fire support
- Would like tax dollars to go to education buildings no longer in use
- Jobs
- Projects and services which benefit the community directly
- Highway 58 beautification
- Address the trailer park issue
- Trail through and around town

Comments from respondents not willing to support a temporary increase in property taxes include:

- I live on a fixed income
- Not until the City commits to support new businesses
- City has not managed money well
- There is never temporary tax
- City is collecting motel taxes – isn't that enough?
- City charges too much for water
- People cannot afford more taxes
- Reduce taxes

## Chapter 4: Action Steps Planned

The City Council of Oakridge has evaluated the community input and determined the appropriate action steps to take in the coming months. The action steps are intended as a pathway for the City to move the community forward in the next five years. This plan is not intended to limit the leadership role of the City but to place priorities on the five primary areas with specific action steps. Many actions have multiple benefits for the community and it's citizens. The absence of a specific mention of an action step is not

necessarily an indication that the City does or does not support a single action but rather has chosen to focus their limited resources in the areas they feel can do the most long-term good for the community.

The City has identified five priority areas that will most effectively support or develop solutions to some of our community needs. While these areas have been prioritized for direct action, it is realistic to understand that many of these efforts will continue beyond the five-year projection of this strategic plan.

The City of Oakridge will pursue solutions and positive outcomes for the City in the following five priority areas:

- Beautification of our Community
- Economic Development for our Region
- Improved Medical Facilities and Services for Oakridge
- Youth and Community Services
- Internal Organizational Improvements

A community-supported effort spearheaded by engaged citizens working in cooperation with city officials has the potential to reinvigorate our community. A pioneer “can-do” spirit was the dominant character of the first settlers of Oakridge and it will be that spirit that brings our community back to the emerald jewel in the Cascades that it has been in the past.

Throughout the community process, meetings were well attended and citizens were vocal participants in the planning process. While Oakridge has experienced a lack of confidence in the City’s administration in the past, the steps to rebuild trust in City Hall is beginning to turn the tables and create an environment for community engagement and support. It is the City’s hope that this first strategic plan in the last twenty-five years will provide a new level of transparency for those citizens wishing to help change the future of Oakridge.

The five priority areas and corresponding steps are as follows:

### **Beautification of the City of Oakridge**

The City feels that despite the need throughout the city for beautification efforts, the most benefit for the citizens and the community will be to emphasize the Highway 58 corridor as our first priority for cleanup, nuisance abatement, property improvements, and visitor friendly enhancements. The City will need citizen involvement and broad community support as they tackle absentee ownership, abandoned and dilapidated buildings, and disinterested parties. The following actions steps will be taken by the City to help improve the visual and economic health of the Highway 58 corridor.

The following plan will be implemented over the next five years and beyond.

#### Step One: Highway 58 Beautification Plan (2013 – 2018)

- Inventory all properties from the western boundaries to eastern city limits.

- Identify hazardous and dangerous buildings that pose a threat to local citizens and/or are a visual blight to the community.
- The City will send notices to the owners of properties determined to pose a threat to public health and safety and/or are visual blight on the community. The property owners will be advised of city policy and ordinances that require property maintenance and nuisance abatement for weeds, debris, inoperable vehicles, and health and sanitation risks of the community.
- After the notification period, willing property owners will be given a range of voluntary options to bring their properties in compliance. Unwilling property owners will be subject to the code enforcement process and civil penalties as allowed by law.
- After exhausting all enforcement and voluntary measures, the City Council will determine the next steps, including condemnation if appropriate.

#### Step Two: Highway 58 Refinement Plan – ODOT (2015-2017)

- The City of Oakridge will continue working with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to develop an acceptable plan for highway improvements through Oakridge.
- The City has been advocating for and will secure a pedestrian activated crosswalk across Highway 58 by the year 2017.
- The City will advocate for multiple crosswalks across Highway 58 as part of any improvement plan to the state highway.
- The City will work to improve “access management” within the Highway 58 refinement plan to ensure that existing businesses are not harmed and if so, that ODOT mitigates any negative impacts to the fullest extent possible.

#### Step Three: Transient Room Tax (TRT) Allocations (2014- 2019)

- In fiscal year 2015 the City Budget Committee will consider an allocation for specific beautification efforts on Highway 58. These dollars will be used for purposes agreed to by the City and the Business Community along Highway 58.
- The City will work with local groups and community leaders to formulate a policy for the small amount of TRT funds to be used in each of the next four years to help change the character and look of the corridor.
- The City will seek support and advice from the Oakridge Economic Development Advisory Committee to vet any proposed policy on the use of TRT funds on the Highway 58 beautification efforts.

#### Step Four: Additional Beautification Efforts (2013-2019)

- The City will enforce nuisance abatement ordinances to require citizen compliance with health, safety, and visual nuisance problems within Oakridge. This will be a citywide effort, however special emphasis will be given to the Highway 58 corridor and the arterials associated with the highway.
- The City will evaluate potential parking improvement options on First Street. An improved parking plan will be implemented.
- Vacant properties owned by the City will be evaluated as possible new municipal parking lots at strategic locations throughout the city.



- The City will work with volunteers and civic boosters to secure donated materials to improve existing buildings for a minimal cost.
- The City will support community-based initiatives to improve the community on a case-by-case basis. If the City can legally support these efforts, then city staff will provide support and leadership where possible.
- The City will take steps to re-utilize existing City properties in the Highway 58 corridor in a positive and helpful manner to surrounding property owners and the community at large.

A desired outcome of the plan is a marked improvement of Highway 58 with new or invigorated retail commercial ventures occupying vacant spaces on the highway frontage by December 2018. The travelling public will be more motivated to stop in Oakridge by the enhanced beauty of this area.

### **Oakridge Economic Development Initiatives**

Creating and maintaining jobs was the theme heard again and again during this planning process. The City is committed to attract new businesses while retaining and supporting existing businesses. By providing adequate water, sewer, roads, and city services the City can provide a framework for economic development. Steps will be taken to improve the prospect of properties designated for industrial and commercial development being used for economic development. The City will also take a pro-active approach to supporting business by creating an information clearinghouse in City Hall to assist existing and prospective businesses seeking information and opportunities in Oakridge. The City recognizes that small business will be the key to our future and will encourage these businesses to consider Oakridge. Large box stores and national chains may eventually find Oakridge, but in the next five years it is likely that most of our business will be from the area.

Recreation and outdoor sports related businesses are key to Oakridge's future. There has been a great deal of thought put into Oakridge's recreation based economy. This strategic plan does not attempt to duplicate or reinvent any of the good work that has come before, but rather to create an environment that supports sustainable development and provides good jobs for the citizens of Oakridge.

#### Step One: Economic Development Readiness (2014-2019)

- The City's website will be improved to provide better information for potential businesses looking to locate in Oakridge (Fall 2013).
- The City will re-engage the Oakridge Economic Development Advisory Committee (OEDAC) to have broader roles.
- The City will market and attempt to sell as many of the "City-owned" properties and buildings in the next five years as possible.
- The City and OEDAC will work with University of Oregon Community Planning Workshop to secure the services of a Regional Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) student to work on economic development initiatives for one year or secure a contract economic development person (Summer 2014).
- The City staff will be trained and given support materials to help existing businesses and to help promote Oakridge to prospective businesses.

### Step Two: Economic Development Infrastructure

- The City will work to improve water availability to the industrial park.
- Complete Engineering Feasibility Study by 2014.
- Implement Study and seek citizen support 2015-2016.
- Expand and improve water system for the City of Oakridge 2017-2019.
- Continue to seek the re-establishment of an Amtrak terminal in Oakridge.
- Secure all Oregon congressional delegation support for the terminal.
- Work with Union Pacific to advocate for a new terminal.
- Seek financial support from the Union Pacific Railroad grant funds in August of each year.

### Step Three: Leadership and Advocacy

- Continue to advocate with state agencies whose action can and do impede Oakridge's ability to re-establish economic viability.
- Work with Lane Regional Air Protection Agency to ensure that the six-point plan does not restrict Oakridge from growing our community.
- Work with DEQ to minimize property impacts from the water quality corridor impacts along the river.
- Work with Business Oregon, DEQ, Water Resources, DLCD, and others to secure adequate "affordable" water to the industrial park and community.
- Work with federal officials to secure priority allocations of forest products harvested around Oakridge to be processed in Oakridge.
- Work with the USFS, ODFW, and OPRD to promote tourism around Oakridge and better improve recreational resources to support the surrounding communities.
- Explore consolidation of special districts to better support the region in economic development.
- Continue to provide community information and promote public participation in all public policy decisions affecting the future economic activities of Oakridge.

The action steps will have a positive impact on all citizens and will create a climate of mutual support and trust between the City and the existing business community. Additionally, the City will have taken steps to increase the diversity of available land and range of municipal support available for new business by the end of this planning period.

### **Medical Service Promotion and Recruitment**

The City of Oakridge recognizes that obtaining access to quality affordable health care services in our community is vital for future growth. As with many rural communities, the ability to provide health care services is a growing challenge. The City of Oakridge can no longer wait for "market forces" to create a health care network in our town. The City must create incentives, long-term relationships, and alternative care structures that would result in sustainable on-site medical care in our community. To accomplish this objective, the City will aggressively pursue health care initiatives designed to recruit and retain qualified health care professionals.

### Step One: Medical Service Advocacy and Promotion

- The City will work with citizens of Oakridge to re-establish a local Medical Advisory Committee. The committee will develop recommended strategies for expanding medical services in Oakridge, work with other surrounding jurisdictions (Lane County, OHSU, State of Oregon, etc.), and other organizations to determine cost-effective ways to develop and retain health care services for our region. Additionally, the committee will advise the City on how the local government can support health care initiatives.
- Work with the University of Oregon medical van program to determine how this project could result in locally available 24/7 medical services in Oakridge.
- Develop an on-going program to promote rural health care services at the University of Oregon Medical School to attract family practice physicians to Oakridge as part of their student loan program. Work with other medical schools and programs as necessary to secure health care professionals in our community.

### Step Two: City Government Strategies and Actions

The City will examine and determine a strategy to recruit health care professionals that may include providing the following incentives for interested health care operators in Oakridge:

- Provide free or reduced land for clinics in exchange for a specific time commitment to our community.
- Provide low cost or free space in the Willamette Activity Center for a health care clinic.
- Provide a building in Oakridge to qualified health care providers to establish a clinic or facility within our community.
- Provide other reasonable incentives to recruit health care professionals. The City will not be the bank for any operator or business, but will provide support with other conventional lenders as may be lawful and prudent.
- The City will evaluate and determine whether a Health Service District (ORS Chapter 190) could be established in the region and what the district boundaries should encompass.
- The City will advocate and seek state and federal support for establishing a Rural Health Care Program in Oakridge.
- The City will seek funding for evaluating the feasibility of establishing an Assisted Living Facility within the community.
- The City will consider offering incentives to developers and operators of Assisted Living Facilities and other Senior Care Facilities as opportunities present themselves.
- The City will advocate with Oregon Housing and Community Services to place Oakridge on a priority list for new investments in Senior Housing Care programs.

Within the next five years, the City of Oakridge will recruit new health care professionals to our community. The City, in cooperation with other jurisdictions and with the support of our citizens, will seek resources and strategies to establish a health services clinic in our community that will provide basic health care for our people. At the end of this five-year planning period, Oakridge should have a medical facility for urgent and routine health care in our community.

## **Youth Services**

The City of Oakridge wants to support our young people to become the next leaders of the community. Although Oakridge schools do an outstanding job of educating our children, they find difficulty providing additional resources within their budget. City government can play a supportive role for our schools, advocating with the Oregon legislature, assisting in seeking greater federal support, and by creating job opportunities for young adults after they leave the local school system.

### Step One: Improve Community Facilities

- The City of Oakridge will promote and support the rehabilitation of the Willamette Activity Center in the next five years. Free space will be provided for social services, community support activities, and training services for area youth in the WAC.
- The City will involve area youth in community beautification and participation in how to rehabilitate the WAC.
- The City will continue to support the use of existing school facilities and resources in the most cost-effective and sustainable manner.

### Step Two: Political Support

- The City will advocate and support the local school district in its effort to increase state support for our schools.
- The City will work with Oakridge School District to seek and secure academic enrichment resources from private, state, and federal resources.
- The City will coordinate meetings with our local, state, and federal elected officials to ensure that the needs of Oakridge School District are known and supported by these individuals.

### Step Three: Local Leadership

- The City Council has directed the city staff to fully cooperate with any viable initiative that the local school district wishes to undertake.
- The City may provide any or all of the following: written support for grant applications; infrastructure support from city services; support for local financing options; and support for remediation of any negative impacts from state education policy.
- The City will seek and support youth involvement in public policy planning and facility improvement plans.

A desired outcome of this process is more after-school and enrichment opportunities for our youth within the next five years. The City expects to see more services, more programs, and more employment opportunities within the next five years as well.

## **City Administration and Internal Improvements**

The City of Oakridge has experienced a serious impact on the credibility and confidence of our local government. Since that crisis, the City Council has drastically reduced the

number of city staff and their hours. The reduction in staff has improved accountability and the responsiveness of services. The City's budget is balanced and is once again building a small reserve to be prepared for unanticipated events. The City Council asked each department to prepare a five-year financial plan for improving services and response time to citizen needs. Each department responded with a detailed plan for investment in critical resources and personnel. The City Council reviewed and analyzed each proposal to determine ways to provide the best service and strategies to allow Oakridge to grow without placing any additional burden upon citizens.

It is the belief of the City Council that we are on our way to restoring confidence, re-building trust, and creating a public-private partnership which takes the talent and strength of our citizens to make Oakridge all that it can be. The City Council will continue to monitor performance and outcomes to ensure that our City Government is characterized by a "can-do" attitude and staffed by dedicated, professional, and committed personnel in making our community a strong rural town with a positive future. In all these matters, financial considerations will dominate decision making to ensure that Oakridge does not over commit or expend resources which may or may not be available.

#### Step One: Physical Facilities

- Move City Hall Administration to the Willamette Activity Center by 2015.
- Initiate renovations to the existing City Hall for police and jail use to be completed by 2019.
- Complete feasibility study of the costs and strategies for making the existing City Hall the Oakridge Justice Center.
- Seek bed space rental agreements with surrounding jurisdictions to provide income to the City for the facility operation.
- Improve the current deficiencies in City Hall to provide functional space for staff and public access.
- Rehab the Willamette Activity Center as follows:
  - Engineering Report completed in September 2010
  - Capital Campaign Plan to be developed 2013-2014
  - Fundraising begins 2014-2015
  - Renovations begin 2016
  - Re-dedication of the WAC 2017
  - Full use and occupancy 2018-2019

#### Step Two: Invest in Law Enforcement

- The Police Department provided a five-year capital improvement plan that the City Council accepted as a reasonable plan for the community.
- The City will add police officers as financially feasible.
- The City will provide resources for equipment, training, and support as financially feasible.

#### Step Three: City Administration

- City Administration provided a five-year capital improvement plan that the City Council accepted as a reasonable plan for the community.

- The City will make some investments in accounting software to fully implement the financial management capabilities of the City.
- The City will add a part-time position to provide back up and support for existing personnel who are currently running at capacity.

#### Step Four: Fire/EMS

- The City Council reviewed the five-year capital improvement plan from the Fire/EMS Department and felt that many of the items were beyond the financial resources of the City.
- The City Council approved re-paving the apron of the Fire Hall in 2013-14.
- The City Council targeted \$25,000 annually for an equipment reserve fund for the department.
- The City will support the departmental effort to secure equipment funds through FEMA and Assistance to Firefighters grant programs.
- The City Council felt that a complete evaluation of the potential to merge districts should be considered in 2014.
- The possibility of forming a special district (ORS Chapter 190) for Fire and EMS should be considered and if viable, a district formation vote should be taken in 2014.
- A serial levy or operating levy should be considered as part of a district formation or as part of a special election after district formation.

#### Step Five: Public Works

- A new municipal well is a high priority and should be complete by 2016.
- A new water tank will be established as part of the new well complete by 2016.
- An Inflow and Infiltration Program for wastewater management shall be complete by 2015
- A public works director should be considered for the 2014-2015 budget based on funds available.
- The City will continue to contract for projects where it can be demonstrated that doing so will save money.
- Additional personnel will be hired as funding becomes available. This department is funded out of receipts, so as the community grows it is expected that additional personnel will be added.

The City of Oakridge will strategically add key personnel for our police protection, improved public services, resource protection, and cost-effective management approaches. The City Council does not expect the number of city personnel to reach the previous (pre-crisis) levels, but rather through contract services and targeted seasonal hires, we expect to be able provide a comparable level of service to historic levels by the end of the planning period.

## **Conclusion**

The City Council reviewed input and numerous outstanding community suggestions. Steps and actions were then selected from the input and community suggestions as the building blocks for the community. These building blocks are the critical steps to attract more residents, employers, and visitors to our community. With additional investment into Oakridge, the community will grow and prosper. Jobs and more jobs are the wheels of progress for Oakridge. Nothing in this chapter is intended to limit city government support or involvement in other activities that are promoted by its citizens. Rather this chapter is designed to provide key milestones for the City Council to assess progress over the next five years.

## **Chapter 5: Capitalization Strategies and Resources**

The City of Oakridge will pursue financial support from federal, state, local, and private foundation resources for specific projects identified within the five-year strategic plan. Each opportunity will be evaluated to determine if the project is a good fit for the funding sources identified. In some cases, city staff will prepare grant applications and in other cases, the City may elect to contract with outside providers to help seek outside funding. While outside funding is absolutely necessary to move projects forward, local matching dollars and in-kind support are absolutely necessary for a successful grant writing effort. In many cases, grant resources identified herein have applications for a wide range of projects and the City will determine which priority project best fits with the grant opportunity and work with that funder to ensure Oakridge requests are fully considered in each funding cycle. While grant resources are critical to helping the community overcome current economic stagnation, it is future economic development that will put Oakridge on a path of economic sustainability. New entrepreneurs who bring their talent, energy, and innovation to Oakridge are the key factors building a diverse and long-term sustainable economy for the community.

City personnel are encouraged to contact funders prior to sending in applications as this will avoid spending energy and resources on applications that may not be competitive under the funding round being considered. It is important that personnel develop relationships with as many funding agencies and foundations as possible. When granted a funding request good communication with funding agencies also ensues to protect and nurture this long-term relationship. Private foundations appreciate keeping abreast of local developments especially if they have invested in these improvements. Most funders want to be a part of a positive project, so celebrating your successes and promoting your accomplishments is critical for all parties involved including citizens, funders, and policy makers.

### **Federal Grant Resources**

The following grant resources represent some key federal resources for economic development, infrastructure, and capacity building for the City of Oakridge. It is not

uncommon for Federal agencies to change names of programs, however in most cases elements of the original grant program are retained in the new incarnations.

### Federal Grant Sources

<b>Grant Identification</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Average Award</b>	<b>Supports</b>
Rural Business Opportunity Grant	USDA Rural Development	\$25,000-50,000	Business Planning
Rural Business Enterprise Grant	USDA Rural Development	\$200,000 - \$250,000	Business Implementation
Economic Development Assistance	Economic Development Admin.	\$50,000 - \$1,000,000	Job Creation, infrastructure, planning
Rural Community Development Initiative	USDA Rural Development	\$50,000 - \$300,000	Housing, Technical Assistance
SAFER Grants	Dept. of Homeland Security	\$50,000 - \$100,000	Fire Personnel Training
Rural Capacity Building for Community Development and Affordable Housing Grant Program	Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$100,000 – 1,500,000	Affordable housing development
Rural Housing Preservation Grant	USDA Rural Development	\$50,000 - \$100,000	Low/Moderate Income housing rehabilitation
Community Connect Program	USDA Rural Development	\$250,000 - \$1,500,000	Community Oriented Broadband service
Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program	Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$500,000 - \$1,500,000	Neighborhood transformation-housing
TIGER Grants –National Infrastructure	US Department of Transportation	\$1,000,000 - \$10,000,000	Road and Street improvements
COPS - Community Policing Development	US Department of Justice Office of Community Policing	\$100,000 - \$1,000,00	Police Personnel
Micro-grants for Law Enforcement	US Department of Justice Office of Community Policing	\$25,000 - \$250,000	Police Equipment
Law Enforcement: National Training and Technical Assistance Grant Program	US Department of Justice	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Training Support
Officer Safety and Wellness Initiative - VALOR Grant Program	US Department of Justice	\$100,000 - \$500,000	Training Support
Community-Based Violence Prevention	US Dept. of Justice Office of Juvenile	\$150,000 - \$500,000	Demonstration Projects



Demonstration Grant Program	Justice and Delinquency Prevention		
<i>Justice and Mental Health Collaboration grant</i>	Bureau of Justice Administration	\$75,000 - \$250,000	Grant to coordinate law enforcement with mental health services
Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement Grant Program	Dept. of Health and Human Services	\$75,000 - \$1,000,000	Improve rural health care delivery systems
Sparks! Ignition Grants for Libraries and Museums <i>program</i>	Institute for Museum and Library Services	\$10,000 - \$25,000	Organizational development
Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention Program - Interprofessional Collaborative Practice <i>grant program</i>	Dept. of Health and Human Services	\$75,000 - \$1,000,000	Improve rural health care delivery systems
<i>Small Community Air Service Development grant program.</i>	USDOT Office of Aviation Analysis	\$50,000 – \$250,000	Airport Improvement funds
<i>Rural Jobs Innovation Accelerator Challenge grant program.</i>	Commerce – Economic Development Admin	\$50,000 - \$500,000	Local solutions to job creation in rural communities

### State Grant Resources

The State of Oregon offers a wide range of financial support in the form of specific grants tied to a single state agency and generally for a common purpose. Due to the City of Oakridge’s current economic condition the City is eligible for a large number of these grants. In many cases grants and loans are provided from the same agency and the applicant may be directed to the loan program rather than the grant program for factors determined by the state personnel. No single grant is likely to complete an entire project, so multiple grants and a local investment is often the typical format of a project budget.

#### State of Oregon Grant Support

<b>Grant Identification</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Average Award</b>	<b>Supports</b>
Preserving Oregon Grant Program	Parks and Recreation Dept.	\$5,000 - \$20,000	Rehabilitation of Historical Buildings
<i>Certified Local Government grant program</i>	Parks and Recreation Dept.	\$5,000 - \$20,000	Historic Preservation
Oregon Wood Energy Cluster Pilot Project	Energy Department	\$10,000 – \$75,000	Project Development
Local Government Grants	Parks and Recreation Department	-Small Grants – projects with a maximum \$75,000	Park Development

		grant request. Up to fifteen percent (15%) of funds are available for these projects. -Large Grant Requests - Other than for land acquisitions, projects with a maximum \$750,000 grant request. A Project Sponsor may request up to \$1,000,000 for land acquisition projects. -Small Community Planning Grants – Maximum awards for planning grants will be \$40,000.	
Land and Water Conservation Grants	Parks and Recreation Dept.	\$10,000 - \$200,000	Land purchase funds
Recreational Trails Fund	Parks and Recreation Dept.	\$15,000- \$200,000	Trail development
<b>Community Development Block Grants</b> are available to non-entitlement cities and counties for a variety of community facilities, public works projects, housing rehabilitation, services to microenterprise and other businesses where the proposed project will primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. <b>Special Public Works Funds</b> are designed for the construction and/or improvement of infrastructure needed to support industrial, manufacturing and certain types of commercial development.	Business Oregon	Varies depending upon project	Economic Development –  Community Development
<b>Community Development Block Grants</b> available to non-entitlement cities and counties for a variety of community facilities, public works projects, housing rehabilitation, services to microenterprise and other businesses where the proposed project will primarily benefit low-	Business Oregon	Varies depending upon project	Water / Wastewater

<p>and moderate-income persons.</p> <p><b>The Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund</b> provides low-cost financing for construction and/or improvements of public and private water systems.</p> <p><b>Special Public Works Funds</b> provide funding for construction and/or improvement of infrastructure needed to support industrial, manufacturing and certain types of commercial development.</p> <p><b>Water/Wastewater Financing</b> is available for construction and/or improvement of water and wastewater systems to meet state and federal standards.</p>			
<p><b>Main Street Programs</b></p> <p><b>Exploring Downtown</b> is for those communities that demonstrate an interest in revitalizing their downtowns and want to learn more about the Main Street Approach®. Interested communities may join at anytime by submitting a letter of intent and completing a brief community assessment survey.</p> <p><b>Transforming Downtown</b> is for communities who are committed to downtown revitalization using the Main Street Approach® but need technical assistance to take them to the next level. Application rounds are held as resources permit.</p> <p><b>Performing Main Street</b> is for those communities who were previously certified National Main Street cities and those communities with advanced downtown programs following the Main Street Approach®. Application rounds are held as resources permit.</p>	<p>Parks and Recreation Dept.</p>	<p>Based on funds available</p>	<p>Historic Downtown Improvements</p>

## Private Foundations

Oregon is blessed to have a wide range of private foundations that fund many different public projects and initiatives. Oakridge is eligible for a majority of private foundation support except where a foundation is limited in its geographic focus. Often private foundations sponsor periodic trainings and information sharing sessions around the state. It would be in the City of Oakridge’s interest to have staff, council, or volunteers participate in these sessions as this brings Oakridge to the forefront of the foundation’s attention and sets the stage for preparing high quality competitive applications to support projects.

It is always beneficial to “pitch” your project to the program officer with the major foundation prior to considering submitting an application, as this will alert a likely reviewer of your project ahead of time. This also helps make sure you are addressing the key elements that are of interest to the foundation. Reviewing past funding patterns of the foundation through their annual reports will highlight what areas the foundation trustees are most interested in funding and how much you may ask for within the funding patterns of the foundation. Most importantly persistence pays off. If you don’t secure the needed resources on the first attempt, make sure you re-submit your grant application again when eligible with the feedback you have received from the program staff.

### Private Foundation Grant Support

<b>Grant Identification</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Avg Award</b>	<b>Supports</b>
Grant Opportunity from Bikes Belong	Foundation	\$10,000 - \$50,000	Trail Development
Citizens' Institute on Rural Design Grant Program	Foundation	\$2,000-\$5,000	Technical Assistance
Ford Family Foundation	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$300,000	Community Gathering Places, +
Oregon Community Foundation	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$75,000	Community Gathering Places, +
Meyer Memorial Trust	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$300,000	Community Gathering Places, +
Collins Foundation	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$75,000	Community Gathering Places, +
M.J. Murdock Trust	Foundation	\$50,000 - \$200,000	Community Gathering Places, Historic preservation, +
Paul G. Allen Trust	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$1,000,000	Community Gathering Places, +
Juan Young Trust	Foundation	\$5,000 -	Youth

		\$15,000	Services and Resources
Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation- Seven Feathers	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$40,000	Community Gathering Places, +
René Bloch Foundation	Foundation	\$5,000-\$8,000	Community Support
The Braemar Charitable Trust at <a href="http://www.trustmanagementservices.net">www.trustmanagementservices.net</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
The Irwin Foundation at <a href="http://www.theirwinfoundation.org">http://www.theirwinfoundation.org</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
The Kinsman Foundation at <a href="http://www.kinsmanfoundation.org">www.kinsmanfoundation.org</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
The Lazar Foundation at <a href="http://www.lazarfoundation.org">www.lazarfoundation.org</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation at <a href="http://www.millerfound.org">www.millerfound.org</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
Robert D. & Marcia H. Randall Charitable Trust at <a href="mailto:brenda.randall@randallgroup.com">brenda.randall@randallgroup.com</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
John & Linda Shelk Foundation	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
Spirit Mountain Community Fund at <a href="http://www.thecommunityfund.com">www.thecommunityfund.com</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
The Swigert Foundation at <a href="mailto:robyn.brewer@unionbank">robyn.brewer@unionbank</a> .	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
<a href="http://www.swindellstrust.org/">http://www.swindellstrust.org/</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
Herbert A. Templeton Foundation at <a href="mailto:h templetonfoundation@gmail.com">h templetonfoundation@gmail.com</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust <a href="mailto:Tuckertrust@stoel.com">Tuckertrust@stoel.com</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
Wessinger Foundation at <a href="http://www.gosw.org/sites/wessinger">www.gosw.org/sites/wessinger</a>	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support
The Autzen Foundation	Foundation	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Community Support