

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING RETREAT
MINUTES
July 17, 2023**

Mayor Graham opened the retreat at 1:00 p.m. Mayor Graham, Councilor Hyatt, Bloom, Dahle, Kaplan, DuQuenne and Hansen were present.

I. Council Budget Priorities Overview & Next Steps

• Managing for Excellence

○ City Communication Strategy

Deputy City Manager Sabrina Cotta reviewed the communication strategy with council (see attached). She noted the critical efforts made by Dorinda Cottle, the city's communication officer and thanked her. The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Public Works Department getting involved in social media regarding infrastructure announcements.
- Having special council column in the Ashland News.
- Create a "roadshow" and solicit organizations throughout the valley. Council will send agencies to the city manager.
- Having annual or semi-annual economic roundtables.
- An employee survey for city staff.
- Setting up a sign showing local events that visitors can see as they travel into the city. Possibly use a QR Code or Wayfinding, etc.
- Look into something like the National Park Service announcements.
- Create welcome packets that include information on fire adapted communities, AFN, emergency services, etc.
- Directing conversations based on misinformation to the communications officer to post accurate information on the city's online Let Curiosity Be Your Guide.
- Send council agenda packets out the Wednesday before council meetings instead of Fridays.

• Citywide Performance Measures

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Create clear metrics on each of the city's utilities.
- Create quarterly reports/performance plans on risk reduction, evacuation information, climate energy action plan, police use of force, etc.
- Have a dashboard online to centralize key information throughout the website like police use of force, water statistics, etc.

• Citywide Performance Program

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Internal staff performance reviews.

- Do a compensation and class study.
 - **Livable Community**
 - **Risk Reduction**
 - **Emergency Communications Evacuation and Mobilization**

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Show backroads and different ways to access the highways.
- Have a variety of emergency communications.
- Ensure community has all the mobilization resources.
- Encourage self-responsibility and community responsibility.
- Community Connect software was coming to the Fire Department for the citizenry.
- Offer preparation trainings for the community.
- Find ways to notify students/citizens who do not live in Ashland year-round.
- The Emergency Management Plan between the City, the Ashland School District and SOU.
- The benefits of reader boards on the highway.
- Resume fire inspections for businesses.

- **Housing, infrastructure, health, and safety**

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Create a master plan for unhoused support services.
- Establish an ad hoc committee to help develop the master plan.
- Council priorities would have to shift to encompass this undertaking. The city lacked the internal capacity to manage a new project.

- **Climate Vulnerability and Resilience**

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Have an assessment of vulnerabilities in homes, schools, electric, utilities, heat, drought, etc.
- Create an electric master plan.
- Climate impacts on the economy.
- Setting aside funding to help community members take advantage of the inflation reduction act.
- Including business resiliency plans in the emergency plan.
- Disaster preparedness for the slow onset disaster of climate change.

- **Economic Development**

- **TLT Business & Event Small Grants Approach**
- **South Ashland Strategic Vision**
 - **University District**
 - **Croman Mill**
 - **Ashland St./Independent Way/Siskiyou Blvd.**

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman provided a presentation (see attached).

- **South Ashland Strategic Vision**
- **Future Annexation Areas/Investment Needed**
- **University Campus/District**
- **Walker Avenue and Ashland Street Pedestrian Place**
- **18.3.12.060 Pedestrian Place Overlay**

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Ashland Street medians.
- Establishing a liaison to SOU.
- The city's role in the University District master plan.
- Add a bowling alley or something similar to the area as a draw for the public.

- **Croman Mill District – Land Use Overlays**
- **Croman Mill District – Potential Use Areas**
- **Transit Triangle**
- **Potential Climate Friendly Areas**
- **What are some requirements for a Climate Friendly Area?**
- **Climate Friendly Areas (State Required)**
- **Climate Friendly Areas (state requirement) timeline**
- **Future Annexation Areas**

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Being proactive regarding annexations.
- Councilor Dahle will investigate economic development corporation formation.
- Improve the medians and island on Ashland Street.
- Clarification that redlining in Ashland is not occurring.
- Shifting \$60,000 small non-profit grant money to the Chamber.
- Beautifying gateway areas off of 1-5.

- **Affordability**
 - **Ad Hoc Committee for Affordable Childcare & Early Childhood Development**
 - **Utility Affordability Assistance Programs Overview**

Finance Director Mariane Berry and Finance Manager Bryn Morrison provided a presentation on City assistance programs (see attached):

- **Ashland Low Income Energy Assistance Program (ALIEAP)**
- **Senior and Disabled Discount**
- **Emergency Heat Assistance (year-round)**
- **Ways you can help – Round-up and Contributions to HEAT Assistance**
- **City Funded Assistance Programs / Donation Funded Assistance Programs**

- **Total Assistance Programs**

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Retaining a year-round energy assistance program to cover summer or heat events.
- Increase the monthly donation from one dollar to \$5 and keep it year-round. Monetize it as a credit and market it.
- Other agencies roles in utility bill assistance.
- Having a study session to discuss options.

- **Affordable Housing**

- **Invest In the Future**

2. City Council Advisory Committees

The following points were discussed or suggested:

- Council doubling up on some committees.
- Council will email Mayor Graham where their interests are.
- Creating council liaisons to organizations outside of the city.
- The Early Childhood Development Ad hoc Committee, city employee participation and fund distribution.

- **Workplan Discussion & Directions**

- **Climate & Environment Policy**
- **Forest Land**
- **Historic Preservation**
- **Housing & Human Services**
- **Public Art**
- **Social Equity & Racial Justice**
- **Transportation**

- **Council Liaison Appointments**

3. Adjournment of Retreat

The retreat adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Attest:

Clerk of the Council Pro Tem Dana Smith

Mayor Tonya Graham

City Website	Internal Communication	External Communication	Citizen Engagement
<p>Goal: Main repository for information (Information going out)</p>	<p>Goal: Informed staff (Information going out/ exchange of information)</p>	<p>Goal: Informed citizenry (Information going out)</p>	<p>Goal: Meeting people where they are (Exchange of information)</p>
<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda management • Workflow management 	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular employee newsletter • Regular HR roadshows to department • Regular staff appreciation events • "Ride-alongs" 	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular & timely press releases • Regular use of social media • Utility bill newsletter • Website updates • City Manager Report • Council, APRC & Committee Meetings 	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town halls • Coffees • Road shows to the public
<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New website • App development 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-user email • City Manager employee newsletter • In-person meetings 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press releases • TV interviews • RVTV • Everbridge notifications • Social Media 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time & expertise • Budget • External communication tools for notification • Feedback gathering tools
<p>What's next:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select new website provider/ begin process of website update 	<p>What's next:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand roadshow to additional topics • Lunch & Learns 	<p>What's next:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Social Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nextdoor account • Instagram account 	<p>What's next:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen's academy • Open house opportunities-specific topics



University District



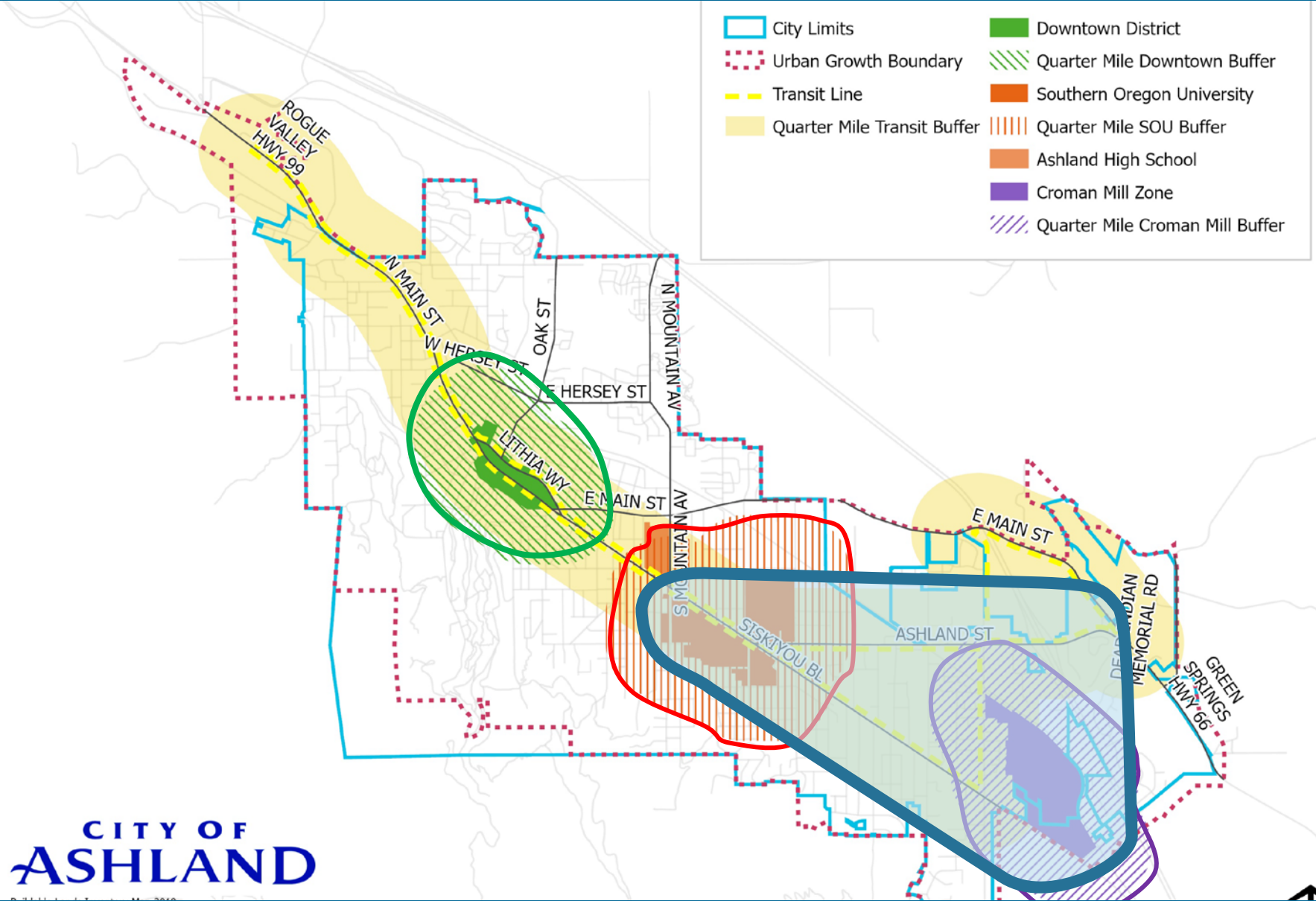
Croman Mill District



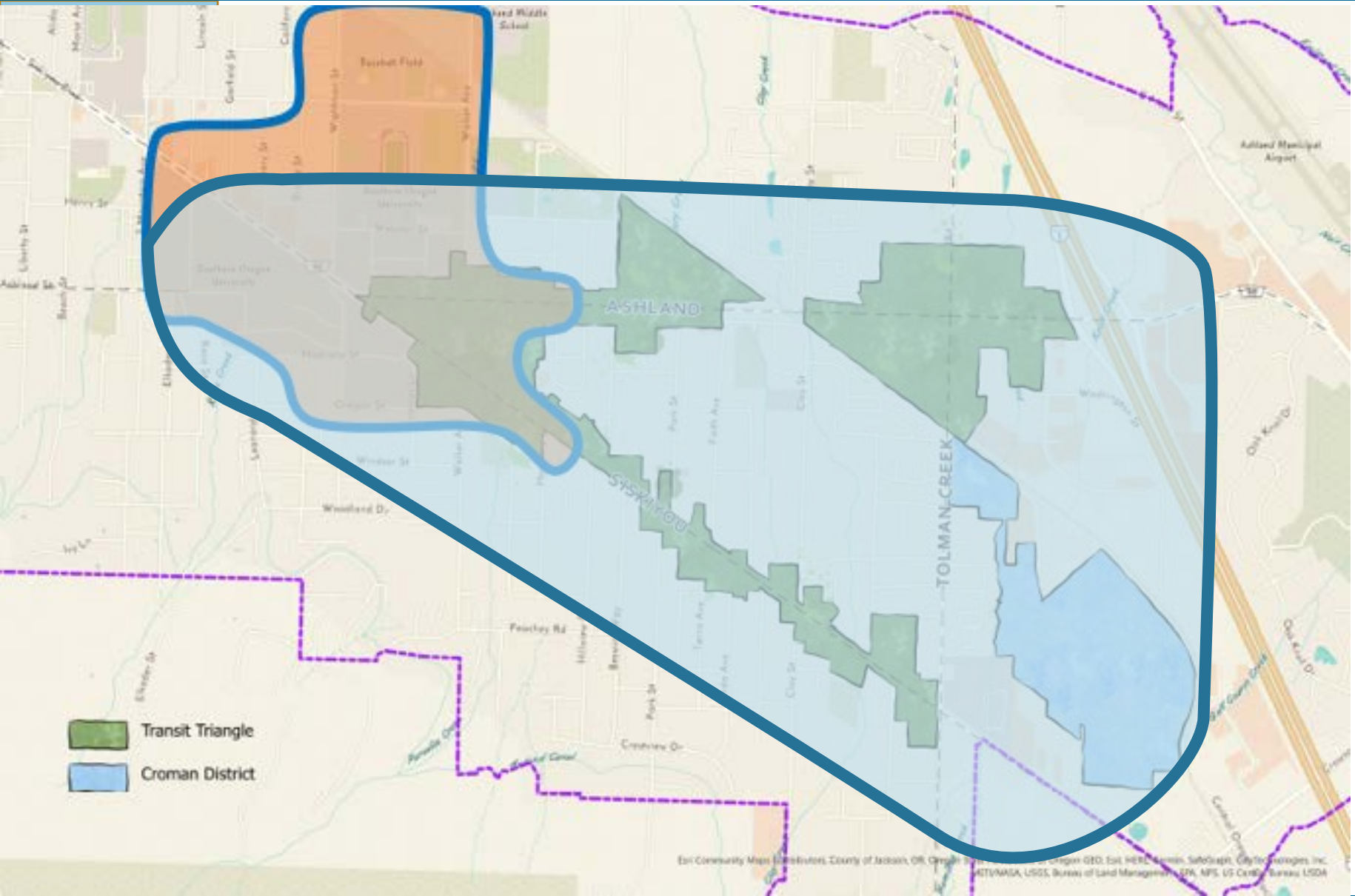
Ashland Street

South Ashland Strategic Vision

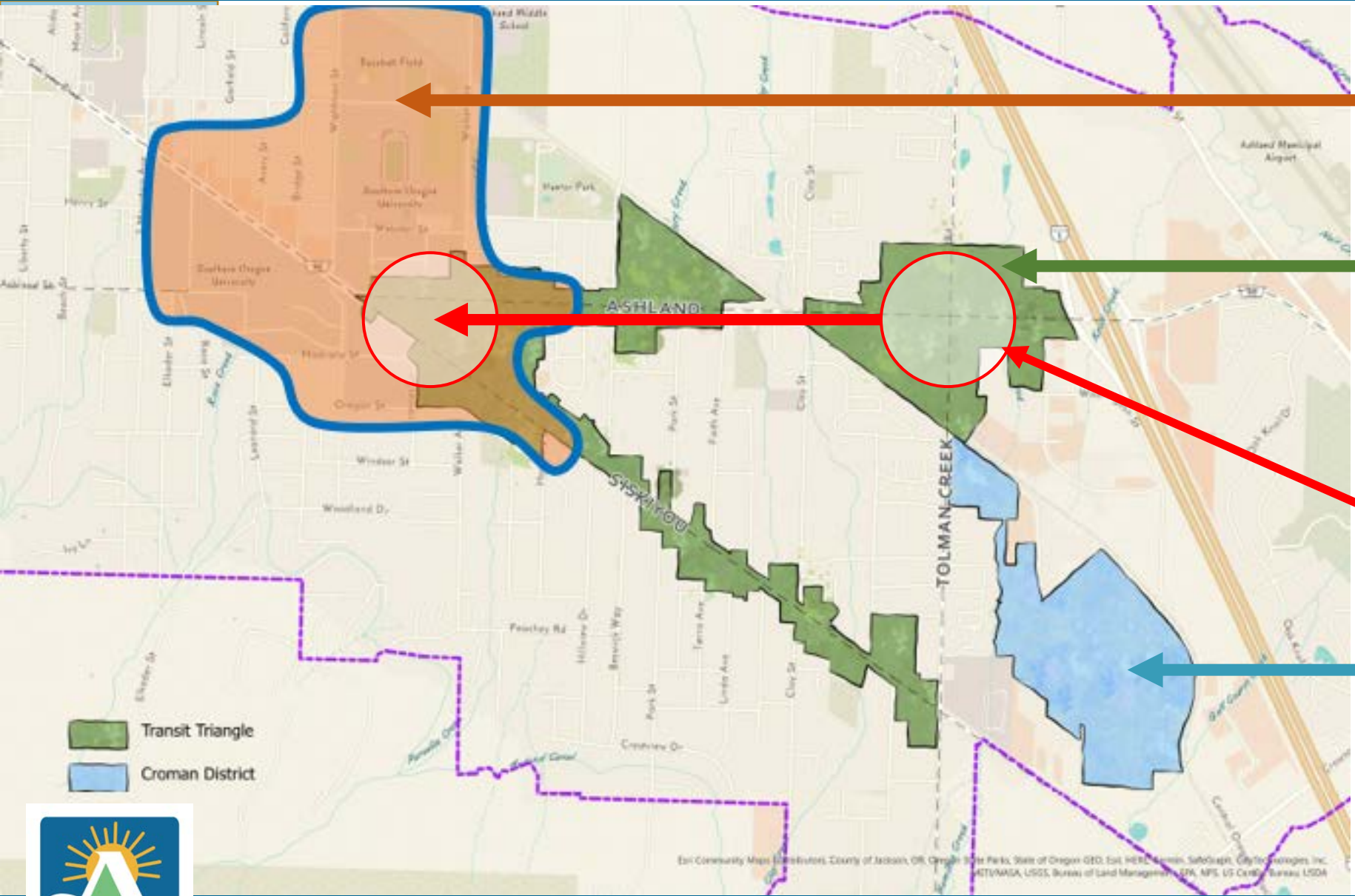
City Council
07/17/2023



South Ashland Strategic Vision



South Ashland Strategic Vision



University District Area

- SOU Masterplan update
- driven by SOU

Transit Triangle

- Ashland St./ Siskiyou Blvd
- City adopted incentives
 - Superseded by new State mandates
 - No longer relevant

Pedestrian Places

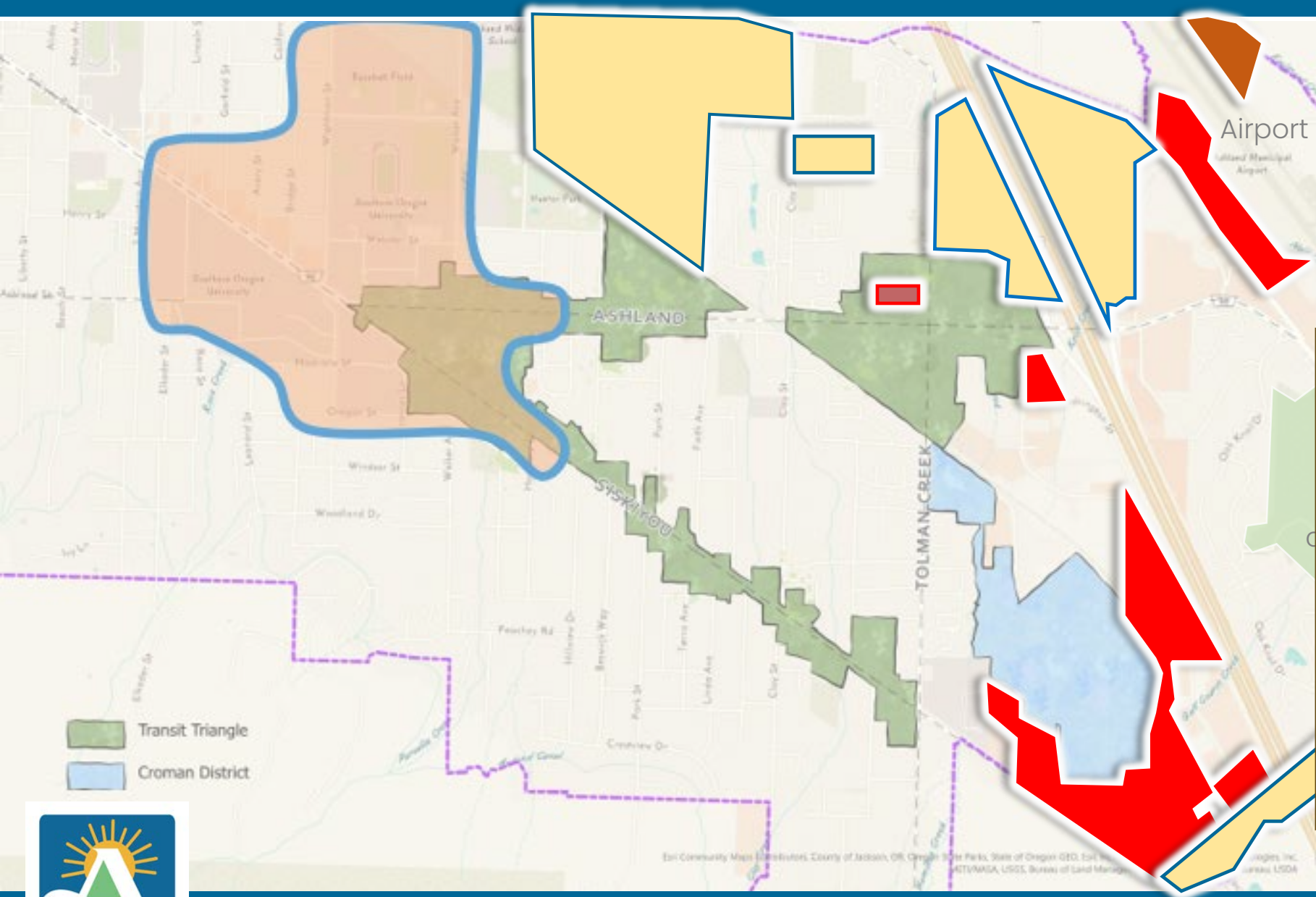
- City adopted overlay
- Investment needed

Croman Mill District

- City adopted masterplan
- Townmakers LLC Proposal
- Potential Tax Increment Financing



South Ashland Strategic Vision



Future Annexation Areas

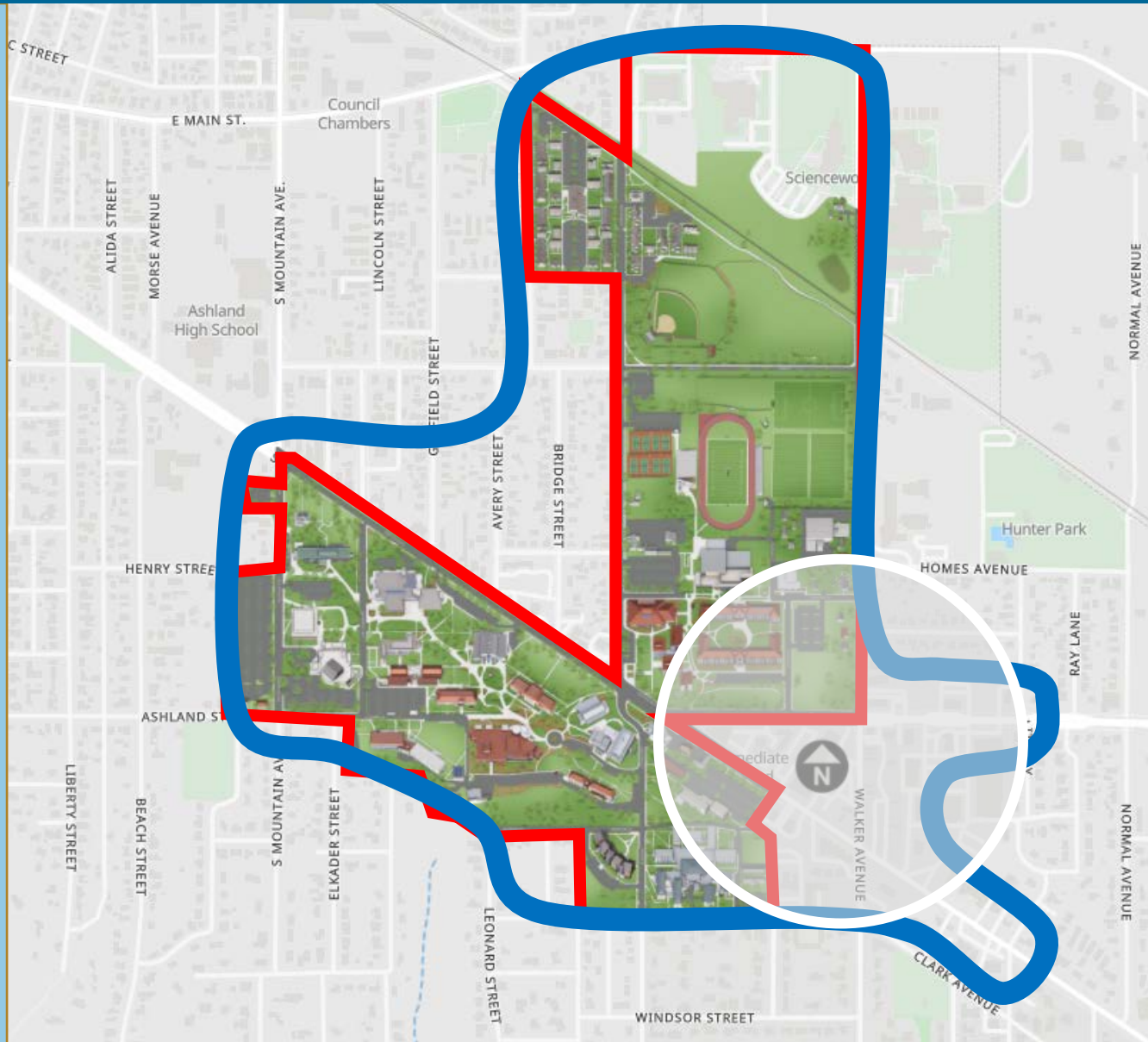
- Residential
- Commercial/Employment
- Airport

Investment Needed

- Annexations developer driven
- Infrastructure
 - Transportation System (TSP Update)
 - Water/Sewer extensions
 - Electric



South Ashland Strategic Vision



University Campus:

- Classrooms
- Libraries
- administrative buildings
- sports fields
- On-campus dining
- On-campus Student housing

University District

- Cohesive visual Identity
- Student housing (both on and off-campus)
- Retail, Restaurants and services.
- Entertainment, cultural and recreational opportunities.

University District



Walker Avenue and Ashland Street Pedestrian Place
Neighborhood Development and Circulation Opportunities



Vision Statement:

Potential to become a university district neighborhood hub. New development and streetscape changes will tie the north and south areas of the SOU campus together with places for people to gather, shop, live, and work.

Short Term Opportunity Sites:

Opportunity Site A

- Privately owned vacant property.
- Could provide neighborhood-scale employment and affordable housing choices.

Opportunity Site B (potential phase development)

- Phase 1: Could provide additional commercial mixed-use development.
- Phase 2: Could retain and intensify affordable housing choices.

Long Term Opportunity Sites:

Opportunity Sites C, D, E & F

- Grocery, retail, restaurants, and a fitness center are a great mix of places to support the campus needs, but these existing uses lack connectivity and a cohesive site plan.
- Redevelopment over time could improve streetscape, pedestrian-scale design, create gathering places, and provide more retail entertainment uses.

Southern Oregon University Development Master Plan

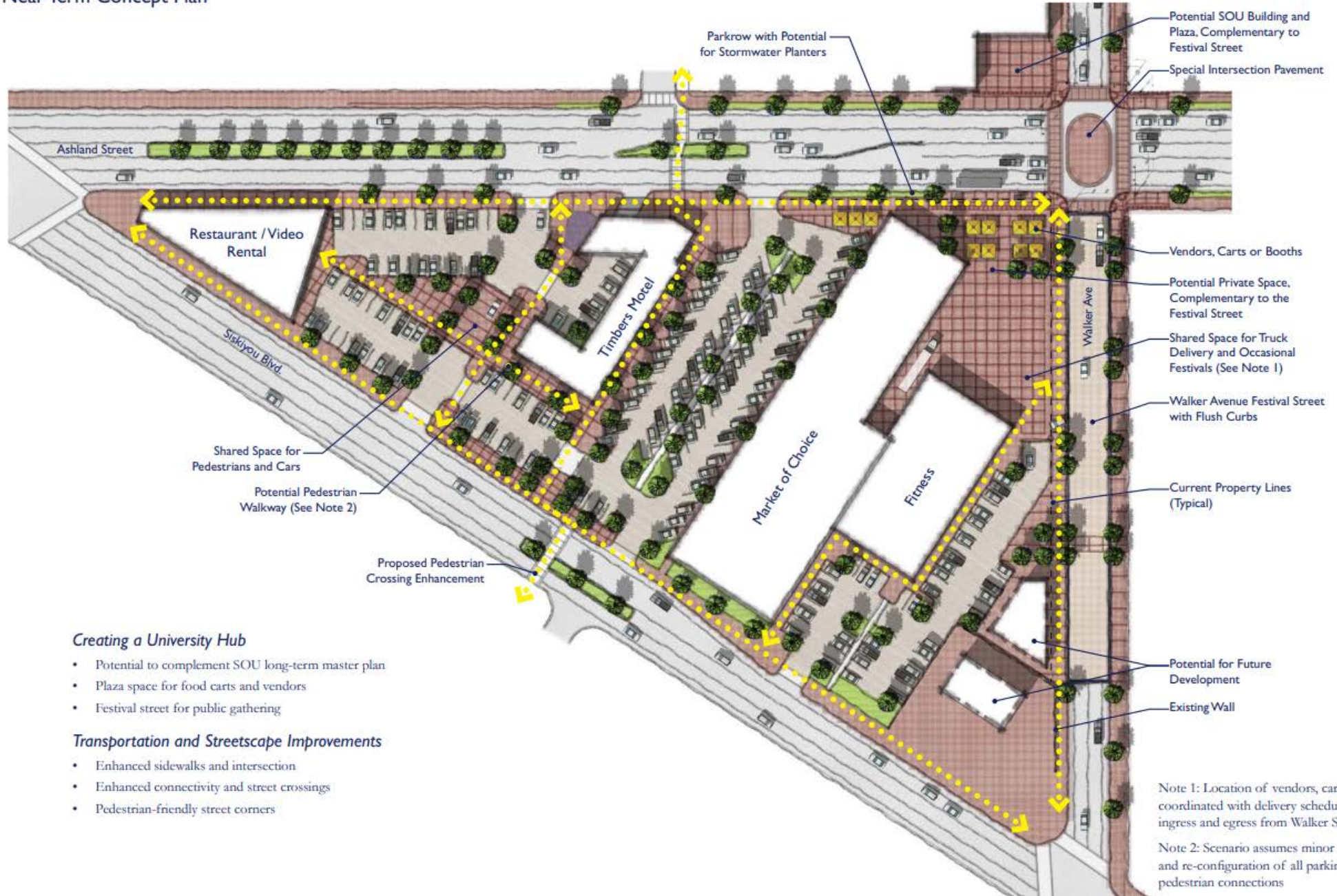
- Explore opportunities to integrate pedestrian place features into future university development.

Legend

- Priority Streetscape Improvements
- Opportunities for Future Connections
- Gathering Place
- Pedestrian Crossing Enhancements
- Planned SOU Master plan



Near Term Concept Plan



Creating a University Hub

- Potential to complement SOU long-term master plan
- Plaza space for food carts and vendors
- Festival street for public gathering

Transportation and Streetscape Improvements

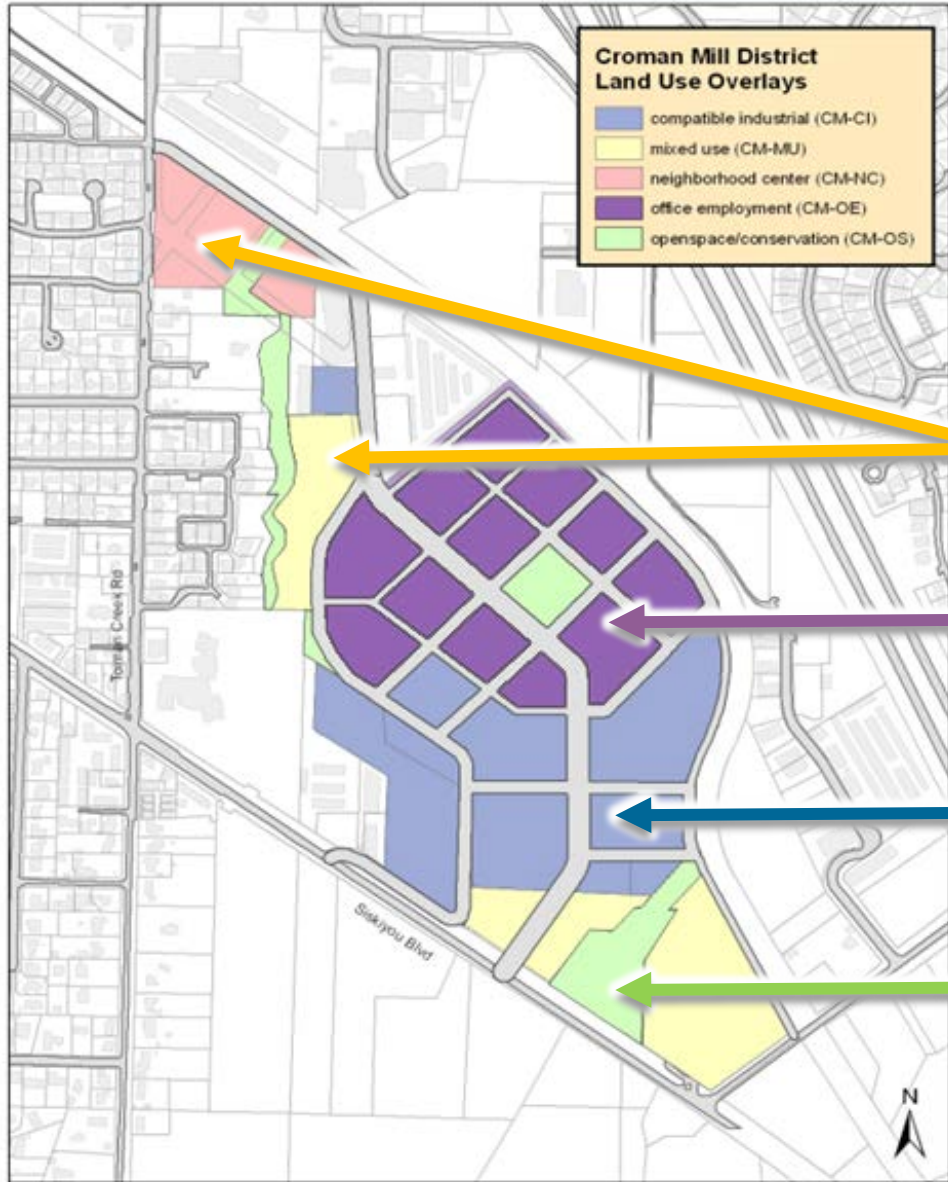
- Enhanced sidewalks and intersection
- Enhanced connectivity and street crossings
- Pedestrian-friendly street corners

Note 1: Location of vendors, carts or booths coordinated with delivery schedules of market. Truck ingress and egress from Walker Street.

Note 2: Scenario assumes minor re-development and re-configuration of all parking to promote new pedestrian connections



Better Together



On August 17, 2010 the Ashland City Council passed ordinances adopting the Croman Mill District and design standards for development in the district.

Mixed Use/Residential (CM-MU/CM-NC) 23.5%

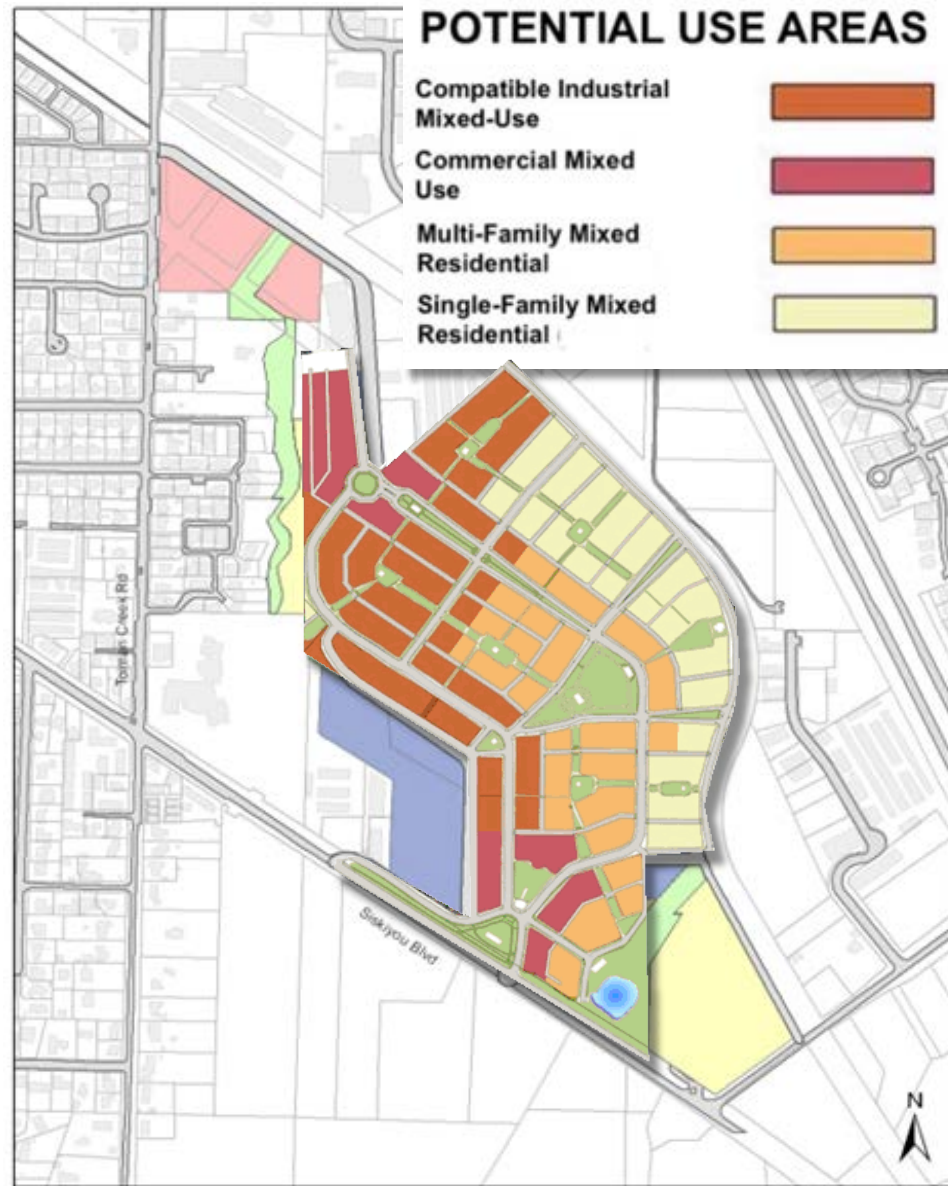
Office/Commercial (CM-OE): 27.5%

Industrial/Manufacturing (CM-CI): 37%

OpenSpace (CM-OS): 12%



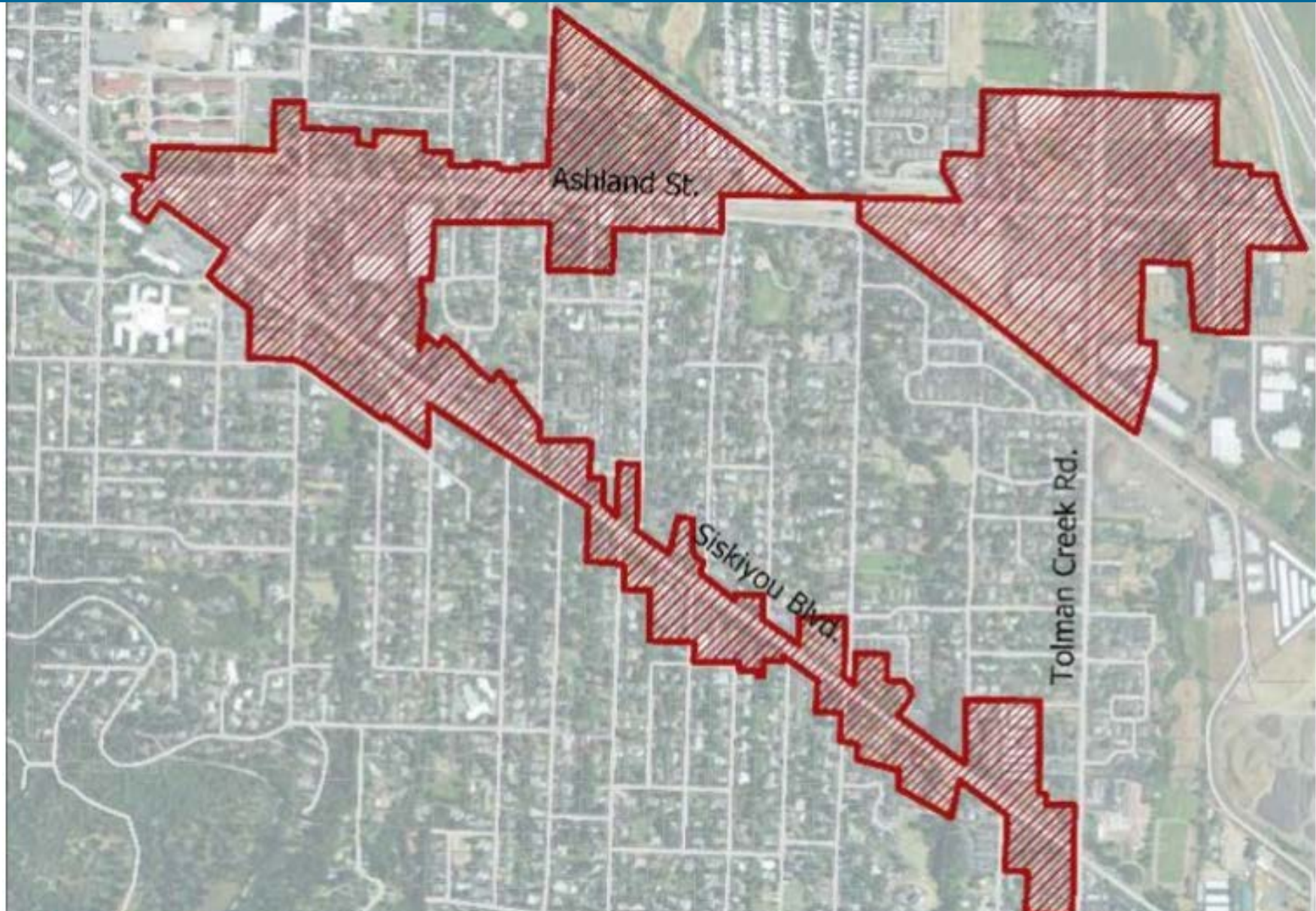
Croman Mill District



Croman Mill Neighborhood, Ashland, Oregon
 Town Makers LLC., Developers
 Qamar and Associates Inc. - Urban Design
 Structura Naturalis Inc. - Planning




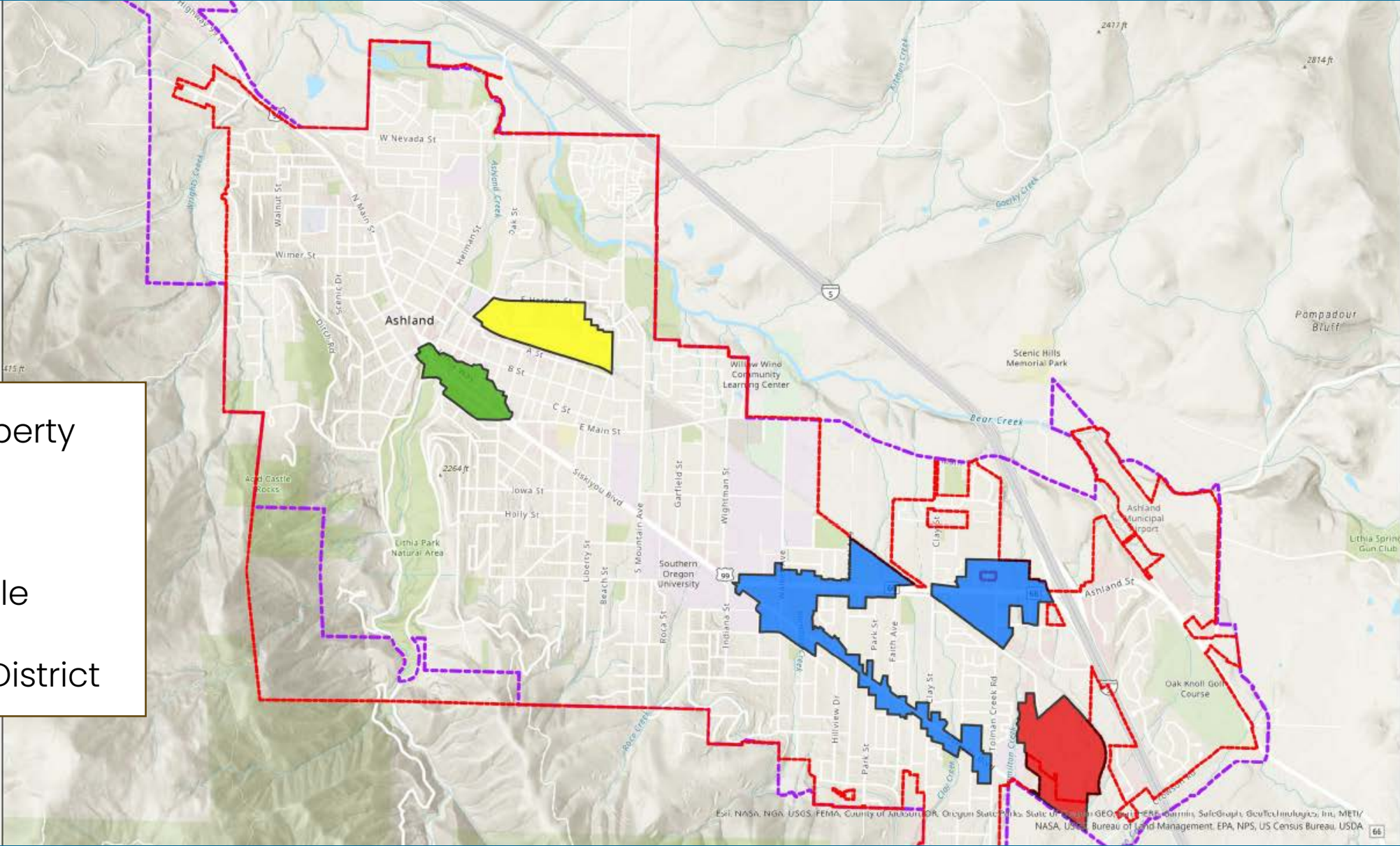
Croman Mill District



Transit Triangle

<https://ashland.municipal.codes/LandUse/18.3.12.070>

-  Rail Road Property
-  Downtown
-  Transit Triangle
-  Croman Mill District



Potential Climate Friendly Areas

What are some requirements for a Climate Friendly Area?

- No parking mandates
- Minimum residential densities of at least 15 units per acre
- No maximum residential densities
- 50-foot height permitted outright
- Mixed uses
- Prioritize Multimodal Transportation



Study

- Study most promising locations based on State requirements and criteria
- Engage Community in selecting Climate Friendly Areas
- Identify where people are at risk of displacement

Select

- City Council to select and designate Climate Friendly Areas
- Update the Ashland Land Use Code and Comprehensive Plan
- Update Transportation System Plan

Adopt

- Adopt Climate Friendly Areas
- Adopt Land Use and Transportation changes
- Implement

Jan 2023

↑
current
stage

Dec. 2024



Climate Friendly Areas (State Required)

Climate Friendly Areas (state requirement)



Parking Reforms (state requirement)



Economic Opportunities Analysis



Croman Mill

Redevelopment Planning (Townmakers) LLC

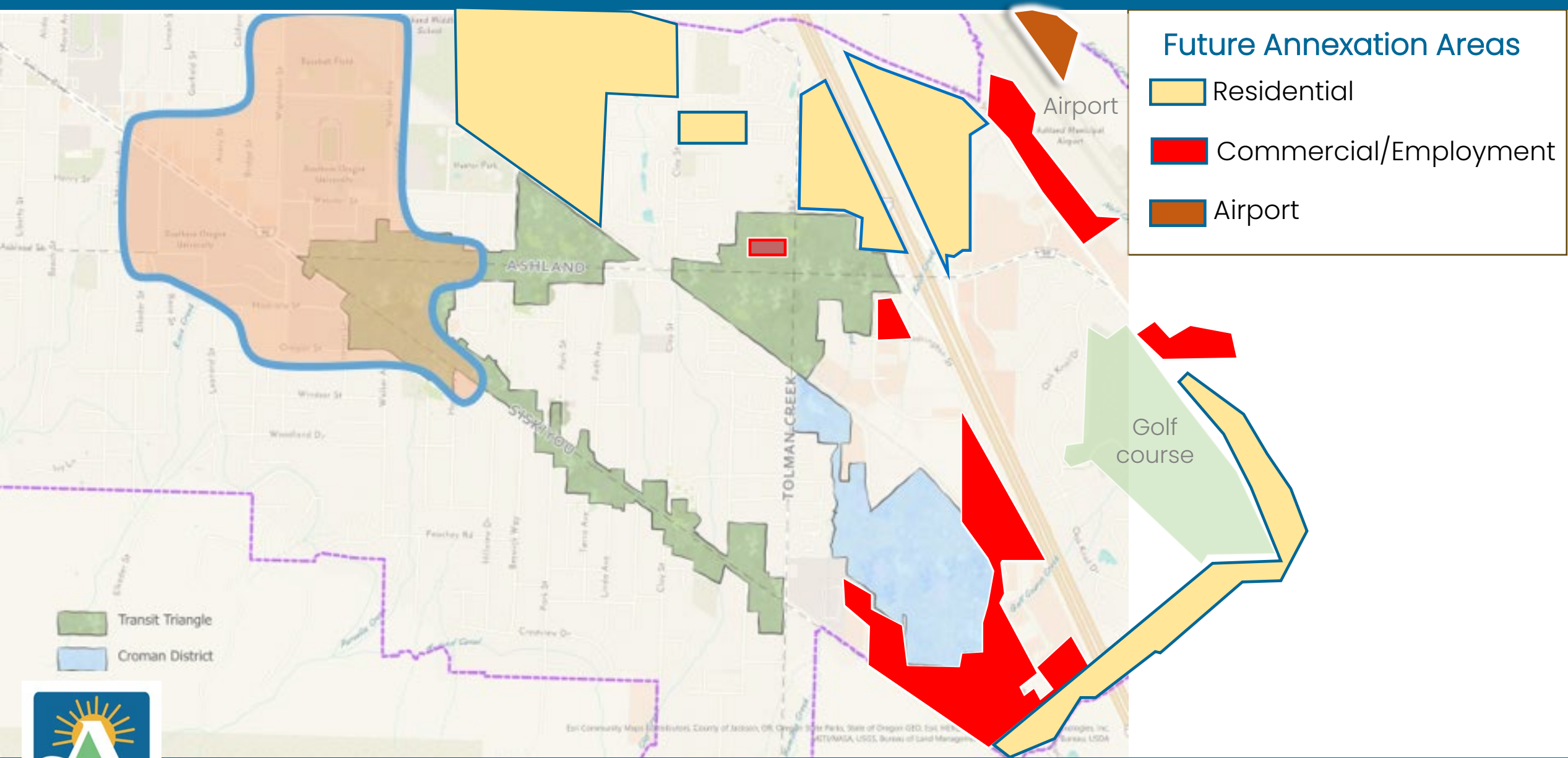


Cleanup (DEQ)



Tax Increment Financing Study - District





Discussion



City of Ashland Utility Assistance Programs

City Assistance Programs

Ashland Low Income Energy Assistance Program (ALIEAP) - Ashland Electric provides approved applicants:

- Customers at/below 65% of Oregon's median income are eligible for 50% percent reduction in electric charges
- Discount begins in December each year for maximum of 3 to 6 months, depending on their qualification, or a maximum of \$300 in total
- Application for discount are available October 1 through January 31

To qualify for utility discounts, income cannot exceed the levels shown below which are based on the number in the household.

Ashland Low Income Energy Assistance Program

Applications are available October 1, 2022 through January 31, 2023

	Yearly	Per month
1 Person Family	\$33,872	\$2,823
2 Person Family	\$44,293	\$3,691
3 Person Family	\$54,715	\$4,560
4 Person Family	\$65,137	\$5,428
5 Person Family	\$75,559	\$6,297
6 Person Family	\$85,981	\$7,165



City Assistance Programs

Senior and Disabled Discount - Ashland Electric provides approved applicants:

- For customers 65 or older, or disabled and 60 or older
 - year-round electric, water, sewer, street user, and storm drain fees reduction
 - 20% reduction if their income is 125% or below of federal poverty level
 - 30% reduction if their income is 100% or below of federal poverty level

To qualify for utility discounts, income cannot exceed the levels shown below which are based on the number in the household.

Senior and Disabled Year-Round Discount

To qualify for the senior discount, a person must be 65 years of age or disabled and 60 years of age and the total household income shall not exceed the amounts below. Applications are available year-round.

	Yearly 30% discount	Yearly 20% discount
1 Person Family	\$13,590	\$16,988
2 Person Family	\$18,310	\$22,888
3 Person Family	\$23,030	\$28,788
4 Person Family	\$27,750	\$34,688
5 Person Family	\$32,470	\$40,588
6 Person Family	\$37,190	\$46,488



City Assistance Programs

Emergency Heat Assistance - Ashland Electric provides approved applicants:

- At/below 150% of the federal poverty level, and
- Can receive \$100 toward the past due balance once per 12-month period

To qualify for utility discounts, income cannot exceed the levels shown below which are based on the number in the household.

Emergency Utility Assistance

To qualify for the one time Utility Assistance, the account must be no more than \$100 past due and not have received this funding within the last 12 months. Applications are available year-round.

	Yearly	Per Month
1 Person Family	\$20,385	\$1,699
2 Person Family	\$27,465	\$2,289
3 Person Family	\$34,545	\$2,879
4 Person Family	\$41,625	\$3,469
5 Person Family	\$48,705	\$4,059
6 Person Family	\$55,785	\$4,649



City Assistance Programs–Ways you can help

Round-up – Allows Ashland utility customers to voluntarily round-up their utility bills to the nearest dollar

- Funds accumulated are devoted to assisting low-income Ashland residents with monthly utility bills
- Customers who qualify for low-income assistance are screened to determine eligibility
- Funds are used to assist qualified, low-income customers and/or customers in an emergency situation
- This program support is provided to a customer on a one time per year only basis

Contributions to HEAT Assistance - Individuals or organization regularly contribute to the Emergency HEAT Assistance Program



City Funded Assistance Programs

City-funded Assistance Program	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual
Low Income Energy Assistance											
Customers	456	445	510	352	311	463	477.48	498	519	545	563
Distributed	\$ 99,902	\$ 98,568	\$ 82,967	\$ 88,012	\$ 87,083	\$ 86,614	\$ 84,253	\$ 91,656	\$ 109,310	\$ 112,626	\$ 97,470
Senior/Disabled Program											
Customers	140	150	136	165	174	181	195	216	237	263	281
Distributed	\$ 36,385	\$ 38,967	\$ 39,434	\$ 45,523	\$ 50,285	\$ 55,487	\$ 60,370	\$ 73,527	\$ 90,482	\$ 96,878	\$ 101,854
Average relief/applicant-family	\$ 260	\$ 260	\$ 290	\$ 276	\$ 289	\$ 307	\$ 309	\$ 340	\$ 382	\$ 368	\$ 362

Donation Funded Assistance Programs

Donation-funded Assistance Program	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual
Donations from the Public											
Heat	\$ 2,762	\$ 3,191	\$ 2,987	\$ 2,906	\$ 2,906	\$ 2,625	\$ 2,481	\$ 2,215	\$ 4,162	\$ 1,587	\$ 1,250
Roundup	3,599	3,555	3,311	2,990	2,715	2,562	2,399	2,563	3,250	3,613	3,394
Total Donated	\$ 6,361	\$ 6,746	\$ 6,298	\$ 5,896	\$ 5,621	\$ 5,187	\$ 4,880	\$ 4,778	\$ 7,412	\$ 5,200	\$ 4,644



Total Assistance Programs

Total Assistance Programs	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual
Distributed Amount											
Low Income Energy Assistance	\$ 99,902	\$ 98,568	\$ 82,967	\$ 88,012	\$ 87,083	\$ 86,614	\$ 84,253	\$ 91,656	\$ 109,310	\$ 112,626	\$ 97,470
Senior/Disabled Program	36,385	38,967	39,434	45,523	50,285	55,487	60,370	73,527	90,482	96,878	101,854
Heat Program	4,200	5,304	4,100	4,800	2,800	2,900	2,800	3,600	1,100	800	1,400
Total Distributed	\$ 140,487	\$ 142,839	\$ 126,501	\$ 138,335	\$ 140,168	\$ 145,001	\$ 147,423	\$ 168,783	\$ 200,892	\$ 210,304	\$ 200,724
Budget	\$ 110,500	\$ 112,200	\$ 84,809	\$ 149,500	\$ 149,500	\$ 156,000	\$ 159,120	\$ 160,038	\$ 160,038	\$ 190,700	\$ 190,700
% of Distributed/Budget	127%	127%	149%	93%	94%	93%	93%	105%	126%	110%	105%

BN 2023-25 Budget for assistance programs \$388,917

