# Ashland Comprehensive Plan

Planning Commission and City Council Joint Workshop July 9, 2025



## Meeting Agenda

- 01. Meet Our Team
- 02. Project Scope + Schedule Overview
- 03. Comprehensive Planning 101
- 04. Existing Conditions
- 05. Public Input Results
- 06. What's Next?





### 01. Meet Our Team

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## 01. Meet Our Team

## Meet Our Team

















## Meet Our Team

- Midwest + Denver based landscape architecture, urban design and planning firm
- Experts in community engagement, comprehensive plans, and land use planning
- Client focused and stakeholder driven





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## 02. Project Scope + Schedule Overview

## **Project Scope**



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## **Project Schedule**

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Мау	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	2024	2024	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2026	2026	2026
PHASE 1: PROJECT RESEARCH + ANALYSIS																	
1.1 Project Pre-Kick-Off Meeting with City Staff (virtual)		Dec	16											_			
1.2 Public Outreach Plan														_			
1.3 Kick-Off Meeting with Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (AC #1) (in-person)				January 2	28									_			
1.4 Data Gathering and Existing Conditions Analysis																	
1.5 Project Branding																	
1.6 Project Website Launch																	
1.7 Existing Conditions Analysis Review Meeting with Advisory Committee (AC #2) (in-person)													e V	ve	ar	er	ier
														+		1	·
PHASE 2: PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT																	
2.1 Stakeholder Interviews + Focus Group (virtual)																	
2.2 Interactive Engagement Activities on Website																	
2.3 Other Engagement Events (1 event, up to 3)																	
2.4 Public Visioning Workshop (PM #1) (in-person)																	
2.5 Public & Stakeholder Engagement Review with Advisory Committee (AC #3) (in-person)																	
2.6 Engagement Review Joint Workshop with Council and Commission (JW #1) (in-person)																	
PHASE 3: DRAFT PLAN + EVALUATION																	
3.1 Draft Plan																	
3.2 Draft Plan Review with Advisory Committee (SC #4 - #6) (virtual)																	
3.3 Draft Plan Public Open House (PM #2) (in-person)								$\rightarrow$									
3.4 Draft Plan Joint Workshop with Council & Commission (JW #2) (in-person)																	
3.5 Public Comment and Review Period																	
PHASE 4: FINAL PLAN + ADOPTION																	
4.1 Final Draft Plan																	
4.2 Planning Commission Public Hearing (PM #3) (in-person) (1st Mondays of the Month)													1				
4.3 City Council Public Hearing (PM #4) (in-person) (1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month)												20	26				
4.4 Final Plan Deliverables	Ī	1	ľ				1										

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Advisory Committee Meeting #4: Draft Plan Review: TBD - August

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## 03. Comprehensive Planning 101

## **Comprehensive Planning 101**

"The comprehensive plan, also known as a general plan, master plan or land use plan; is a document designed to guide the future actions of a community. It presents a vision for the future; with long-range goals and objectives for all activities that affects the local government."

- Gary D. Taylor, Iowa State University





# **Comprehensive Planning 101**

# What is the role of the Future Land Use Plan?

- Guides decision making related to rezonings and development proposals as they are brought to the Planning Commission and City Council
- Designed to create ideal land use schemes for the future of the city
- May require modifications over time to adapt to the ever-changing economic environment





## **Comprehensive Planning 101**

### Implementation Measures Fall Into Three Broad Categories

Development regulations that control the location, form and character of private projects Capital projects which are financed, designed, built and maintained by governments Programs that in some cases involve active government participation and in other cases simply mean endorsement or coordination of voluntary private efforts

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Effective implementation is the difference between having a good plan on paper and having a great community on the ground



## **Current Comprehensive Plan**

## Ashland Comprehensive Plan (2014)

- Last Comprehensive Plan update was adopted in 2014
- Previous plan goals included:
  - Maintaining Ashland's stock of historic buildings
  - Promoting recreational aspects of the community to attract visitors
  - Recruit, retain, and expand local primary/industrial companies that provide quality jobs
  - Encourage infill and redevelopment opportunities
  - Replace and upgrade aging infrastructure
  - Conserve and protect natural resource and encourage compact development/redevelopment





### **Current Zoning Map**





### **Current Future Land Use Map**

#### **City of Ashland**

#### OFFICIAL FUTURE LAND USE MAP

FUTURE LAND USE CODE Residential Estates (RE) Low Density Residential (LDR) Medium Density Residential (MDR) High Density Residential (HDR) Residential Transition (RT) General Commercial (GC) Downtown Commercial (DC) Highway Commercial (HC) Flex Space (FX) Light Industrial (I) Public and Semi-Public (Pub) iIII ETJ City Limit **OVERLAYS** Corridor Overlay Preservation District Parcels **FEMA FLOODPLAINS\*** 200-Year Floodplain Floodway HAT Railroad

\*The 100-Year Floodplain shown on this map are a generalized representation of the Floodplain boundaries shown on the following FIRM panels: 31155C0545D 31155C0565D Both Panels are effective of 04/05/2010

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#### Current Future Land Use Map CONFLUENCE



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## 04. Existing Conditions

## **Data Sources**

### Where can this data be found?

- United States Census Bureau
  - American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates – 2023
  - Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Data – 2022
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
  - Flood Map Service Center (MSC)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
  - Surface Waters and Wetlands
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)
  - Topography and Slope
- Local + State Sources
  - State of Nebraska
  - Saunders County + Cass County
  - City of Ashland

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**Science for a changing world** 









## **Population**

- The blue line shows an adjusted population rate utilizing housing unit counts from building permit data, multiplied by housing tenure based on housing type
- 2023 population estimate:
  3,134.45 residents

Population change using ACS 5-Year Estimates

Population estimates using Ashland building permit data

#### Ashland Population Change with Estimates from Building Permits (1970-2023)





## **Race and Origin**

- 95.6% White
- 1.8% Asian
- 0.1% Black or African American
- 0.2% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- 2.3% Some Other Race

### Ashland Race and Origin (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates





### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

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## Age

- Median Age: 36.6 years
  - Younger than Saunders County (40.4 years)
- Fluctuations in age ranges, from male to female

#### What does this mean to us?

Ashland has a younger adult population, with children, possibly attracted by the great schools and park system!



### Ashland Age Pyramid (2023)



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Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)

#### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

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## Age

- Median Age (2023): 36.6
- Median age of Ashland and comparison cities significantly lower than Saunders County and comparison city Louisville

#### Median Age - Regional Comparison (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimates



#### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

## **Housing Characteristics - Tenure**

- Average household size: 2.45 persons
  - Saunders County: 2.55 persons



Owner-Occupied 67.3% (Saunders County: 81.7%)

2.75 persons

Average owner household size (Saunders County: 2.64 persons)

Renter-Occupied 32.7% (Saunders County: 18.3%) **1.82 persons** Average renter household size (Saunders County: 2.14 persons)





### **Household Composition**

- A family household includes a family related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption, whereas a nonfamily household includes households shared with persons that the householder does not share relation to the householder.
- More Single-Member Households than regional comparisons
- Overall, Ashland exceeds its comparison cities in Single-Member households and Family households without children

Single-Member Households

Family Household with Children

Family Household without Children

Non-Family Household

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## Household Types- Regional Comparison



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Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)

### **Household Composition**

- **33.1%** of Ashland Households are single-member households
- Ashland has a higher share of 1person households than regional comparisons, consistent with the amount of single-member households Ashland has.
  - This may include those populations previously married or separated, recently widowed, or single-parents

1 Person
2 People
3 People
4+ People

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#### Household Size- Regional Comparison (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)

#### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

### Housing Characteristics - Age

- 60% of homes in Ashland were built prior to the 1980s
- 27.7% of homes were built in the last 25 years
- Ashland's housing stock is older than Gretna, Nebraska, which has had recent upticks in housing development.

#### What does this mean to us?

Ashland has a stock of older housing that may be vulnerable due to age or characteristics of the home.

#### Ashland Housing Stock Age (2023)



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#### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

### Housing Characteristics – Housing Value

- 65% of Ashland's housing is valued between \$100-299K
  - 27% valued between \$300-499K
- 5% is valued below \$99K
- Over 2% is valued above \$500K

#### What does this mean to us?

Ashland has a healthy mix of mid-range "levelup" housing for households in a mid-income range.

#### 60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0% \$50.000 Less than \$50.000 to \$99,999 \$300.000 to \$100.000 to \$150.000 to \$200.000 to \$500.000 to \$1.000.000 or \$149.999 \$299.999 \$499.999 \$199.999 \$999.999 more Ashland, NE \_\_\_\_\_ Saunders County, NE \_\_\_\_\_ Gretna, NE ······ Omaha-NE Metro

### Ashland Housing Value (2023)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)



### **New Information!**

### Housing Characteristics – Housing Value Regional Comparisons

 Ashland has similar housing values to comparison cities, with the outlier of Springfield

### Ashland Housing Value (2023)





#### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

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## **Household Income**

• Over half of Ashland households generate an income over \$75,000

#### What does this mean to us?

Ashland has a share of higher household income ranges, especially when compared to nearby cities with similar characteristics

### Ashland Housing Income (2023)





### **Regional Income Comparisons**

- Median Household Income in Ashland is \$80,948
  - Less than nearby cities.

#### Ashland Median Housing Income Comparisons (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)



#### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

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### Housing Costs and Gross Rent

- Median **homeowner** housing cost: \$1,654
  - Gretna: \$2,076
- Median **rent** in Ashland is \$913
  - Gretna: \$1,467

#### What does this mean to us?

Ashland has more affordable housing rates for homeowners and renters compared to other peer communities.

### Ashland Housing Costs (2023)





#### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

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### **Housing Costs**

- The median average housing cost in Ashland is \$1,654
- Homeowners with a mortgage in Ashland paying slightly more than those in Wahoo and Springfield
- Homeowners are paying slightly less than those in Louisville

### Median Monthly Housing Cost for Homeowners with a Mortgage – Regional Comparison (2023)





Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)

City Limits Proper, no SIDs

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## **Housing Costs**

- The median rent in Ashland is \$913
- Median rent is slightly less than rent in Louisville, and significantly less than rent in Springfield

### Median Monthly Rent - Regional Comparison (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)



### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

### Household Cost-Burden

- Housing cost-burden is defined by 30% of household gross income being spent on housing costs
  - **37.9%** Ashland **renters** are cost-burdened (150 households)
  - **9.4%** of Ashland homeowners with a **mortgage** are costburdened (23 households)

### Ashland Percent of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs (2023)





City Limits Proper, no SIDs

### **Housing Costs**

Iomeowners

Renters

- The share of cost burdened renters in Ashland is less than those renters in Louisville, Wahoo and Springfield
- The share of cost burdened **homeowners** with a mortgage compared to peer communities is lower,
- **Meaning that:** housing may be more attainable and affordable in Ashland than other communities

Percent Cost-Burdened - Regional Comparison (2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2023)

60%



### City Limits Proper, no SIDs

Data **does not capture** educational services that are located outside of City's defined geographic area or that have obtained certificate of occupancy after 2021.

### **Commuter Trends**

### Ashland Commuter Trends (2022)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau LEHD OnTheMap Data (2022)

**584** Live elsewhere,

work in Ashland

157 Live & work in Ashland

**1,278** Live in Ashland, work elsewhere

- 66.8% of commuters travel to the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro for work
- 23.8% travel to the Lincoln Metro for work


## **Community Profile**

### **Population Projection Calculations**

Average Annual Change (2010-2023)

Calculated using average growth percentages from ACS 5-Year Estimates

### Average Annual Actual Change (2010-2020)

Calculated using growth percentages from actual population, using Decennial Census data

Linear Growth

Assumes a constant growth rate for Ashland

**Logistic Growth** 

Assumes a growth rate that eventually slows down or stabilizes over time

### Regional Capture

Accounts for Ashland's regional capture of population in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro Area

### --- Other Projections

Calculates population based off of geometric growth, based on population ratios

### Average

Takes the average population projections of all scenarios calculated

### Ashland Population Projection (2023-2050)



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Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1970-2023

# **Community Profile**

## **Population Projection**

- Using 2023 ACS Census numbers as the base, the 2050 average population estimate is **5,231**
- Highest projection places Ashland at 9,359 and lowest at 3,679
- Populations are projected utilizing the following six calculations:
  - Average Annual Change (2010-2023)
  - Average Annual Actual Change (2010-2020)
  - Linear Growth
  - Logistic Growth
  - Regional Capture
  - Other Projections

### Ashland Population Projection (2023-2050)



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## **Existing Land Use**

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• Single-family residential and Public / Semi-Public are the two highest existing land uses.

Existing Land Use	Acres	Total Share (%)
Single-Family Residential	397.7	48.6%
Public / Semi-Public	225.6	27.6%
Commercial	53.4	6.5%
Parks and Recreation	50.8	6.2%
Agricultural / Open Space	48.9	6.0%
Multi-Family Residential	21.6	2.6%
Industrial	12.3	1.5%
Two-Family Residential	8.4	1.0%
	Single-Family Residential Public / Semi-Public Commercial Parks and Recreation Agricultural / Open Space Multi-Family Residential Industrial	Single-Family Residential397.7Public / Semi-Public225.6Commercial53.4Parks and Recreation50.8Agricultural / Open Space48.9Multi-Family Residential21.6Industrial12.3



## Transportation

- Bisected by Highway 6 (Grand Army of the Republic Highway), Highway 66, and rail line
- Highway 66 provides arterial connection to Interstate 80 – carrying many trucks (275-425 ADT, 2023)
- Vacant rail line NE





## Floodplain

 Areas adjacent to Ashland, predominately to the south, east, and north are within floodplain and floodways





## Existing Parkland and Open Space

- The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a Level of Service (LOS) of **10.5 acres** of parkland for every 1,000 population
- In total Ashland has **43 acres** of parkland within city limits.
- Ashland's LOS is **14.2 acres** of parkland per 1,000 population





# **Existing Parkland and Open Space**

Park	Category	Acres
Euclid St. Park	Neighborhood	0.4
Kiddy Korner Park	Neighborhood	0.4
East Side Park	Neighborhood	0.5
Sabre Heights Park	Neighborhood	0.7
Wiggenhorn Park	Community	4.7
Ashland Sand Volleyball	Special Use	3.6
Central Bark Dog Park	Special Use	1.7
Saline Ford Park and Trail	Special Use	11.9
Jack Anderson Ball Park	Special Use	19.2

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## Bicycle and Walking Trails

- 2.93 miles of existing trails
- 5.33 miles of planned trails





## **Bicycle and Walking Trails**

- Ashland's current LOS = 0.95 miles of trail per 1,000 residents
  - If counting planned trails, the LOS would increase to 1.75 / 1,000 residents

	All Municipalities	Municipalities with a Population less than 20,000
Median LOS	16.0	4.5
Lower Quartile	6.0	2.0
Upper Quartile	46.0	9.2

Source: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

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### **Regional Attractions and Places of Interest**

- Camp Ashland
- Iron Horse Golf Club
- Carol Joy Retreat & Conference Center
- Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum (SAC)
- Eugene T. Mahoney State Park
- Omaha Wildlife Safari Park
- And more! (Downtown, wineries, breweries)



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## 05. Public Input Results

## Stakeholder Interviews

## Overview

- Stakeholder Interviews hosted virtually through zoom using a Calendly Sign-up.
- Stakeholder Interviews occurred April 8-10
- 16 Interviews were organized with 33 stakeholders contacted





CONFLUENCE

## Public Open House

## Overview

- The Public Open House was held on **May 12, 2025**
- The event was marketed through social media, the project website, and yard signs.









### CONFLUENCE

## **Online Website**



149 Contributions



## 102 Contributors



#### Image Voting

Vote on Images >

Show us your vision for Ashland by selecting images of preferred development and building patterns.

### improvement!

Pin Comments to the Map >









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Commission and City Council.

#### () Jul 18, 2025 12:00 PM - Jul 18, 2025 4:00 PM O Downtown Ashland

Pop-up Booth at Stir-up Days

Help shape the future of Ashland by stopping at our popup booth during Ashland's Stir-up Days!

#### **Project Timeline**

**Upcoming Events** 

#### Phase 1: Research and Analysis

This phase includes an existing conditions analysis of Ashland.

#### 6 Phase 2: Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Phase 2 includes public engagement opportunities to allow for engagement, both online and in-person.

#### Phase 3: Draft Plan and Evaluation

This phase includes the draft writing stages of the plan, using information and input received from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the timeline.

#### Phase 4: Final Plan and Adoption

The final phase includes adoption by the Planning

See less

### CONFLUENCE



City of Ashland values your input on how to guide the path ahead.

Share your vision for Ashland by participating in the following activities.

**Ashland Comprehensive** 

Help us plan for the future of Ashland!

Welcome!

Your Input Matters!

Plan







#### Mapping Activity Place comments directly on a

map of Ashland and tell us where your favorite places are, your ideas for development and investment, or places that could use













The City of Ashland is updating its Comprehensive Plan! This new plan will shape a shared vision for the future, guiding the city's growth and development for the next decade and beyond. This website can be utilized to stay

We want to hear YOUR ideas on what you'd like to see in Ashland! This plan aims to enhance Ashland's unique character developed through public participation and a creative practical vision. Change is inevitable, and the

updated on the process, learn about project milestones, and find ways to get involved.



**Ouestionnaire** 

Take the Questionnaire >

Please take this short visioning questionnaire to share your ideas for the future of the community.







## Audience



## Connection to Ashland Live in Ashland Shop or Dine in Ashland **Recreate in Ashland** Work in Ashland Go to School in Ashland **Military Service Member** 73 Online/In-person Responses CONFLUENCE

## Audience





## Do you think the City of Ashland should provide incentives towards development? If so, which incentives should be provided?

69 Online/In-person Responses



# PARKS AND RECREATION

- Excitement centered around new community facilities, including the Ashland Wellness Aquatics Center (AWAC) and the Recreational Center.
- Identify and provide improvements to existing parks within Ashland.
- Ensure that neighborhoods are adequately serviced by a nearby park, for existing and new residential developments.





## WATER RECREATION

- Create a new recreational amenity in the region by providing access to the Salt and Platte River.
- Support for a Boat Launch at the Platte River, with potential access near Camp Ashland.
- Provide educational experiences regarding the saline wetlands found near Salt Creek.
- Develop a regional trail along Salt Creek, with access to recreation opportunities along the waterbody.



## TRAILS



- Enhanced trail connections to regional amenities and community assets as a new recreational attraction (Mahoney State Park, Memphis Lake, Carol Joy Holling Camp, SAC Museum, + Camp Ashland)
- Establishing safe crossings at Highway 6 for pedestrians and trail users to navigate between different areas of the City
- Convert the abandoned railroad line to a trail system through Rails to Trails and provide a regional connection to Memphis Lake.





# **DOWNTOWN ASHLAND**



CONFLUENCE

- Downtown Ashland is thriving and is a place to be.
- Contributes significantly to Ashland's community, character, and identity.
- Could consider opportunities with improvement grants to assist property owners with continued investment and redevelopment.
- Additional connection to draw more tourism between regional destinations and downtown with mutual benefit.
- Concerns regarding parking, including amount of available parking and identification/signage (clarifying public vs private).
- Redevelopment of industrial buildings in and adjacent to downtown, including the OPPD building.



## **INFRASTRUCTURE + TRANSPORTATION**

- Highway 6 acts as a physical barrier between neighborhoods in East Ashland, creating a disconnect to key community assets and spaces, including the schools, community facilities, and Downtown Ashland.
- Additional crossing improvements are noted repeatedly to provide safe crossing along Highway 6.
- Support for a truck bypass as well as future street planning to provide for new arterial/collector roadways for the city.



# COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- Ashland's unique sense of place and small-town feel is contributed by the local small-businesses.
- Generally, there is a lack of support for franchise-type businesses and big box retail.
- Opportunities to enhance community character could include streetscape improvements along major streets including Furnas Street and Highway 6.
- Support for public art along major streets, including a roundabout sculpture on Highway 6.





## HOUSING



- Single-family development patterns are preferred, however there is a need to bring affordable and workforce housing to support local Ashland businesses.
- Ashland's character and identity attracts residents and families to live in the community.
- Need for starter homes and additional rental units to support young professionals or young adults.
- Support for infill residential development to provide additional housing units to the community.





# **Priority of General Items**

### 99 Online/In-person Responses





Preservation of Historical Resources + Buildings

Retail / **Restaurant Attraction**, Expansion + Retention

**Business / Industry Employment Attraction,** Expansion, + Retention

Increase Variety + Number of Housing Units



**Promote Infill Development +** Redevelopment **Opportunities** 

Leveraging + Expanding upon Tourism to Attract More Visitors

Sustainability + Environmental Preservation / Protection





**Increase Alternative Transportation Options** 

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## What's Next?

### **Near-Term**

Pop-up Event: Ashland Stir-up Days – July 18, 2025

## **Mid-Term**

- Draft Comprehensive Plan Chapters
- Draft Comprehensive Plan Chapter Review with Advisory Committee – August 12



