VISIT BEND BUSINESS & MARKETING PLAN FY2025

[TEXT-ONLY]

Thank you for taking the time to view Visit Bend's annual business plan. Operating under a contract as the Destination Management and Marketing Organization for the City of Bend, Visit Bend is entrusted with leveraging a portion of room tax funds to make our community a better place for everyone. We're tasked with crafting engaging and thoughtful campaigns, facilitating grants that nurture Bend's tourism infrastructure and culture, conducting vital research, and managing a welcoming visitor center. Through these initiatives, Visit Bend maximizes revenue for the City's vital services, taking care of the places that take care of us while prioritizing positive impacts on the industry and the community.

1: ACKNOWLEDGING HISTORY

While Bend is breathtakingly beautiful, our history isn't as pretty. The indigenous tribes of this region fished, hunted, and recreated on these lands for generations before any of us donned skis or dropped a kayak in the Deschutes.

This history is not lost on us, and we recognize we're inhabiting and recreating on the traditional lands of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Wascoes, and Paiutes. We are working to acknowledge their experiences and their relationship to this land.

2: INTRODUCTION

Visit Bend contributes to a vibrant community through initiatives in destination management and marketing that focus on the economic, social, and environmental health of the town and its environment.

Driven by the transformational power of human relationships, the inclusion of diverse voices, and a desire to preserve the land for which we are all stewards, Visit Bend is a local and national catalyst for tourism management with a positive impact.

In a world consumed by possessions rather than experiences, the Visit Bend team strives to amplify the voices of those working toward a welcoming and balanced Bend, reinvesting in our community for future generations while maximizing room tax revenue for a thriving city government

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COMMUNITY VOICE

Visit Bend aims to be a leader in destination management globally and to protect what makes Bend a world-class destination: the environment, community, and the visitor experience.

— Todd Montgomery, Board Chair

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 strive to nurture a safe and supportive community that is inclusive and welcoming.

Environmental

We partner with community organizations and actively work toward environmental responsibility and sustainability.

COMMUNITY VOICE

"The Bend Sustainability Fund support helps ensure Miller's Landing Park will be accessible to all river users for decades to come. Improvements at Miller's Landing Park balance both access and habitat restoration, exemplifying the value that our community places on accessible recreation and the natural environment. The Bend Sustainability Fund helped BPRD bring our community's values to life."

— Rachel Colton, Park Planner, Bend Park & Recreation District

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3: SUCCESSES FROM FISCAL YEAR 2024

In FY24, Visit Bend held steady on its commitment to long-term sustainability as a thriving destination. With room taxes and occupancy rates stabilizing—and even declining due to reduced marketing spending and factors like weather—the team continued to focus on balanced, sustainable destination management. Visit Bend launched a new website, providing a modern user interface and content spotlighting responsible tourism efforts and industry partners. The Bend Sustainability Fund granted nearly $700,000 to local projects, improving accessibility and overall experience for locals and residents. The Bend Cultural Tourism Fund granted $400,000 to cultural events and organizations. Visit Bend became the first official destination partner with Leave No Trace and was named as Leave No Trace's Destination Partner of the Year. These efforts will positively impact our community for years to come and are just a few examples of Visit Bend's successes in FY24.

COMMUNITY VOICE

"Since its inception, the Bend Sustainability Fund has supported several US Forest Service partner organizations with grants for their work on the Deschutes National Forest. Forest visitors are enjoying improved signage and access for winter trail networks, riverside restoration projects, and new mountain bike and hiking trail construction. This support from Visit Bend's programs helps to protect our forests and ensure access for diverse user groups."

— Lisa Machnik, PhD, Recreation, Heritage, Lands and Partnerships Staff Officer, Forest Service, Deschutes National Forest

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MARKETING

In FY24, emerging from a pandemic-related break in destination marketing efforts, Visit Bend sought to re-balance positive economic, social, and environmental responsibilities. Marketing strategy infused earlier stages of the customer journey to once again ensure Bend was top of mind as a vacation destination in the Pacific Northwest.

As part of that approach, Visit Bend produced and launched a series of twelve season-specific TV commercials delivered digitally to potential visitors in Portland, Seattle, and other areas of the Pacific Northwest. Visit Bend's successful marketing programs incorporated more diverse content creators and increased the volume of responsible and inclusive content.

Based on data related to visitor sentiment, Bend remains one of the most highly-indexed communities in the world, with a positive reputation among visitors and residents alike. These metrics are based on billions of conversations happening around the web and analyzed to create this index.

High-level metrics from FY24

- Visit Bend's new website engagement time per session is up 32.09% year over year, and the engagement rate per session is up 17.9%. The primary drivers of traffic include organic search, direct, and social/referral.
- Organic search click-through rate is up 36% year over year, and Visit Bend's organic search average position has increased 119%.
- According to an audit by accessiBe, a leading web accessibility company, Visit Bend's website accessibility score is in the top 3% of accessible websites globally.
- At the time of publication, Visit Bend had produced more than 60 video pieces highlighting local businesses, places, and people, well above our targeted content creation goals.
- Visit Bend's influencer marketing campaign has seen a nearly 13,000% return on investment. With just over $85,000 spent, the media value is estimated at more than $11,400,000.

COMMUNITY VOICE

"For the past decade, visitors and residents alike have experienced memorable and top-quality performances at the iconic Tower Theatre due to the crucial support of both the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund and the Bend Sustainability Fund. We join and applaud Visit Bend in its ongoing efforts to advance the region as a hub of creativity and a destination for arts enthusiasts. We have seen firsthand how Visit Bend's support pioneers innovation, develops relationships, and sustains our cultural ecosystem. They are essential leaders and influencers of Bend's future. We are honored to call them partners."

—Ray Solley, Executive Director, Tower Theatre Foundation

BEND SUSTAINABILITY FUND

During FY24, the Bend Sustainability Fund (BSF) invested $691,672 into eight projects and celebrated the completion of six. Since its inception, BSF has awarded $2,980,000 to 25 projects creating sustainable experiences in and around Bend.

The $400,000 Bend Sustainability Fund grant to Petrich Properties for The Catalyst project has been a catalyst of its own, spurring additional investment in the Bend Central District, which will eventually house City of Bend offices and be connected to Downtown Bend via the Hawthorne Crossing pedestrian bridge. The Catalyst community gathering space—which is strongly supported by Bend Central District business owners, urban planning nonprofits, and the City—will be the new home of Dogwood Cocktail Cabin and a food cart pod. The Catalyst project is one example of how Visit Bend is reinvesting Transient Room Tax (TRT) to unify diverse members of the community working toward a common goal.

See all of the Bend Sustainability Fund projects.

COMMUNITY VOICE

"Through the Catalyst Project, supported by the Bend Sustainability Fund, we are not only establishing a vibrant community hub at the restored Pine Shed, but also driving significant changes in the Bend Central District. The transformation of the Pine Shed into the artistically-reimagined home of local icon Dogwood represents a notable development, bringing Dogwood's creative flair to the BCD and indicating a deliberate shift of a downtown establishment to the emerging Bend Central District. The BSF's funding helped facilitate additional investments to fund the Hawthorne Street Crossing and other efforts to revitalize 2nd Street and Franklin Avenue streetscapes."

—Kurt Alexander, The Catalyst

BEND CULTURAL TOURISM FUND

During FY24, the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund (BCTF) invested $400,000 in 15 cultural events and projects, helping local organizations leverage marketing resources to attract more cultural tourists during the off-season and enhancing arts and culture offerings in Bend. The program started awarding grants in 2015 and historically funds between $200,000 and $400,000 per year. This round of awards pushed the total BCTF funding over the $2 million mark, infusing local organizations with $2,032,105 in total.

See all of the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund projects.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Visit Bend invested $85,500 into seven organizations in FY24, providing substantial financial support to organizations working to enhance Bend's future as a sustainable, economically vibrant, livable, and inclusive destination.

COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

In the last year, Visit Bend's efforts have moved community sentiment in a positive direction, marking a modest but meaningful 2.5% increase in the Community Sentiment Index, thanks to insights from our partnership with the Oregon State University Sustainable Tourism Lab. This progress, highlighting enhanced community awareness of tourism's contributions, signals a step in the right direction. This is the beginning of a longer journey toward fully aligning tourism with our community's well-being, underscoring our continued commitment to meaningful improvements and open dialogue.

COMMUNITY VOICE

"Strategic partnerships like COLW's and Visit Bend's are a powerful force for good in our community. By working together to fund and elevate key projects and opportunities that help our region grow well and with intention, these joint efforts uplift and sustain what makes this place so special for locals and visitors alike."

—Corie Harlan, Cities and Towns Program Director, Central Oregon LandWatch

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ECONOMIC IMPACT

Travel spending in Bend increased from $382.2 million in calendar year 2022 to $383.4 million in 2023.

Tax receipts generated by travel spending increased to $25.7 million, up from $25.4 million in 2022.

Direct travel-generated employment grew to 3,470 jobs, a 10.5% increase over 2022.

Direct travel-generated earnings increased to $117.8 million, a gain of 16.0% compared to 2022.

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

Visit Bend is a small but mighty group of passionate people (and dogs) who still get goosebumps as they glimpse the Cascades peeking out over the high desert. Humbly behind the scenes but deeply networked, the Visit Bend group is a curious, quiet, steady force to be reckoned with. We've chosen a new lane in the tourism sector—a new "why" that is less about self-promotion and more "let's do this because it's the right thing"—when it comes to supporting the place we call home. Visit Bend strives to tell the story of improving a destination and managing the visitor experience in ways that are meaningful to residents and visitors. We do this through research, relationships, and strategic communications that both disrupt and influence how people think about the industry. Considering all humans are visitors on these lands, Visit Bend values a bigger picture of health for the community. We believe if you love Bend, you might also love visitors, since we are all travelers at heart.

SEEKING BALANCE

Economy:

Tax revenue

Consumer spending

Wages earned

People:

Equity + Accessibility

Resident sentiment

Guest satisfaction

Place:

Environmental stewardship

Responsible recreation

Thriving spaces

A Balanced Bend approach exemplifies the ideal model for regenerative tourism that intertwines economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and social well-being to foster a cycle of sustainable growth and investment. Economic impact, driven by visitors contributing through transient room taxes, sets the foundation for this cycle, enabling Visit Bend to support our social fabric and invest in environmental conservation.

This important funding source from our visitors not only empowers the City with greater flexibility in spending through the general fund, but also supports our natural spaces, community initiatives, and infrastructure that enriches Bend for residents and visitors. As we nurture our environment and community, we cultivate a more compelling destination, thus attracting further visitation and continuing this regenerative cycle. A Balanced Bend not only sustains, but regenerates and ensures a thriving community that benefits visitors, residents, and the world around us.

Visit Bend's Adaptability in Serving the Community

Over the years, Visit Bend's adaptable, community-oriented, and visionary team has successfully shifted resources and priorities to meet the needs of the industry and city. The City's general fund receives nearly 65% of all room taxes generated. Visit Bend's skilled team is uniquely qualified to leverage the remaining 35% of restricted funds to maximize returns for a thriving community. Coming out of the recession in 2010, Visit Bend was tasked with rebuilding our economy. As Bend became vibrant again, tourism led the economic recovery charge with the launch of one of the first TRT-funded community arts and culture grant programs, the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund. In response to community concerns in 2017, Visit Bend launched several stewardship programs including the Bend Pledge and the Visit Like a Local program. While those two programs have since sunsetted, they introduced a more balanced approach to Visit Bend's work. In 2021, Visit Bend hired a Sustainability Director and appropriated a significant portion of its budget to environmental and social efforts, including the Bend Sustainability Fund and Strategic Partnership programs.

5: MARKETING STRATEGY

[ECONOMY]

Visit Bend has evolved to focus on a broader scope of work that ultimately benefits all of us as we strive for a balanced Bend.

There is no doubt visitors contribute in many ways to making Bend better for all, and we don't have to look much further than their economic impact. When visitors stay in a hotel or short-term rental, they pay an overnight tax that becomes unrestricted funding for the City of Bend. This past year, those unrestricted dollars supported police and fire, roads and other infrastructure, and core services provided by the City.

This economic activity—along with the goal to maximize returns to the city's general fund—drives the economic portion of Bend's sustainability model. A strong visitor economy is critical to the city's health and vibrancy, which is buoyed by Visit Bend's grant programs and strategic partnerships. This year's evolved marketing strategy keeps these objectives in mind as we strive to attract new guests while ensuring Bend remains top-of-mind for repeat visitors.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Maintain public safety service levels to keep pace with increasing calls and expanding range of service demand

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In FY25, Visit Bend's marketing team will build upon its new This is Bend campaign and offer more in-depth targeting and measurement tools. In January 2024, Visit Bend launched a new industry-leading website designed to deliver a much-improved visitor experience and connect users to the community of Bend. The new website improves the visibility of industry partners and serves as an integral part of Visit Bend's strategy in FY25. Harnessing the power of generative AI and advanced datasets, Visit Bend's marketing efforts will be more optimized than ever, re-establishing the organization as a leader in this space.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Develop and implement a language access policy and program

To have a larger impact with FY25's proposed budget, Visit Bend will focus most of its paid marketing efforts on markets in Portland and Seattle. This will also curtail the carbon footprint required for travel to Bend. Over the next year, the team will evaluate additional opportunities to target travelers seeking a new experience.

Despite weather-driven tourism declines in FY24, travel remains in high demand among consumers nationwide. Recent data shows 35% of Americans intend to travel more in 2024 than in 2023, with another 47% saying they plan to travel the same amount. Coastal states, including

Oregon, rank as the most desirable to visit in the coming year, with 49% of respondents wanting to visit the PNW. 60% of respondents expecting to travel domestically in the coming year seek a mountain and forest experience. These data points show Bend is well-positioned to attract visitors in FY25.

This approach to our messaging and demographic targeting—including when and to whom our messaging is served—will ensure a balanced approach to courting new and returning visitors.

PRIMARY MARKETING GOALS + ACTION ITEMS

1. Elevate and diversify Visit Bend's marketing and content strategy, resulting in increased TRT collections and reinvestment into our community.
    a. Implement a comprehensive digital-first marketing strategy tailored to families, active adventurers, and empty nesters. Expand partnerships with influencers and innovative content platforms that resonate with key demographics and underrepresented communities.
    b. Enhance inclusivity in marketing efforts by showcasing diverse experiences and accessible activities in Bend, working closely with organizations like Oregon Adaptive Sports and new partners in the DEIB space to ensure representation of marginalized communities and individuals experiencing disabilities.
2. Strengthen Bend's tourism sentiment ratings.
    a. Leverage new data analytics tools, including sentiment analysis and web-tracking, to ensure all messaging reflects Bend's unique outdoor and cultural offerings and underscores the benefits of tourism.
    b. Utilize strategic partnerships with local businesses, cultural entities, and environmental organizations to create equitable marketing assets and responsible, educational messaging that positions Bend as a welcoming destination for all visitors.
3. Maximize partnerships, research, and strategic investments to enhance Bend's economic and social impact.
    a. Redistribute budget allocations to prioritize high-impact marketing investments, focusing on markets in Portland and Seattle while exploring other market opportunities identified through updated economic impact research.
    b. Develop and implement innovative approaches to content delivery to inspire travel to Bend, ensuring our marketing efforts are inclusive, accessible, and appealing to a broad audience base.

6: SOCIAL IMPACT STRATEGY

[PEOPLE]

Visit Bend is committed to ensuring every person feels valued and accepted, whether they're a first-time visitor, a lifelong resident, or someone new to town. It is through this lens that we aim to meet the evolving needs of the community and build connections between visitors, community members, and tourism partners, to foster a welcoming and inclusive Bend.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Strategically invest in the Core Area to spur private development

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EQUITY + ACCESSIBILITY

In FY25, Visit Bend will deepen its commitment to making Bend a more equitable and accessible destination for all. Recognizing that our community's richness lies in how we treat one another, we will champion accessibility and inclusivity within Bend's tourism ecosystem.

Throughout FY24, we engaged in meaningful dialogues with state and regional partners, including DMOs, lodging partners, elected officials, tour providers, and educational institutions. These conversations sought to help us understand the landscape of our tourism sector and to identify ways we can make Bend even more welcoming and accessible.

Building on these conversations, Visit Bend has strengthened partnerships with organizations like Oregon Adaptive Sports and Wheel the World. Our goal is to remove barriers to accessibility so everyone can experience the beauty and adventure our area offers.

As we move forward, our partnerships and projects are guided by a steadfast dedication to making Bend a model of inclusive tourism. We measure our success not just by the reach of our DEIB training programs among staff and industry partners, but by tangible improvements in accessibility for individuals experiencing disabilities and for historically marginalized communities. Through ongoing collaboration, advocacy, and action, we are shaping a future for Bend that welcomes everyone.

COMMUNITY VOICE

"Oregon Adaptive Sports envisions a day when every person with a disability has access to the benefits of outdoor recreation. By combining OAS's expertise in adaptive sports with Visit Bend's commitment to inclusive and sustainable outdoor recreation, this collaboration directly results in expanded access to the outdoors for Central Oregon residents and visitors with disabilities. The psychological benefits of outdoor recreation are well documented, and our partnership with Visit Bend helps ensure individuals with disabilities can experience the natural beauty and exhilarating adventures Bend has to offer."

—Pat Addabbo, Executive Director

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

The Visit Bend Strategic Partnership program is designed to identify and address areas of critical concern for Bend, with a focus on environmental responsibility, economic vibrancy, livability, and inclusivity. Through meaningful financial investments and collaborations with local and national organizations, this program aims to make a positive and lasting impact on the community.

Learn more about our Strategic Partners here:
https://industry.visitbend.com/our-commitment-to-bend/

THREE KEY AREAS OF FUNDING

Climate change and sustainability

Partners include:

- CarbonHero
- Central Oregon LandWatch
- The Conservation Alliance
- Leave No Trace

Access and inclusion

Partners include:

- Deschutes Trails Coalition
- Oregon Adaptive Sports

Tribally-led initiatives

Partners include:

- Warm Springs Community Action Team (WSCAT)

BEND CULTURAL TOURISM FUND

Without cultural events and the people who make them happen, Bend wouldn't have the robust and captivating arts and culture scene it's known for across Oregon. That's the value of the BCTF, a grant program operated by Visit Bend and funded through transient room tax dollars.

With a focus on inclusive events that diversify Bend's cultural landscape, the BCTF was one of the first DMO-operated arts and culture grant programs in the state. From musical productions to art exhibits to film festivals and more, the BCTF supports cultural opportunities that draw visitors to Bend, while also providing enriching programming for residents.

COMMUNITY VOICES

“Visit Bend’s BCTF is one of the only grant programs uplifting the arts in ways that will strengthen our economy and culture. We've witnessed this firsthand as a grantee the past two years for our budding theater space."

—John Kish, The Greenhouse Cabaret

COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

In FY25, Visit Bend remains committed to nurturing a harmonious relationship between our community and the tourism sector, placing resident sentiment at the heart of our strategy. The recent uplift in the Community Sentiment Index, facilitated by our collaboration with the Oregon State University Sustainable Tourism Lab, underscores the positive impact of our initiatives. This data-driven approach has illuminated the path for strategic investments and community engagement efforts like the Bend Sustainability Fund that align with our residents' values. These efforts reflect our dedication to ensuring tourism contributes positively and sustainably to Bend's livability and way of life.

Moving forward, Visit Bend will foster deeper connections with our community, leveraging feedback to refine our tourism development strategies to be more inclusive and regenerative. We are committed to transforming tourism into a force for good—a catalyst for economic growth that enhances the quality of life for all Bend residents. By continuing to invest in meaningful projects and dialogue, we aim to build a future where tourism benefits everyone, affirming our vision of Bend as a sustainable, vibrant, and welcoming destination.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Develop new policies to support sustainable development, including policies that are responsive to community concerns.

PRIMARY SOCIAL IMPACT GOALS + ACTION ITEMS

1. Promote equity and accessibility in Bend’s tourism ecosystem
    a. Partner with local organizations representing marginalized communities and people experiencing disabilities to champion projects that improve accessibility and promote equity in tourism-related facilities and experiences.
    b. Expand partnerships with organizations like Oregon Adaptive Sports and Wheel the World, focusing on enhancing physical accessibility across Bend’s tourism attractions and facilities.
2. Enhance resident sentiment and engagement

a. Launch community engagement initiatives, including forums and campaigns, to discuss the outcomes of the carrying capacity study. Develop strategies for balancing tourism growth, livability, and sustainability.
b. Invest in community projects through the Bend Sustainability Fund and the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund to better support our community, economy, and environment.

3. Boost guest satisfaction through thoughtful destination management
    a. Work with land managers and local nonprofits to share messaging around trail inventory, maintenance, and under-utilized outdoor spaces, all with the goal of improving user experience and protecting our natural attractions.
    b. Engage with and educate visitors in the Bend Visitor Center, which continues to offer a welcoming space for travelers and residents alike to access information, local area permits and resources, as well as a small number of Bend retail items featuring local makers.

7: ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

[PLACE]

Visit Bend's environmental strategy intertwines with our two other pillars of sustainability: economic and social. Our community depends on all three, and it's vital to balance them.

The foundation of a sustainable and thriving destination is built on its underlying resources. For Bend, these include open spaces, rivers and trails, mountains, lakes, and green spaces. It's crucial to nurture, respect, and invest in these resources. To create a sustainable destination, we must work collaboratively with a diverse group of partners, keeping a big-picture view and making meaningful investments in the organizations and individuals equipped to tackle the challenges our growing community faces.

Visit Bend is proud to have achieved carbon-neutral certification in FY24, through an investment in the Zumwalt Prairie Carbon Collaborative. We were also honored to be invited to join a ten-destination cohort assembled by Destination Think, which will collaborate over the next three years to enhance community health environmentally, socially, and economically. Joining with destinations like Copenhagen, Denmark, and Queenstown, New Zealand, Visit Bend will work to advance stewardship and global sustainability through travel. Visit Bend also partnered with Destination Think to produce a six-episode series for the Travel Beyond podcast.

Moving into FY25, we will continue to reinvest TRT dollars into the places and spaces that create sustainable experiences in our community through the Bend Sustainability Fund. This model of regenerative tourism directly links visitor generated tax dollars to the underlying assets that make Bend a premier destination.

We will also continue to fund partners who help us achieve our environmental goals through our Strategic Partnership Program.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Plan and build facilities to meet the needs of a growing city with a lens of sustainability and a reduced carbon footprint

Visit Bend is working to develop educational tools, share resources, and encourage thoughtful behavior for all who spend time in and around Bend. Visit Bend is proud to be a certified CarbonNeutral® organization and Leave No Trace partner, setting a positive example within the industry and community.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

Integrate new greenhouse gas reduction strategies to achieve the City's climate action goals.

PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS + ACTION ITEMS

1. Enhance environmental resilience and sustainability.
    a. Expand initiatives to mitigate the impacts of climate change through regenerative tourism practices. This includes recertifying as a CarbonNeutral® organization and supporting projects that ensure Bend remains a vibrant year-round destination.
    b. Collaborate with Destination Think peers, strategic partners, and other local organizations on educational content around responsible recreation and climate resilience strategies. Amplify these efforts through Visit Bend's marketing channels to raise awareness around sustainable tourism and environmental stewardship.
2. Promote engagement in outdoor recreation, education, conservation efforts to all who spend time in Bend.
    a. Deepen partnerships with organizations like Oregon Adaptive Sports and Wheel the World to enhance accessibility to Bend's natural areas for individuals experiencing disabilities. This includes promoting accessible outdoor recreation and ensuring marketing materials reflect this commitment.
    b. Partner with local conservation, environmental, and indigenous organizations to foster a culture of shared responsibility for protecting Bend's natural resources.
3. Support and partner with organizations working to find solutions to the challenges facing Bend as a sustainable destination.
    a. Continue to grow and strengthen our Strategic Partnership Program. Deepen relationships with land managers, Bend Parks and Recreation, and the City of Bend to support their work, amplify shared messaging, and encourage responsible recreation on our public lands.

b. Reinvest a minimum of 15% of Visit Bend's budget into tourism-related facilities through the Bend Sustainability Fund, benefiting all those who spend time in Bend and helping to ensure a long-term sustainable destination.

8: LOOKING FORWARD

Visit Bend flourishes on the cutting edge of what it means to be a destination management organization. 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 lodging tax revenue will always be a measure of our success, it's not the only one.

We strive to be more than numbers on a tally sheet of tourism revenue. We're deeply invested in the long-term success of our destination, industry, and community. We love Bend from the depths of our souls to the soles of our hiking boots. This passion drives everything we do.

Our team is committed to serving the needs of Bend's people and places within the guardrails of local and state statutes. By changing the status quo and creating a truly sustainable destination, we know our community will prosper.

Shaping Bend's future is a job for everyone. We will lean on partners and experts in climate resilience, social equity, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship to help make Bend the best version of itself. We strive for a Bend future that balances short-term desires with long-term priorities.

Bend's strength is rooted in its people, and the Visit Bend team is no different. We're committed to tending the top-notch team we've assembled. From enhanced employee benefits to valuing each member's contributions, we will retain and reward the best and brightest talent.

While Bend has boomed beyond its roots as a sleepy timber town, one thing has stayed constant: Our community's desire to protect, respect, and enjoy this place safely and sustainably. Community members and industry leaders may not always agree on the best way forward, but we're unified by our deep love of Bend.

The Visit Bend team vows to use our time, talent, and resources to support a future for Bend that is sustainable, economically vibrant, livable, and inclusive.

9: 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 FY25

Visit Bend and the City of Bend's finance department forecast flat year-over-year Transient Room Tax collections, based on the current fiscal year's collections to-date and forecasted collections for the remaining months of current year. This year's budget balances needs across all three pillars of the organization's work.

In FY25, the City of Bend anticipates total Transient Room Tax (TRT) collections of $14,358,364. The portion allocated under contract to Visit Bend is to be $4,981,204 which will be reinvested in accordance with Oregon state statute and Bend city code into tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities. The remainder of the collections are allocated to the City's general fund and police + fire. Total revenue for the organization, which also includes advertising sales, retail sales, and interest income totals $5,070,000.

As a not-for-profit organization, Visit Bend operates its profit and loss (P+L) budget on a break-even basis. In FY25, Visit Bend is budgeting $4,971,122 of expenses, with a surplus of $98`,878, which represents funds needed for visitor guide printing.

- $373,500 to the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund
- 747,200 to the Bend Sustainability Fund
- $2,005,174 to Marketing + Visitor Development
- $311,892 to General and Administrative
- $1,493,356 to Personnel

	Year to Year Comparison		Variance	
REVENUE	**FY25**	**FY24**	**$**	**%**
City Funding - Current Year	4,981,200	5,111,974	(130,774)	-3%
Retail Sales	78,000	85,200	(7,200)	-8%
Advertising	4,800	10,800	(6,000)	-56%
Interest Income	6,000	8,400	(2,400)	-29%
Total Revenue	**5,070,000**	**5,216,374**	**(146,374)**	**-3%**
EXPENSES	**FY25**	**FY24**	**$**	**%**
Personnel	1,493,356	1,471,824	21,532	1%
Bend Cultural Tourism Fund	373,500	383,400	(9,900)	-3%
Bend Sustainability Fund	747,200	766,800	(19,600)	-3%
Marketing + Visitor Development	2,045,174	2,291,834	(246,660)	-11%
Overhead Expenses	311,892	302,400	9,492	3%
Total Expenses	**4,971,122**	**5,216,258**	**(245,136)**	**-5%**
NET INCOME (LOSS)	**98,878**	**116**	**98,762**	

TRANSIENT ROOM TAX COLLECTIONS

Transient Room Tax (TRT) 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, TRT 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 TRT of 10.4% 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% is reinvested into the promotion of tourism and tourism-related facilities under a contract with Visit Bend. The remaining 65% is allocated to the city's general fund and police + fire. Transient room tax collections make up nearly 14% of the city's general fund, with about 85% going to police + fire, 10% to streets, and 5% to other core services. In FY25, visitors will contribute nearly $10 million to the City of Bend's general fund through taxes paid on their stays.

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.